

WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

Edited by
W. G. TURNER

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TO OUR READERS,

With this issue of *WORDS OF HELP* we again would render thanks to the LORD for thus enabling us to complete another year in this branch of His happy service. St. Paul's words, "Having therefore obtained help of GOD I continue unto this day," awakens a sincere echo in our hearts as we write, and the more so as the years pass.

Our readers at home and abroad still send encouraging letters, with assurances that *WORDS OF HELP* continues to live up to its title. Very gratefully we make our acknowledgments to those who give valued help by their contributions to our pages, as also to those who reprove, rebuke and exhort us from time to time.

To our Printer and Publisher for their very practical assistance in the production and circulation of the Magazine many thanks.

The prayers of our Christian readers are still needed and valued by your friend

THE EDITOR.

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WORDS OF HELP

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Three Days' Journey into the Wilderness

(*Exodus·viii. 27*)

BY THE EDITOR

WHEN the Pharaoh, the oppressor of Israel and type of that one whom our LORD called the Prince of this world, acting under pressure of the plagues of Egypt, grudgingly gave a reluctant consent to Moses' appeal, saying, "Go ye, sacrifice to the LORD in the land," the immediate reply was, "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto the LORD our GOD, as He shall command us." These words had originally formed part of the Divine commission given Moses at Horeb, and it was clearly impossible to agree to Pharaoh's command as Egypt's oppression was now daily becoming unbearable to the people of GOD, who were therefore in no condition to act as worshippers.

In this reply of Moses two foundation principles are plainly given, separation from Egypt and obedience to the word of GOD. They *then*, and Christian believers *now*, must enjoy liberty if they are to function as His people. Three days' journey into the wilderness for Israel then would effect a final separation from "the land of Egypt, the house of bondage." They were to be separated from the *death doom* in Egypt by the blood of the Paschal lamb; they were to be separated from the *power* of Pharaoh by GOD's power at the Red Sea. On the further shore of this they would then sing the song of redemption, being a people now at liberty to sacrifice unto the LORD their GOD as He should command.

The worshippers and servants of the true GOD must be a redeemed people brought completely "out of the land of Egypt,

out of the house of bondage," so with Christian believers now.

In one aspect this typically illustrates St. Paul's words to the Galatian Churches, "Our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of GOD our FATHER. But GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. i. 4; vi. 14).

The world to-day, like the Egypt of the days of Moses, attempts to alleviate the slavery and doom of sin by its amusements, attractions, occupations, politics, and even allows also a veneer of religion, and this not necessarily Christian, as Islam and Buddhism are equally respectable in the eyes of the man of the world. The real believer (as distinguished from a merely professed conventional one) is separated from it all by the death and resurrection of CHRIST, typified in the story in Exodus.

St. Paul in the Roman Epistle traces what answers for the believer to the three days' journey in the wilderness. Having shown that the Jew with all his national and religious advantages was really no better than the pagan Gentile, he sums up the situation by declaring "all the world guilty before God" as "all have sinned." Then follows an announcement of deliverance from the guilt, burden and inevitable doom of sin. "Through the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS . . . through faith in His blood." This answers to the typical Passover lamb, and so is followed in the next chapter by what the Red Sea typifies and really meant for Israel, namely, complete deliverance from Pharaoh's oppression by the mighty power of God. Hence we now read of believing on "Him that raised up JESUS our LORD from the dead." Note the part played in the witness of the early Church—*JESUS and the Resurrection*, on account of its importance.

These great chapters (Romans iii.-viii.) reveal that by the righteousness of God *through* the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS our sinful conduct is *condemned*, GOD's holy law completely *vindicated*, the believer *acquitted*. The all-important word "justified" occurs in chapter v., and teaches that this is, by GOD's grace, *through* CHRIST's blood, and *on* the principle of faith in "Him Who raised CHRIST from the dead." Now

follow in quick succession the stages on the spiritual journey equivalent to Israel's three days' journey in the wilderness (in chapters v., vi., vii., viii.), which abundantly repay study.

The Christian believer's progress through the experiences of these chapters where by faith our baptism teaches us that we *died* with CHRIST; were *buried* with Him; *raised up* with Him; and are now *alive* to GOD to walk in newness of life. No condemnation; the SPIRIT of life in CHRIST JESUS; walking not after the flesh but after the SPIRIT; all being the characteristics of this new life, through three days' journey into the wilderness in entire separation from the antitypical Egypt.

The Grace of God and its Bestowments

"GRACE" is one of those great Bible word-windows that allows the light and warmth of the Divine nature to stream to us sinful men and women. It is a song in a word; a strain of heavenly music.

As it occurs in the New Testament the word "grace" bears a variety of meanings, but the basic thought is always that of some good thing from GOD that is bestowed upon unworthy recipients. It may refer to a special gift, or a special privilege, or the Divine enabling operating in the child of God. All the bestowments of grace are included in our salvation, as that term is used in its fullest sense.

Centrally, grace is GOD's love in action towards, upon, and within us unworthy ones. It is the initiative of Divine love; GOD's great movement towards man's salvation. It is the ministry of Divine love in quest of the unlovely. "Ye know the grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Grace is the mighty love of GOD stooping to bestow mercy and blessing upon us undeserving sinners.

Well would it be if every preacher of the Gospel were as impressed with the meaning of Divine grace as was D. L. Moody. It is said that he became so deeply influenced by his study of the theme that hurrying out into the street he stopped the first man he met and asked him, "Do you know

grace?" "Grace who?" was the astonished reply. "The grace of God that brings salvation to all men," replied the fervent evangelist.

As Ephesians i. indicates, the Church is the field for the highest exercise of the Divine love and power. And each believer is a living monument of the grace of God.

GRACE IS ESSENTIALLY DIVINE

Grace distinguishes Christianity from all human religions. No human religion could have invented it, for it is foreign to fallen human nature. The gods of heathen mythology were simply big men, with men's passions and vices as well as qualities. The human heart unaided cannot rise higher than itself. The deities of ancient Greece and Rome were but glorified projections of men's thoughts and imaginations, and these, we know, are contrary to God's thoughts.

An English lady missionary in India was telling the poor, benighted Hindoo women of the love of God in giving CHRIST to die for us sinners. Presently one of the women interrupted her: "I don't call that love," she said. "What do you mean?" enquired the missionary. "Well," replied the woman, "I love my children, and I would not give one up for my dearest friend. But you have been telling us that God gave up His only Son to die for His enemies. I don't call that love. You must find a bigger word than love for a deed like that." "God commendeth (gives the most attractive and impressive proof of) His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us."

Grace is always the source of man's salvation, in whatever age he may live. The procuring cause, on the Divine side, is always the atoning sacrifice of CHRIST. And response of mind and heart and will to the Divine truth brought to bear on the soul is always that which actually obtains the blessing.

HOW GRACE FORGIVES

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins," is the language of the Old Testament saint. We Christian believers, with our fuller knowledge of the grace of God, are able to testify, "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

Grace forgives *righteously*. The Cross solves the stupendous problem, "How can a just God forgive sin?" God cannot

be merciful at the expense of His justice. The infinitely holy One cannot excuse sin. The penalty of His broken law must be paid. His justice required a penalty; His love provided the payment of that penalty. In the person of CHRIST GOD gathered up unto Himself the guilt of mankind, and by His own sacrifice satisfied the demands of His own righteousness, thus providing a basis upon which He could justly pardon us sinners. "God was in CHRIST, reconciling the world to Himself." And so God is "just, and the Justifier of him who believes in JESUS," for "grace reigns through righteousness."

Grace forgives *fully*. All our sins were future when our adorable Substitute made Himself responsible for them; and now there is no condemnation for us who, in God's grace, are in CHRIST. "I have no accounts to settle," said a dying believer; I owe nothing to man, and JESUS paid all my debts to God."

Grace forgives *gladly*. Of that we are assured in the stories of the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver, and the lost son, as recorded in the 15th of Luke. And many another passage tells us of the joy brought to the heart of God when estranged sinners come back home to Him.

And grace forgives *freely*. The Christian reader may exclaim, "Of course it is freely, or it would not be grace at all!" Yes, but those who are strangers to the grace of God do not find it easy to see that all self-merit must be excluded in the matter of their salvation. The Cross destroys all trust in outward privileges, ceremonies and self-righteousness for acceptance with God, and casts us upon Divine grace for salvation. There is nothing meritorious in turning to God in penitent faith and in receiving the free gift of eternal life. John Wesley had been a clergyman of the Church of England for several years before he was willing and able to say, "I felt that I trusted CHRIST and CHRIST *only* for salvation"; and then he was able to add, "and an assurance was given me that He had taken away all my sins, even mine." After abandoning all trust in a correct creed, an upright and disciplined life, religious duties conscientiously performed, he learnt to rejoice in that scheme of salvation that brings God all the glory while it brings the believing sinner all the blessing.

GRACE AND THE CHRISTIAN

Our hearts have from time to time been subdued under a sense of our sinfulness, our unworthiness, our unprofitableness, our helplessness; and then melted and enlarged under a sense of the grace of God. We live daily upon His bounty. We are dependent upon His grace for every good thing that comes to us. We should receive all our blessings as gifts of His grace: our SAVIOUR CHRIST; the HOLY SPIRIT; the Bible; our own salvation; our preservation; our Christian work; the kindnesses of Christians—all these good things are gifts from Him, *bestowments of His grace.*

Grace has made us a "titled" people. As members of the Body of CHRIST we are entitled to go to Him, and, using "holy argument," plead, "LORD, I am a member in Thy Body; give me of the grace that resides in Thee for my use"; or, "LORD, I am a branch in Thee, the Vine; give me of Thy strength, that I may fulfil Thine own purposes, and bring forth fruit to Thy praise."

Every victory over sin is the bestowment of GOD'S grace. He is able to keep us from falling. He is able to make all grace abound towards us. It is He Who *gives* the victory. We should lay the emphasis upon the energies of His will that wills our sanctification.

God is eager to pour the blessings of His grace into and through our lives, that they may be victorious, progressive and fruitful. But the activities of His grace may be *hindered* by *ignorance of His truth* and of His mind; by an *unyielded will*; by *lack of prayer*. We have to co-operate with His activities, for He has not made us robots, and will not treat us as such. Every spiritual grace, every urge after the things of God, all power over sin and temptation, all effectiveness in service, is a gift of God's grace; we must trust Him for all. The measure of His activities in and through us is decided by the measure in which we co-operate with Him by habitually refusing sin and self-will, by praying, obeying and trusting—all in the energy of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Grace has saved us, is saving us, and will continue to save us until there is nothing to save us from. But even then the treasures of His grace will not be exhausted. For "in the ages to come" God will "show the exceeding riches of His grace in

His kindness towards us through CHRIST JESUS." His interest of love in each of the redeemed will never cease. Our spirits will ever be enlarging to know Him better and to love him more. The grace of GOD not only has provided salvation for us undeserving sinners, but secures every blessing in this life, and will be the never-failing source of bliss throughout the endless ages to come.

And now let us read over again the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, with its wonderful unfolding of the grace of GOD and its bestowments.

E. ADAMS.

Joshua the Servant

(*Exodus xxxiii. 11*)

JOSHUA was in no hurry to get out of the LORD's presence in the tabernacle "outside the camp." One cannot be thus in the presence of GOD without learning something of GOD. Joshua at least learnt that His delight was in His people, and on that ground, and not on the ground of their own behaviour, He would bring them into their promised possessions, and neither the giants, the sons of Anak, nor walled and fenced cities, could stand against them. When the ten spies disheartened the people, as recorded in Numbers xv. 8, it was Joshua who said, "*If the LORD delight in us, then He will bring us into the land and give it to us: a land which floweth with milk and honey.*"

What lesson may we learn from this? We might learn much from the tabernacle "outside the camp" and our going out to it; but the thought for the moment is more the lesson to be learnt from Joshua abiding in the presence of the LORD. It is there we shall learn the heart of the LORD and His purposes of grace.

In the incidents encircling our verse we find Moses in the activities of his service: and very essential activities too, no doubt. We do not, however, find him complaining about Joshua remaining in the tabernacle and leaving him to serve alone.

The LORD JESUS, in St. Luke x., does not tell Martha that her much serving was in itself wrong—she was doubtless doing much good. She was obsessed with her activities, and it made her a complainer; and the LORD graciously points out that Mary had chosen that good part in sitting at His feet and hearing His words. In thus abiding in His presence and learning of Him, yea, in getting to know Him, she alone it was, at the appointed time — neither too early nor, as the other women, too late — could bring her pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anoint the feet of JESUS, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Would that we were more zealous in our service; there is need of it; but it should be a service flowing from our having tarried in His presence, where we shall have learnt more and more of His heart. What a blessed thing it is that we have the sanctuary of His presence to which to repair in days such as these. We need not, really, look out upon the world; but if we look at that that professes the Name of the LORD we see a scene of even worse wickedness (because of having received more light) than that seen in the camp of Israel. Good it is that there are zealous servants who are active in such a scene; but surely the “good part” is to be, like Joshua, abiding in the presence of the LORD and learning of Him; and then, as He leads, be used to fulfil the service He appoints for us.

H. SAMBROOK.

Some Threshing-Floors in Scripture

THERE are four agricultural processes connected with corn referred to in Scripture—sowing, reaping, threshing and winnowing. Sowing is a subject often spoken of among Christian workers. The only sowing that really counts is the sowing of the good seed—the word of God. This is done, as regards the Gospel, by the “evangelists” and those doing evangelistic work, but it is also done by the “teachers” who teach the word of GOD to believers. The actual sower does not always “reap” or see the fruit of his labour, which may become apparent during the work of a subsequent servant of GOD.

Thus the LORD said, "One soweth, and another reapeth" (John iv. 37). When this is the case sower and reaper can rejoice together that GOD has given the increase (cf. 1 Cor. iii. 6).

Speaking generally, *conversions* may be regarded as reaping the results of the sowing of the good seed on some previous occasion, often by an entirely different servant of GOD, especially in this and similar countries where Gospel preaching indoors and out-of-doors is so frequent. The full effect of the sowing of the word—the full harvest—will only be known when the "dead in CHRIST shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the cloud to meet the LORD in the air."

This will also be true of the sowing of the word by the "teacher" when speaking, as led by the HOLY SPIRIT, to those who are already believers in the LORD JESUS. Writing as a believer to fellow-believers, do we not often have to own, to our shame, that the word brought to our attention by servants of the LORD is snatched away by the wicked one or choked by the care of this world, or in some other way rendered unfruitful? Let us take warning from the parable of the sower.

Threshing is a needful process in order that the corn may be separated from the straw and chaff. Scripture uses corn (or wheat) and chaff in contrast in two ways. First, they are used in both Old and New Testaments of human beings. Man placed in responsibility by GOD has failed throughout the ages, and although puffed up with pride will be smitten by CHRIST when He comes into His Kingdom. "Then the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold, broken to pieces together," shall become "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor" (Dan. ii. 35). The figure is also used in connection with the chastisement of Israel by Syria (see 2 Kings xiii. 7, and Amos i. 3).

From such Scriptures as the latter it is clearly appropriate to regard times of *special persecution* as threshing-times. It is then that those who are only professors recant and the true believers in GOD are made manifest. History since the Cross has given many instances of threshing of this nature. Various forms of *adverse circumstances* are also permitted by the LORD

in a threshing way in order to reveal those who are truly His and distinguish them from those who are Christians only in name—such as times of business depression, epidemics, famines, etc. There are one or two solemn illustrations of threshing in the New Testament which might be mentioned. The LORD's teaching in John vi. that He was the true bread from heaven, with all its implication that He must die and that life could only be obtained by appropriating His death to oneself, had the threshing effect that thenceforth many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.

Again, at the Passover before He suffered, His word searching the conscience resulted in Judas immediately going out into the night. There are two illustrations in 1 Cor. xi. that call for serious consideration. Divisions (sects, schisms) have occurred among believers, through the wilfulness of man, but they have been permitted by the LORD "that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (v. 19). What exercise of heart this Scripture would awaken in us that, far from being indifferent about these divisions, we should cast ourselves on the LORD for His guidance, that we ourselves may not be sectarian but may be numbered among the approved in His sight. We also read (v. 30) of many being weak and sickly, and many sleeping, because of the irreverent and unseemly way in which they had responded to the LORD's words, "This do in remembrance of Me." How solemn a threshing!

Secondly, the idea of threshing (though perhaps not the actual word) is found in Scripture in connection with the *separation of truth from error*; for instance, "he that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD" (Jer. xxiii. 28). The LORD also said, "Take heed what ye hear" (Mk. iv. 24); and "Take heed lest any man deceive you" (Mk. xiii. 5). Such Scriptures imply the threshing of what we hear. The threshing instrument to apply in this way is "to the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them" (Is. viii. 20). Having now the full word of GOD we are able to thresh what we hear, in subjection to the HOLY SPIRIT, dwelling in us, Who "will guide you into all truth" (John xvi. 13).

There is a third application. The Old Testament passages in which threshing-floors are named seem to relate to the distinction between actions and character pleasing to God and those which are not. There are four distinct threshing-floors named in the Old Testament which the writer understands to convey such lessons (to these we refer in our next issue).

J. C. KELL.

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

The Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living

(*Psalm xxvii. 13*)

THE goodness of the LORD is a remarkable expression, and surely contains volumes for meditation; the Psalms, as well as the whole volume of Scripture, are full of it; but how little it is known and realised, even by those who have the greatest opportunity of contemplating it. The man whose heart God had looked upon, and whom He had chosen to be king over His people, upon whom the SPIRIT of the LORD came after he had been anointed, soliloquises in Psalm xvi. 2: that his goodness extends not to GOD, his LORD, but to the saints in the earth, and to the excellent in whom he was delighted. It is the SPIRIT of CHRIST in the Psalms that draws the attention of all who have ears to hear in general, and the godly remnant of Israel in particular, to the goodness of the LORD, without which there could be no blessing for anyone in the land of the living. This is expressed plainly by David when he exclaimed by inspiration: "Unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

The circumstances through which he was called to pass showed him plainly the desperate and overwhelming condition of everything under the sun from a divine standpoint, and the insignificance of man in the midst of it all. What prospect is there for man apart from the goodness of the LORD? He has been an utter failure in the very purpose for which he was created, and his failure made it necessary for

GOD to manifest Himself as a man in the midst of men, to show what He intended man to be, and to accomplish His purposes in man. The MAN CHRIST JESUS has vindicated the honour and glory of GOD in everything that man failed in, and GOD has set Him, His only begotten SON, at His own right hand in glory, in a Manhood which is the expression of what He Himself is, and which will never be given up.

The whole body of the Psalms is an unfolding of this goodness, and though the incidents referred to apply to the man chosen by the SPIRIT of GOD to record them, they find their full significance in the One Whom David called his LORD, and Whom GOD has set at His right hand, till all His enemies are made His footstool.

The goodness of the LORD in the land of the living, as unfolded in the Psalms, will be a source of blessing and comfort to the remnant of Israel in the time which is specially mentioned in Scripture as their great tribulation.

The believer of the present dispensation can find blessing and encouragement from all that is unfolded of the character of GOD, and if he is confidently resting on what GOD has for him in the person of His only begotten SON, he can enjoy contemplating what the purposes of GOD are for the nation of Israel now scattered and peeled to the ends of the earth, when, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, they are cast into the burning fiery furnace, to emerge without even the smell of fire upon them, but with all bands that bound them consumed. They will have the comfort and consolation of the SON of GOD in the midst of it all. Have not you and I, fellow-believer, this comfort and consolation *now*?

G. S. PURNELL.

Gaius—Diotrephes—Demetrius

(3 *John*)

BY THE EDITOR

THESE three names in John's third epistle help to shed light on the conditions prevailing in the early Church in the days of the last of the Apostles. This short letter is full of interest and importance also for our own times, the three characters bearing these names having their modern counterparts in every Christian community.

The Apostle says, "I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee; but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face." Other things of varying degrees of interest and importance to his correspondent were in John's mind of which no record was made. But the HOLY SPIRIT foreseeing the need, led the aged Apostle to set down in order some very important principles of permanent value for the church.

Gaius, or Caius, to whom it is addressed, possessed a very common Roman name, mentioned in four distinct cases in the New Testament of early disciples, all well known in their day. One of this name was a convert of St. Paul who baptized him at Corinth (1 Cor. i. 14); one is mentioned as being St. Paul's travelling companion (Acts xix. 29); another (if not the same) occurs in Acts xx. 4. One, however, whose character most nearly approximates to that in this epistle is referred to by the Apostle Paul (Romans xvi. 23) as "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church." Thorough-going hospitality and the means to permit its exercise mark both. It is also significant that a very early tradition (for what this is worth) identified Gaius of Corinth with the Gaius of St. John's third epistle, affirming him to have been John's secretary and then the Bishop of Pergamos.

In any case the Gaius here saluted so cordially by the Apostle is a lovable character, one who was "given to hospitality, a lover of good men." It is for this he is commended, "the well beloved Gaius whom I love in the truth," and for whose temporal and spiritual prosperity the Apostle expressed his desire "that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as

thy soul prospereth." Gaius is a Christian believer who will neither be flattered nor frightened out of what is due to CHRIST and the truth. So he is here given all encouragement to hold on his course of fellowship with the truth and with others who are being hardly used for their devotion to it. He is heartily commended by the Apostle for his courage and good spirit, and urged to continue whatever opposition may be raised. The keyword of this epistle is "receive".

St. John shows that the spring and motive of all true service, whether on the part of those to whom Gaius has been showing hospitality, or on his own part in extending it, is "for the sake of the NAME." It was this which inspired these servants of CHRIST in their preaching and teaching missions. "The church in those days had not yet assumed the title to interfere with the rights of its HEAD. The free action of the HOLY SPIRIT which the Apostles upheld in the earliest days was honoured still," and it was this which caused Gaius to become a fellow-helper to the truth by his hearty hospitality in spite of a frowning Diotrophes in the church. The NAME of Him Whom they served, and the truth about Him which they brought were sufficient credentials in St. John's eyes to warrant full and hearty hospitality being shown to such. "For the sake of the NAME they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles," these home and foreign labourers in the primitive days of the early church. There are such to-day, and He in Whose Name they go takes account of the reception such receive. Gaius was walking in the truth (v. 3).

The hospitality and support, says the Apostle, is to be "after a godly sort," or more exactly "worthily of God" (R.V.). Here is the test and pattern set before Gaius and all others who care for "the sake of the NAME." How then does GOD dispense *His* hospitality, *His* support, *His* fellowship? He giveth liberally, He loveth a cheerful giver. And one otherwise unrecorded sentence of our LORD cherished by the Apostle of the Gentiles, runs "Remember the words of the LORD JESUS, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

So here St. John enforces the duty, responsibility and obligation, saying: "We ought therefore to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth" (v. 8). "Fellow-helpers to"

is equivalent here to "fellow-workers with for the sake of the NAME." This is what specially endeared these travelling labourers to the Apostle, and what drew the heart of Gaius to minister so generously to their needs as occasion offered.

Of course Gaius had difficulties to contend with, for Diotrephes, filled with self-importance, carried his opposition to the extreme of forbidding this showing of hospitality and kindly fellowship. The tribe of Diotrephes is not extinct. With a gracious warning against him and his influence St. John bids the beloved Gaius to "follow not that which is evil, but which is good," reminding him that "he that doeth good is of GOD: but he that doeth evil hath not seen GOD." How the beloved Apostle breathes the spirit of his MASTER as he concludes his short letter with threefold greetings! Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name. Folk like to be remembered—they did then, they do now. Greet the friends by *name*.

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

Some Threshing-Floors in Scripture

(*continued from page 11*)

1: THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF ATAD

AT this threshing-floor Joseph and his house, and his brethren, and his father's house, accompanied by a great company of Egyptians, mourned for Jacob seven days (Gen. 1. 1-18). Jacob himself is an example of a man of faith who nevertheless for almost all his life was not emancipated from himself. He could not resist planning and scheming, and over and over again was a victim of his own plans. The contrast with Joseph is remarkable. Joseph left himself in God's hands, doing right without regard to the circumstances at the time, or the consequences that might follow. Jacob, at the age of 130, had apparently been threshing his life's history, for he confessed to Pharaoh that the days of the years of his life had been few and evil (Gen. xlvii. 9). Joseph's life on the contrary ended in years of triumph.

A parallel to Joseph to-day would be a believer in the LORD JESUS who, having trusted in Him as his SAVIOUR, has learnt the truth of Rom. vi. 4, that (just as Joseph had been into and out of the pit and the prison) he has been buried with CHRIST into death, that like as CHRIST was raised up from the dead by the glory of the FATHER, he also should walk in newness of life. He has learnt that his old man has been crucified with CHRIST, that the body of sin might be destroyed (made of none effect), that henceforth he should not serve sin. This is indeed a drastic threshing of all that I am as a sinner! In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing—no wheat. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh" (John iii. 6). So we thank God from the depths of our hearts that we are born again, "born from above," "born of GOD." We can regard Jacob, on the other hand, as corresponding with one who believes in the LORD JESUS CHRIST as his SAVIOUR but is engaged in a constant struggle against circumstances, struggling by his own efforts to subdue the evil activities of the flesh like the man in Romans vii., who has not yet applied to himself the truth of Romans vi. and cannot therefore confidently say Romans vii. 25. So seven days of mourning at the threshing-floor of Atad marks the end of Jacob's life of struggle. Nevertheless this threshing-floor—beautiful type—was after all in the land of promise, beyond Jordan, the other side of death, for Jacob was a saved soul.

The threshing-floor of Atad seems to be associated with the separation that occurs at the death of one who has faith in GOD between all that has been mere human effort—worthless chaff—and what has been truly of faith. Believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST have however the HOLY GHOST dwelling in them and ought to anticipate the threshing-floor of Atad, as it were. The exercises of heart, produced by the Word of GOD applied by the HOLY SPIRIT, lead us reckon ourselves dead unto sin but alive unto GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD (Rom vi. 1), and therefore to yield ourselves to GOD as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto GOD (v. 13). Has the reader yet been at the threshing-floor of Atad?

2: THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF CHIDON

In this incident, detailed in 1 Chron. xiii., the actions of a man of faith dealing with holy matters are subjected to threshing by GOD Himself. David had the altogether right idea of bringing the ark of GOD to Jerusalem, but he ignored the instructions that none but the Levites should bear the ark, and he put it in a new cart just like the Philistines had done earlier (1 Sam. vi. 1). The oxen drawing the cart shook the ark (or stumbled) and Uzza took hold of the ark, with the result that GOD smote him and he died. David was displeased and afraid, but he learnt his lesson.

The ark is well known to be a type of the Person of CHRIST. In its structure it represented both His Deity and His humanity, enshrining Him too as the Bread of Life, the Priest, and the Word of GOD, the One through whom GOD could righteously show mercy in virtue of the sprinkled blood. We find in this type that threshing is applied to the way in which a Christian deals in thought or word or action with holy things and, in particular, with the Person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Directly we depart from Scripture we become, consciously or unconsciously, imitators of the way unbelievers act in regard to His Person, or the way they speak about Him. Any presumption in regard to His Person or work will be manifested by threshing at the hand of the LORD.

As many readers of this magazine are aware, there have been many divisions among Christians who profess to have separated from all humanly devised religious organizations. Such divisions can almost invariably be traced to the application of human reason, often seeming irresistibly logical, to the Person or the work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. In refuting the attacks made in this way, faithful and well-meaning men have been betrayed in their zeal into using equally human reasoning, thus themselves unconsciously imitating Uzza's attempt to protect the ark. The resultant divisions have been permitted by the LORD "that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" as cited earlier from 1 Cor. xi. 19, but we shall not be approved unless we learn the lesson David learnt. In 1 Chron. xv. 2, we find David stating "None ought to carry the ark of GOD but the Levites; for them hath the

LORD chosen to carry the ark of GOD, and to minister unto Him for ever." A statement of the mind of GOD revealed in the Scriptures is the right way to confess wrong and to refute it. The Word of GOD in its purity and simplicity gives us all the instruction that is necessary in the things of GOD, including everything touching the Person of the BLESSED LORD. Let us beware of attempting to oppose attacks on His Person and work by human reasoning. If we do so, though we may be doctrinally right on the point in dispute, we shall not have His approval.

The general principle in the New Testament which we may associate with the threshing-floor of Chidon is, it is suggested, "*If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,*" and a specific example (referring to the LORD's Supper) is "*let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup*" (see 1 Cor. xi. 28, 31 and context), but the lessons to be drawn from the incident are of very wide application.

3: THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF ARAUNAH (ORNAN.)

The accounts of the incidents connected with this threshing-floor are found in 2 Sam. xxiv. and 1 Chron. xxi. The comment of Joab when David ordered him to organize the census of the nation, and the confession of David twice, "I have sinned," made it plain that the object of numbering the people was not that the LORD might be glorified but with a view to David's own glory. If we examine ourselves must we not own that over and over again we seek glory for ourselves and not for the LORD? As examples, if the LORD blesses the work in our Sunday Schools or gospel services *why do we count up the number attending, or the number of conversions?* On the other hand if we see little or no results, why do we pray so earnestly that we may do so? God grant that we can honestly say that no desire for our own glory enters into these and similar things.

Again, David was taught the lesson that the nation of which he was the LORD's anointed King, whether many or few, was his *responsibility*, and in seeking his own glory he had involved the people in judgment. So, in confessing his sin, he reverts in thought to his humble calling as a shepherd boy before he was

anointed as King, and pleads with GOD for "these sheep". Further he thinks of them not as *his* subjects but as "*Thy* people" (1 Chron. xxi. 17).

We thus learn from this threshing-floor that the motive must not be our own glory but the glory of the LORD; that when we sin all the LORD's people suffer; that whatever the LORD entrusts to us brings its responsibilities; and that our fellow-believers are to be regarded as *the Lord's people*.

Ornan himself is also a remarkable contrast with David. He was a Jebusite (this is recorded six times), one of the descendants of a heathen, conquered subject race, whereas David was the LORD's anointed, King of all Israel. Yet Ornan not only owned a threshing-floor but was actually threshing wheat at the time David was sent by the angel of the LORD through the prophet Gad, to Ornan's floor (1 Chron. xxxi. 20). If David had been occupied with the good seed of the Word of GOD or had subjected his proposal to "threshing" he would not have fallen into this sin. This perhaps explains why we read in 2 Samuel xxiv. 23, "All these things did Araunah, *as a King*, give unto David: the King."

David having learnt these lessons responds promptly to the call of the LORD through Gad to set up an altar at the threshing-floor. He offers up burnt offerings and peace offerings and calls upon the Name of the LORD.

This threshing-floor is identified by 2 Chron. iii. 1 with Mount Moriah (where Abraham offered up Isaac) and with the site on which the temple was built—the centre of worship for the nation of Israel, to be sanctified by the evident Presence of the LORD (see Gen. xxii. and 2 Chron. v. 14). The offering of Isaac is a very well-known type (or "foreshadowing") of the death and resurrection of the SON of GOD, and conveys the parallel lesson of substitution in that Abraham offered the ram in the stead of his son. The temple in Jerusalem has its counterpart since the descent of the HOLY GHOST at the feast of Pentecost following the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The SPIRIT of GOD through the Apostle Paul says to the saints at Corinth, and "to all that in every place call on the Name of JESUS CHRIST our LORD," "Know ye not that ye are the temple of GOD and that the SPIRIT of GOD dwelleth in you?" But just as the threshing-floor

of Ornan forms an essential link between Mount Moriah and the temple site so the lessons to be learnt from it have their place in order that believers in the atoning work of CHRIST can enjoy the privilege of worship in the House of GOD as they should.

Let us then frequently visit the threshing-floor of Araunah (Ornan) subjecting the motives of our actions to scrutiny in the light of the Scriptures.

J. C. KELL.

(To be continued, D.V.)

Our Stewardship of Divine Truth

EVERY Christian believer is a "steward of the manifold grace of GOD," is entrusted with the management of what CHRIST has committed to him, and is responsible to use his gifts for the glory of the LORD, his own spiritual and moral progress, and the good of others. The recipients of Divine grace should not recoil from the thought of duty. The New Testament holds in perfect balance the doctrinal and the experimental, Divine sovereignty and human responsibility, GOD's grace and our obligations.

GOD is the Source of all truth, for He is Light, and all truth finds its perfect expression in CHRIST. As professed disciples of Him Who is "The Truth," it is for us to love the truth everywhere, and to remember that the SPIRIT of Truth will not bless untruth, even if spoken in the interests of the Gospel.

But in this paper we are chiefly concerned with Divine truth, the "truth of the Gospel" (Gal. ii. 5, 14), the doctrines and principles of Christianity, which have been committed to every believer. The non-Palestine Jews who had obeyed the Gospel are reminded (1 Peter i. 23) that they had been "born again . . . by the Word of GOD," that is, by the "Word of Truth" (James i. 18). Paul thanks GOD that some in the metropolis of the ancient world had exchanged the tyranny of dictator Sin for the liberating sway of the LORD when they "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered" to them (Rom. vi. 17). And we, too, who have obtained the new life in CHRIST through the application of the same Divine message

by the HOLY SPIRIT, have a fourfold obligation towards Scripture truth: to receive it, to conserve it, to apply it rightly, and to announce it.

We are to "*receive with meekness the engrafted Word*" (James i. 21). We may connect a certain person with our conversion, and say, "So-and-So led me to CHRIST," although what he did was to put the finishing touch to a work in which several persons had a share, for, as a rule, while one may reap, many sow. But in a deeper sense, it was the *truth* that led us to CHRIST, the truth that we were sinners in need of the SAVIOUR, that He died for just such people as we, and that He was waiting for us to come to Him.

We are to continue to receive "the engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls." Our salvation includes seeking and finding precious Divine truth, and making it our own. But the quest is not easy. If it were, it would not be good for us. The inner toil and "exercise" involved develop our truest character and help on our salvation. It is what *costs* that becomes precious to us.

Careful and painstaking search is helpful, but real openness of soul before the LORD and prayerful meditation are vital, and are our best commentary on the Scriptures. By meditating we give the LORD an opportunity to impress His truth upon our waiting spirits, and we know something of the meaning of the words, "We have an unction from the Holy One." Mary of Bethany is not commended for sitting still, but for receiving the MASTER'S Word; her spirit was in a condition of active receptivity. It is a difficult attitude to maintain in our machine-ridden age of row and rush. But without meditation our spiritual life is bound to become stale and weary, and *our words and actions become formal and tradition-bound*.

Texts may "lie bedridden in the dormitory of the soul." We do not receive the truth in power if our minds have just received the mould in which it is brought to us. Truth must be assimilated, not swallowed in tabloid form. It is possible to be familiar with the contents and sentences of Scripture and to receive and repeat the formulæ and phraseology current in our circle, and yet to know little of the power of the truth in our lives.

We are to "*hold fast the faithful Word*" (Tit. i. 9). Every

regenerate person has within him the God-given assurance that the Christian message and the Bible that contains it are utterly reliable, trustworthy. The Scriptures speak to him with the voice of God. He does not accept the Bible as the Word of God merely on the testimony of any man, or church, or council; the Bible has the intrinsic power to convince him of its Divine character. He knows by his God-given intuitions that it is true and Divinely authoritative.

In a sense Christianity is intolerant. It must be, for it is God's best. "*Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien.*" Philosophy and ethics are useless as a rope of sand to bind the "strong man" or to strangle sin. It is the New Testament Gospel, and this alone, that is the remedy for man's sin and need, as 1900 years of experience have abundantly proved. This is the "doctrine which is according to godliness." These are facts which only a hopelessly distorted mind or corrupt heart would attempt to disprove.

The Bible is the Book of the CHRIST. The CHRIST of the Bible is the CHRIST of personal experience to every converted soul. Personal experience of the saving power of the CHRIST of the Bible has been known by multitudes all down the centuries and throughout the world, and constitutes the inner, spiritual history of the true Church. The unique Book, the unique Person, the unique doctrine, and the accumulated witness of the experience of regenerate men and women are all vitally connected. These "many infallible proofs" are the mighty voice of age-long and world-wide testimony against which the much advertised "assured results of modern scholarship" are as the jaunty twittering of sparrows on the housetop.

We are to guard the precious truth entrusted to us (2 Tim. i. 14; 1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Thess. ii. 15). This obligation was more deeply felt by those to whom the "mysteries of God" were newly revealed. We have nineteen centuries of Christianity behind us. But each generation of Christians must learn the truth for themselves, and treasure it as a sacred deposit. We have to fight to maintain faith, for there resides in us still the "evil heart of unbelief" that departs from the living God. If the soul is in a healthy spiritual condition it will not easily become a prey to the error germs that pervade the modern mental atmosphere.

The church in busy, rationalistic Corinth is encouraged to "stand fast in the faith." The Thessalonians are to stand their ground and maintain a firm grip on the teachings of the apostles. Timothy is urged, "Continue in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of" (2 Tim. iii. 14). And Paul himself, who had been "set for the defence of the Gospel," could testify, at the close of his militant life, "I have kept the faith."

E. ADAMS.

(To be continued, D.V.)

The Church Universal and Local

THE HOLY SPIRIT descended on the day of Pentecost and baptized believers into one body, thus forming the Church (not Churches). "For by one SPIRIT are we *all* baptized into one body" (1 Cor. x. 13).

And this unity formed by the SPIRIT is universal, not merely local. As the HOLY SPIRIT is One so is the body which He then formed; it could not be otherwise.

As the human body is indwelt, animated and vitalized by man's spirit, so is the body of CHRIST (of which it is a figure) indwelt and animated and energized by the SPIRIT of GOD.

The Christians of each locality then gathered together in assembly capacity represent the Church universal in that particular town or city, and whatever action is taken by them in regard to receiving or putting away is done on their own responsibility; thus we have local churches, but the bearing of such action extends to the whole, on the ground of the "One Body".

But the church as a whole is not composed of the federation of these local churches, the church or assembly in a particular town or city is the universal Church localized (if I may so speak). But you cannot reverse the thought, the church universal is not composed of the aggregate of local churches, and the moment the Church as a whole is thought of, churches disappear.

Now we are exhorted to keep this unity in the bond of

peace (Ephes. iv.) not to *make a unity* but to *keep one already formed*, the unity of the SPIRIT, which is universal, not local. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the SPIRIT in the bond of peace" is how the exhortation is worded.

We give local expression to it because of our limited capacity down here. In Heaven we shall give universal expression. When we gather in assembly capacity we give local expression to a universal truth. What is that truth? "*We being many are one bread and one body.*"

But if our local action goes no farther than ourselves we are merely giving local expression to a local truth not a universal one, and there would be many breads and many bodies.

All action taken by the local church (or assembly) though done on its own responsibility, must be done for the church universal; the bearing of such action extends to the church as a whole, otherwise it is a practical denial of the unity of the body.

E. O. HEWLETT.

Silent Preaching

IN India, General Gordon once wanted to engage a Moham-
 medan as a servant, but the man was unwilling to go into
 his service. On being pressed for a reason for his refusal, the
 man said: "Sir, you would make me a Christian." Gordon
 replied: "I shall never say a word to you about religion
 and will not trouble you in any way about it." The
 Indian persisted in his refusal and said: "I should become a
 Christian if I were to be in your company every day even
 although you were never to say a word to me. Your way of
 living preaches more than any sermon and I am not going to
 come under its influence. I do not want to become a
 Christian."

Christian personality is the best means of pointing others
 to CHRIST.

Gaius—Diotrephes—Demetrius

(3 John)

BY THE EDITOR

(continued from page 15)

LITTLE is known of Diotrephes and nothing whatever to his credit. Gaius, as we have seen, receives cordial commendation from the Apostle, and Demetrius, we shall find, is warmly appreciated both by the Apostle and the brethren. But Diotrephes is sternly censured for ambition, arrogance and assumption. "I wrote unto the church," says St. John; "but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."

Now, only such as mourn the latent evil of their own hearts could credit the possibility of such things happening (in the lifetime of one of the Apostles) in the church, were it not written in St. John's epistle to Gaius.

It has been suggested that the mind of Diotrephes possibly worked after this fashion. "What business have these preachers to come here? *I* am here. It is for *me* to look after the truth; and *I* never thought of asking their help, especially as they are strangers who come without invitation or in any way being sent. They are intruders. He writes and says, 'We ought to receive such.' No, *I* neither need your advice, nor the help of the strangers. Furthermore *I* forbid the church to receive them upon pain of *my* displeasure, and indeed also of excommunication."

Diotrephes not only shows his bad spirit and animosity against the Apostle by keeping back the letter addressed to the church, but also his contempt for the brethren who "for the sake of the NAME" were engaged in spreading the truth to the glory of GOD. Nothing is mentioned as to his doctrine, which may have been quite orthodox, but that his acts were bad is definitely stated by the Apostle. It is these which lead to the exhortation, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but

that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."

By assuming authority for himself to ban the apostolic communication sent to the church, and threatening excommunication to all who disregarded his own assumption, this insufferable egoist declared himself one who "loveth the pre-eminence" over his brethren. He is the father of all ambitious, self-important men, drugged by self-complacency among the people of God, who forget the word of the LORD, "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be (wills to be) the chiefest shall be the servant of all" (St. Mark x. 44).

Were they descendants of Diotrefes, one wonders, to whom reference is made in the Epistle Dedicatory to the Authorised Version, where words so ancient (and so modern) occur as describing certain "self-conceited Brethren (Translators' capital) who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil"? "O my soul, come not thou into their secret," may well be our prayer.

With what sense of spiritual relief we turn to the consideration of a quite different character, one well known to St. John and to Gaius, introduced to us in these words, "Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true."

He is a fine character and one commended for his transparent Christianity. All we know of him is compressed within the space of one verse, and everything to his credit. The truth he brings commends him; the brethren he meets commend him; the Apostle, too, from personal knowledge, endorses the commendation. For the "sake of the NAME" he went forth not seeking the pre-eminence yet receiving it in a marked way. Happy labourer whose conduct, character and conversation is a confirmation of his work for the LORD. In the case of Demetrius the establishment and confirmation of the truth everywhere he has laboured bears witness to the character of his work and of himself as a workman.

May this tiny Epistle with its character sketches by an Apostolic hand of Gaius with his thorough-going hospitality

worthy of God, and of Demetrius with his transparent Christianity, serve to stir us up after the same godly examples. Of Diotrephes as a warning against spiritual ambition, arrogance and assumption of self-importance, we shall do well to ponder, remembering, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12).

Not in lordly establishment alone, but equally in little assemblies of believers the danger lurks; and nothing but the SPIRIT of Him, the LORD and MASTER of us all, Who said, "I am amongst you as he that serveth," can preserve us from our foolish hearts and from the spirit shown by Diotrephes.

Our Stewardship of Divine Truth

(continued from page 23)

THE Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15). It is the upholder and custodian of the Gospel, not its jailor, as the Roman Catholic system has generally been, as if the pure Gospel were a criminal to be suppressed! Were there no Church the truth would have no human witness, no support, no guardian. It is within the local assembly, and in various ways, that the new convert learns to absorb Scripture truth and Christian principles of conduct. And the Church is to be the bulwark against error, for Christians are to "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

In holding fast the faithful Word we are contending against our own evil heart of unbelief; in obeying Jude's injunction we are contending against error without.

Paul says of certain teachers, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you" (Gal ii. 5). The champion of spiritual freedom and progress was inflexibly conservative when it was a question of preserving and guarding Christian truth.

The two greatest enemies of the true Gospel are, and always have been, a *rationalistic philosophy*, combated in 1 Corinthians; and a *counterfeit Christianity* that teaches salvation

by ceremonial and self-merit, combated in Galatians. We have to-day, on the one hand, the pernicious philosophic speculation of evolution, with its progeny, in the religious world, of the Higher Criticism and Modernism; and, on the other, Roman Catholicism, with its baneful mixture of truth, error, fraud and superstition, its arrogant patter about "the validity of orders," and its lust for power—the *chief key to the whole system*. The vagaries of the human mind, when not subject to the Word of God, are almost numberless. And behind all the views and ways of life that are opposed to true Christianity there lurks the heart of rebellious man that is at enmity with God.

The best way to hold fast "the faithful Word" is to get it to hold us fast; that is, as we have already seen, to receive it as taught by our Divine Instructor, the HOLY SPIRIT of Truth.

We are to "*rightly divide the Word of Truth*" (2 Tim. ii. 15). This injunction applies primarily to the Christian teacher, but it is to be obeyed by all believers. The exhortation would include an accurate and honest treatment of Scripture truth, and a suitable application of it to the needs of the hearers.

Whatever its historical setting or framework, all Bible truth is *for the information of everybody in every age*: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. xv. 4). But everything in the Bible was in the first instance spoken to or written for a particular people, in a particular place, and for a particular time. The Scriptures inform us that God told certain people to do certain things; the question is, "Does He want *us* to do them?" He gave certain people certain promises; can we claim these promises *for ourselves*?

The right use of *the dispensational key* will partly answer such questions. But we may not build the dispensational walls too high. For human nature is the same in every age, and the stream of human life in each period is continued into the next. The three great principles of man's eternal redemption are always the same: the grace of God is the source; the atoning death of CHRIST the procuring cause; and response to the Divine truth brought to bear on the soul that which actually obtains the blessing of pardon. All spiritual life in

every age is essentially the same. The Psalms, for instance, have been used as the praise and prayer book of the godly in every age.

Again, there is the key of right selection and proper balance. "Circumstances alter cases." What may be God's will at one time may not be so later. In Matthew x. our LORD told His disciples to go only to the Jews, but in Mark xvi. 5 He told them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every one.

We are to "*hold forth the Word of Life*" (Phil. ii. 16). Every Christian is a witness to the power and grace of the LORD. Every one of us comes within the scope of the LORD's commission to His apostles, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel." Although the words, "As My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John xx. 21), apply *first* of all to the apostles, they apply also to every child of GOD. Each of us has been sent into the world for a definite purpose. In fact the whole of life should be viewed as a mission—and will be so in proportion as we realise our LORD's commission to us. Every Christian has, in some degree, received the "ordination of the pierced Hands." At the same time, the sense of obligation rests especially upon some who have been specially called and equipped for the work of the ministry.

Every believer should consider himself Divinely called to try to lead non-Christians towards CHRIST or to Him, and to help believers to see and do the will of GOD. We cannot get the most out of our Christianity unless we endeavour to "share" it, that is, to communicate its message to others. In helping others we are helped ourselves.

The message of the Gospel for the unconverted and Scripture truth for the believer are to be made known as widely as lies in our power, whether by personal contacts, the public address, or the printed page. No church, organisation or meeting is to be an *end in itself*; it is a means for "sounding out the Word of the LORD." The soul's blessing is the true end, for the soul lasts eternally.

"To every man his work"—and also his method. Whatever may be the kind of work to which we are called, and in whatever way we may try to do it, we are to seek "by manifestation of the truth" to commend "ourselves to every man's conscience

in the sight of God" (2 Cor. iv. 2). We are not responsible for what may be reckoned as success; we are responsible for the spiritual power, so that some at least of those who listen to us will recognise that we have been divinely commissioned to deal with their soul's welfare. Spiritual blessing is the result of the impact of spiritual truth upon the human spirit, and this can be effectual only by the operation of the SPIRIT OF GOD.

In view of all this we may well exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The enabling is indicated in 2 Timothy i. 14—it is by the HOLY SPIRIT. He alone can enable us to *learn* Divine truth effectively, to *hold it fast*, to *maintain it* against error, to *rightly divide it*, to *hold it forth*. Let us then resolve to wait on Him more habitually in order better to discharge our stewardship of Divine truth.

E. ADAMS.

Some Threshing-Floors in Scripture

(continued from page 20)

4: THE THRESHING-FLOOR OF BOAZ

HISTORICALLY the book of Ruth shows us the working of the grace of God during the dark days of Israel's history about which the book of Judges tells us. Typically the book also sets forth the restoration to favour of the remnant of the Jewish nation which, having forfeited all *claims* to blessing (and so typified by a Moabitess), will in grace be blessed in a future day. But there are many lessons for us to-day in this beautiful story, especially those centring in Boaz's threshing-floor.

Boaz had clearly been threshing and winnowing Ruth's conduct and ways. His comments can be considered under several headings. First, he refers to her *fidelity* (chap. ii. 11). Naomi represented her only link with the LORD in the land of Moab. Ruth clave to her (i. 14), and expressed her devotion in words which are sublimely beautiful and touching. Then he speaks of her *forsaking* all the old associations, and identifying herself with the LORD's people. Thirdly he notes her *faith*, for she had come to trust under the wings of the LORD God

of Israel. Later he notes also her *sobriety* of behaviour and her *virtuous conduct*. Before he spoke to her of these things he had noticed her gleaning in his field, and had taken steps for her safety and provided for her refreshment. How full this all is of instruction for us!

Some of the readers of this magazine may feel they know very little about the LORD and about His will for our pathway. This is indeed true of all of us, for none of us have learnt as much as we should have. But let us emulate Ruth in her devotion, holding fast what we have already learnt, cleaving to the LORD with purpose of heart, as Barnabas (who was "a good man") exhorted the newly converted Christians at Antioch (Acts xi. 22-24). The LORD is mindful of such fidelity and will not fail to reward it in due time, just as Boaz said nothing to Ruth about it until the appropriate moment, but had evidently observed it.

Two practical results follow where there is devotion of heart to the LORD. In principle there must be a *forsaking* of worldly associations. Those among us who have been brought up by Christian parents may never have actually been involved in the evil conversation and amusements of the unsaved who are less privileged, but as we grow up we are sure to learn something about their influence on the unconverted, and devotion to the LORD will cause us to shun them. Those who have been enslaved by "the desires of the flesh and of the mind" and then have been converted necessarily find that previous associations are incompatible with devotion to the LORD. Not only so but the attraction of such things will have gone. Ruth had left her father and mother and the land of her nativity. Similarly in Psalm xlv. we read, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy LORD; and worship thou Him." We can go further than Ruth had gone at that stage, for when she forsook her old associations she had not yet met Boaz, whereas we know our LORD and SAVIOUR, "Whom having not seen we love," and the knowledge of Him with the assurance of His love for us completely eclipses the attractions associated with the unconverted world around us. Is it not so? Then dwell upon verse 2 of the same Psalm: "Thou art fairer than

the children of men: grace is poured into Thy lips: therefore GOD hath blessed Thee for ever."

The second result is, however, the joy of *companionship* with the LORD's people. It is not GOD's purpose that any of His own should walk alone. Boaz said to Ruth, "Thou art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore." As those who now belong to the LORD we should seek the society of those who are His. When we were unconverted the LORD's people were strangers to us, or perhaps it is better to say we were strangers to them. We did not enjoy being in their company. After we have accepted CHRIST as our SAVIOUR we discover we are strangers to the unconverted, and no longer strangers and foreigners to the saints of GOD but their fellow-citizens and of the household of GOD (Eph. ii. 19).

With these things there is also an appetite for spiritual food. Ruth steadfastly gleaned through the barley and the wheat harvests. May we not liken this to attendance at meetings for the study and exposition of the Scriptures such as "Bible-readings," lectures and addresses? We should go to these as often as opportunity affords, *expecting* to find plenty of gleanings (suitable food for our souls). Let us also be diligent in beating out what we have gleaned. So often we fail to do this, forgetting the whole matter as soon as we leave the meeting we have attended. The LORD Himself (of Whom Boaz is a "type") will see to it that handfuls are dropped on purpose for us (v. 16) and He will provide refreshment for our spirits, too (v. 9).

Ruth did not allow herself to be diverted from her steadfast purpose by the attractions of the light-hearted among the LORD's people. There is no little danger to young Christians of this sort of thing in the present day. Worldly influences have crept in, bringing a lack of soberness, a lightheartedness, into the companies of the LORD's people, even when engaged in the study of the Scriptures, and particularly as soon as the "meetings" (or "services") are over. It is not necessary to enlarge on this danger because it takes many forms and yet is easily recognised. The important aspect of it is that, if we yield to it, it robs us of time to *beat out* what we may have gleaned. Boaz had noted that Ruth did not follow young men, whether poor or rich (iii. 10).

Finally, Ruth was a virtuous woman. She had a single purpose in view and kept herself from any disloyalty. May the LORD by His SPIRIT preserve you and me from any disloyalty to Him. He has the right to our whole heart, and we ought not to share our hearts between Him and the world.

From all these points of view Ruth's conduct had been "threshed" by Boaz, and in all respects he had graciously commended her. As the various points have been before us have we been subjecting our individual conduct to "threshing" and are we satisfied with the results? How humbling it is! The LORD knows us better than we know ourselves, and we shall have to give an account to Him. Nevertheless, there is also an aspect of this subject for our cheer. Just as the SPIRIT of GOD compelled Balaam to say; "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" (Num. xxiii. 21) so the LORD in infinite grace will commend His own as Boaz commended Ruth. This must not, however, make us careless in all the matters we have been reviewing.

While Boaz had been threshing Ruth's conduct, she also had been learning his character; in fact we might say she had been "threshing" it, if it might be so expressed without irreverence, bearing in mind that Boaz is a type of CHRIST. She had learnt that she could entirely trust herself to him in the full assurance of near relationship and perfectly confident of her security. So she put herself entirely in his hands. This is the lesson of chapter iii. We must remember that life in Palestine was still primitive. Families doubtless lived and slept in the same tent or hut, secure in their mutual relationship, and Ruth unhesitatingly entrusted herself to Boaz. Boaz being a type of CHRIST we can link this with his remark in chapter ii. 12 that Ruth had come to trust under the wings of the LORD GOD of Israel. And all this is before the marriage. How beautifully it can be applied to us. The "Church" (in which, if we are believers in the LORD JESUS as our SAVIOUR and LORD, we are included) will be presented by CHRIST to Himself as His bride, glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. vi. 27), but that moment has not yet come. In the meantime the more you and I learn of Him, as we shall if we emulate Ruth's conduct, the more assurance we shall have of our relationship to Him, the more confident we shall be of our

security, the more entirely we shall put ourselves into His hands. May you and I know more what it is to be, as it were, in Boaz's threshing-floor.

How varied and how practical are the lessons to be learnt from these accounts of events connected with threshing-floors! The subject has not by any means been exhausted by this series of articles. It is opportune here to refer to the fact that *the Philistines rob the threshing-floors* (1 Sam. xxiii. 1). The Philistines were in the land of promise but had not been "redeemed" and had not come into the land through the Red Sea and the Jordan (both being "types" of the Cross of CHRIST). Alas, there are many in professing Christendom to-day who are not truly saved. They have never accepted GOD's verdict on them as sinners, nor accepted His Son as the Lamb provided by GOD to be the atoning sacrifice in their room and stead. They share some of the privileges of believers without faith in GOD or in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. They are always secretly and often openly the enemies of those who are loyal to Him. They will seize opportunities of preventing the LORD's people from threshing and winnowing, and from feeding on the Word of GOD and the Person of the LORD. Let us beware of them. Our confidence against them must be centred in the LORD Himself, the MAN of GOD's choice, the true David.

While there is much to challenge our consciences in this subject of "threshing-floors" there is also much that reminds us of the unfailing grace of GOD. Let us take courage from the latter and not fail to profit by the former.

J. C. KELL.

Laodicea

THE epistle to Laodicea shows us the LORD's thoughts about the final state of Christian profession on the earth—in other words, the common state of things to-day, just before the LORD comes.

We have failed, and the LORD has to take up, in character, all that those called by His Name have lost in their testimony. It is not activity that He is concerned with, but the condition of heart and soul. They are satisfied, but He knows their

fundamental weakness and He has the remedy, but, alas, He is kept at a distance. How few there are, just those whose ears are opened to hear the SPIRIT, who are ready to receive Him, and enjoy unhindered communion. Yet His eye rests upon them with delight, and, in spite of all the general failure, He assures them that the honour prepared for all His saints will indeed be theirs.

He is the AMEN. Every promise of GOD is assured in Him. He maintains truth, neither is there any variableness with Him. So He could present Himself in this scene as "Altogether that which I also say to you." And, as the sacrificial types teach us, He was searched to His very inmost being by the judgment of GOD, without there being found any fault or flaw. How the FATHER's heart delights in Him, Who, here in this dark scene, was the Truth and the Light.

The faithful and true WITNESS. Ah, Laodicea, what are you? You have riches and goods—spiritual pretensions and worldly advantage—where He had nothing. Your own self-satisfaction has taken the place of divine righteousness, for you refuse Him Who alone is righteousness before GOD. Your good works are lukewarm, indistinguishable from those of the world, leaving you naked before the eyes of Him Who called you for this very thing. And you wander uncertainly, yes, "reel to and fro like a drunken man," for how can you walk straight if you do not discern Him and the way He has marked out by His own footsteps through this scene? And this is the basis of your apparent faults, that you have given up GOD's righteousness, that you have lost the sense of your calling and are intermingled with the world, and that you are blind to Him, and therefore manifest indecision.

How else can the LORD come in, but as the FAITHFUL and TRUE WITNESS? Faithful, yes, unswerving in the pathway of devotion, whatever the enemy might seek to use to turn Him aside. Not spiritual power, not worldly advantage, not the sorrow around, nor forsaking, nor the very terrors of death, would cause His foot to deviate from that pathway by which alone His FATHER could be fully manifested and His will accomplished. Nor was there one whit of compromise, not the yielding of the least place to Satan's wiles. "To this end

was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (St. John xviii. 37).

"THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD." Everything of the old creation has gone at the cross, yes, even the very things of which Laodicea boasts. It has all passed away as under GOD'S judgment, and He comes in, in the power of resurrection life, so that only that which is bound up in the same bundle with Himself can live before GOD. From Himself alone it derives, this new creation, and Laodicea, sunk in the complacency of her own self-satisfaction, shuts Him outside the door. To that which refuses His truth in testimony, mingles willingly, undiscerningly with that which He died to put away, and shuts the door in His face, there is only one thing to say: "I am about to spue thee out of My mouth" (Rev. iii. 16).

This is His divine judgment on the testimony to-day. May we feel in our hearts this shame, that when He comes to take us to Himself, He closes Christian testimony so-called as that which, in all its departure from Himself, is utterly abhorrent to Him.

But then He Himself will take up the witness again, not in grace, but in judgment, until, in blessed faithful stewardship, "He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 24-25).

D.E.B.

THE LORD JESUS said the dead should hear His voice, and should live. But Who applies the word and gives life? The SPIRIT. Who raises the first cry in the soul, "Give me this water that I thirst not?" The HOLY SPIRIT. By what power is it that this water is a well of water whence the living stream flows to others? The HOLY SPIRIT. It is He revealing CHRIST, therein using GOD'S servants as channels of salvation. This is GOD'S joy. He says to His servants now, "*Gather the people together, and I will give them water.*"

W.K.

Aaron's Rod that Budded

(Numbers xvii.)

BY THE EDITOR

AARON, in the preceding chapter, had already stood between the living and the dead to make an atonement, and the plague was stayed. Now he is to be confirmed in his priesthood as the man whom GOD has chosen. Twelve rods are taken, one for each tribe of the people, and laid up in the silence of the sanctuary before GOD. Moses' rod, the rod of authority, is not included here, and Aaron's rod is simply the rod of the tribe of Levi.

On the morrow when the twelve rods are brought out to view it is found that a miracle in the realm of nature has been wrought, for Aaron's rod had budded, blossomed, and brought forth ripe almonds. It was a unique happening, confessedly a miracle, and is recorded in that special Old Testament book of the wanderings in the wilderness which the HOLY SPIRIT, through the Apostle Paul, tells us is both *historical and typical*.

"These things happened," this is the *historical* affirmation of the New Testament; "for our *ensample*," there the typical significance is stated.

The GOD Who could bring life, beauty and fruitfulness out of death is the *God of resurrection*. Aaron's rod that budded, blossomed and brought forth ripe almonds in the dark night of seclusion, and was afterwards laid up in the sanctuary, was *an emblem of resurrection, unique, a type of the resurrection of Christ from among the dead*. By this miraculous happening Aaron was openly designated as the man of GOD's own choice for the priesthood.

In this, and in his rod, Aaron is a type of CHRIST the true maker of a *real* atonement for the sins of the people of GOD; the Rod out of the Stem of Jesse; the Man Whose name is the Branch; the Priest and King, He Who was declared SON of GOD by *resurrection of the dead*. Once dead, now living, and laid up in the heavenly sanctuary a Priest for ever, in the power of an endless life of beauty and fruitfulness. He still, to use the figurative language of the type, buds, blossoms and brings forth ripe almonds.

Amongst the Hebrews the almond tree was known as the "hastening" tree because of its early budding when the cold of winter had scarcely passed. Its name actually has the significance of the "wakeful" tree because it waked out of its wintry sleep before others. The fruit of the almond tree was reckoned very early as among some of the choicest fruits of Canaan, and as such was included by Jacob in the present sent to the all-powerful Egyptian governor (Gen. xliii. 11).

Bearing this in our minds, we see the appropriateness of Aaron's rod bearing almonds if, as it was, a God intended type of the true Rod, the true Maker of atonement, the true Priest ever *wakeful* in His intercession in the heavenly sanctuary, and the coming King Who will *hasten* the Kingdom at the appointed time.

CHRIST in *resurrection life*, beauty and fruitfulness was "the first to rise from among the dead," "CHRIST the firstfruits" (1 Cor. xv.).

CHRIST in *resurrection life*, beauty and fruitfulness is CHRIST the Great Priest—ever wakeful to the needs of the pilgrim host travelling through the wilderness, saluted by God as Priest for ever (Heb. v.).

CHRIST in *resurrection life*, beauty and fruitfulness is the coming King—"My King on My holy hill of Zion," says God, Who will hasten the coming day when the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

Typical, too, in a secondary but very real sense, of all Christians as risen with CHRIST is Aaron's rod "that budded, blossomed and brought forth ripe almonds." For *all* true Christians are described as being—

- (1) A kind of firstfruits of God's creatures.
- (2) A kingdom of priests.
- (3) A company who shall reign in life by Him.

Further, the life, beauty and fruitfulness believers possess in our RISEN LORD are:—

- (1) Fellowship with God—a fellowship of life.
- (2) Beauty of holiness by the HOLY SPIRIT.
- (3) Fruitfulness in service to the LORD CHRIST.

Truly the Anti-type of Aaron's rod has indeed budded, blossomed and borne fruit by the night of death and resurrection from among the dead. Once cut off, dead but now alive for evermore. He lives by the power of God.

Responses to the Lord's Love

IN the gospel of John there are some beautiful and instructive examples of response to the LORD's love. The history of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus forms one such series. In chapter xi. we read (v. 5) "Now JESUS loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Chronologically that is where the history of these three, as recorded in Scripture, begins. Surely every believer in the LORD JESUS will gratefully own, with the present writer, that is where our spiritual history also began. The account implies that the brother and sisters knew they were loved by Him, although they had not yet learnt the unfathomable depths of His love. It is the privilege to-day of every believer, however short their Christian life has been so far, however limited their experience may have been, to rest confidently in the assurance of the love of JESUS. As experience of His love grows, and as we learn to link with it too His present place in glory, we are able with the apostle Paul to give an emphatic negative answer to the question whether tribulation and distress shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. viii. 35-37).

What responses did the knowledge of His love produce? First, an appeal for the LORD's *help* when Lazarus was ill. This can be applied to ourselves in many ways. In every form of trouble or difficulty we can seek His aid, not simply because we know He is all-powerful, but rather because we confide in His affection for us. He not only loves us with a love which is entirely independent of anything lovable in us (as GOD loved the world—John iii. 16), but also with the pure and perfect affection of One for His friends. How confidently we can turn to Him! Further, as a special application, Lazarus was *sick*, and there are many of the LORD's loved ones who are *sick* to-day, not only physically but also morally and

spiritually. Does our knowledge of the LORD's love produce in us the response of prayer to Him for His own who are spiritually sick through being entangled in worldly matters or led astray by evil doctrines? Would to God there was more constant prayer for one another in this way! Again, how do we think of such brothers or sisters? So often we think of them in terms of their relationship to us, perhaps as those who are less healthy spiritually, less faithful, than we are. But Martha and Mary did not say "LORD, behold, our brother, or the brother whom *we* love, is sick." Let us constantly remember that every believer in the LORD JESUS is *one whom He loves*, and cultivate speaking and thinking of each one as he (or she) whom the LORD loves. Many points of friction would be promptly cleared up, many troubles would be ended, many straying ones would be restored, if we invariably thought of our fellow-believers thus.

The LORD allowed the reality of these words of Martha and Mary to be tested, and (alas!) we find Martha (v. 21) and Mary (v. 32), when they meet the LORD no longer speak of Lazarus as "he whom Thou lovest", but as "my brother". If spiritual sickness has actually led to our brother (or sister) being separated from us, and *even if restoration seems hopeless* until the resurrection, let us still think of him and speak of him as one whom the LORD loves. The LORD proves to the sisters that His love remains, and has power, beyond death. Can we not learn the lesson that, when we have faith in Him and full confidence in His love, restoration of the spiritually sick is never impossible? None whom He loves is too far gone to be fully restored to communion with Himself and with those whom He also loves. Does the reader think that this application of the passage is too far-fetched? I believe it is not.

Having thus briefly looked at the responses to the LORD's love as regards our confidence in Him and our attitude towards one another, as exemplified in chapter xi., let us now consider the responses in chapter xii. We find here the same three individuals, each responding to the LORD's love in a different way. Since the beginning of chapter xi. they had learnt much about the depth and power of that love, and about the Person of the LORD Himself. He had told them He is the resurrection

and the life; that he that believeth in Him, though He were dead yet shall he live; and the sisters had at least heard Him say "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die", however little they may have understood this. Martha had expressed her faith in Him: "Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of GOD, which should come into the world" (John xi. 25-27). All who in these days believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST as their SAVIOUR should be fully assured of these things. We can consequently regard Lazarus and his sisters in chapter xii. as representing us who have "passed from death unto life", for we who by nature were dead in trespasses and sins have heard the voice of the SON of GOD, and "they that hear shall live" (chapter v. 24, 25).

"Martha served." This is joyful, unburdensome service, not only rendered to the LORD Himself but to Lazarus and all others who were at table with the LORD. This is a most practical response to the LORD's love going much further than what we have seen in chapter xi. Service for Him, service rendered to those who are His, which flows from appreciation of His love, is assuredly acceptable in His sight.

"Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him." What a blessed privilege to have quiet, confident communion with the LORD in this way, to be sharing in the things which occupy Him! The writer of the gospel recorded this by the SPIRIT of GOD, but he was able also to enter into what sitting at table with the LORD really meant, for, at the last Passover before the Cross, he himself was "leaning on JESUS' bosom" at the table (chapter xiii. 23). Such communion can only be enjoyed in its fulness by one who has learnt, not only doctrinally but in experience, what death and resurrection really are, so Lazarus is described here (xii. 1) as he "which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead." You and I, who believe in the LORD JESUS as our SAVIOUR, have been identified with Him in His death and in His resurrection (baptism being a figure of this to the believer—see Rom. vi. 3, 4). If we "reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD" (Rom. vi. 11) we shall enter into this happy, quiet communion with the LORD in our own experience.

"Mary . . . anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair." Here is spontaneous, whole-hearted, affectionate appreciation of His perfect walk through the cities and villages and lanes of Judaea and Galilee; and recognition too of something of the weariness and toil of His pathway; the worship of a humble, devoted, SPIRIT-led heart, anticipating the LORD's death (v. 7). The savour of this act filled the house. The LORD Himself, and all present with Him, shared the fragrance of the ointment, which we have no doubt rejoiced the heart of the FATHER, too.

The SPIRIT of GOD has recorded all three responses—*service, communion, and worship*. They were exemplified in separate individuals—Martha, Lazarus, Mary—but there are plenty of passages in the epistles making it clear that all three should be true of every believer. The more deeply we appreciate the LORD's love for us the more we shall respond in this three-fold way. No doubt in each one of us one of the three (service, communion, worship) will predominate, but the other two will also be true. Worship is the highest form of response and consequently is specially opposed by Satan through his agents (see the objection raised by Judas Iscariot). If therefore there is a tendency in you or me towards activity in service, or towards meditation and communion, let us beware of neglecting the worship of the LORD in the assembly of His own. But there is no suggestion in the passage of any envying or faultfinding between the one who serves, the one who sits at table and the one who anoints His feet, nor could there be where each is the response from the heart to His love. *Let us beware of finding fault with one another in such matters.*

There is still a further point. "Much people . . . came . . . that they might see Lazarus . . . whom He had raised from the dead." At first sight this seems a very passive matter, but we can apply it to ourselves in the sense of Rom. vi. 13, "Yield yourselves unto GOD, as those that are alive from the dead." Having seen Lazarus, many of the Jews went away and believed in JESUS (v. 11). Oh that our walks might be such a testimony as to have this result! *We should walk in newness of life.* The HOLY SPIRIT led the apostle Paul to write to the Corinthians: "The love of CHRIST constraineth us because we

thus judge . . . that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). We should then be a testimony to the world around of the love and power of the LORD JESUS, and this would be a response—a very practical one—to His love.

We may be sure that the LORD looks for, and appreciates, response from us to His love for us in the various ways illustrated by Martha, Mary and Lazarus which, as we have seen, affect our *circumstances*, our *attitude towards fellow-believers*, our *service*, our *communion*, our *worship*, and our *walk*. May the LORD use our meditation on John xi.-xii. 11, to stimulate our responses to His love!

J. C. KELL.

A Song of the Shepherds

"He keepeth the sheep . . . send and fetch him . . . And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him : for this is he."

1 Sam. xvi. 11, 12.

When God sought a king for His people of old,

He went to the fields to find him:

A shepherd boy he, with his crook and his lute

And a following flock behind him.

O love of the sheep, O joy of the lute,

And the sling and the stone for the battle.

The shepherd was king, the giant was naught,

And the enemy driven like cattle!

"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

St. Luke ii. 8-11.

When God looked to tell His good news to man,

And the shepherd's SON Whom He gave them;

To the shepherds made meek and caring for sheep

He told of the CHRIST sent to save them!

O love of the sheep, O watch of that night,

And the glory, the message, the choir;

'Twas shepherds who saw their King in the straw

And returned with their hearts all on fire.

"I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep . . . I lay down My life for the sheep."
St. John x. 11-15.

When CHRIST thought to tell of His love to the world,
He said to the throng before Him—
"The GOOD SHEPHERD giveth His life for the sheep,"
And away to the Cross they bore Him.
O love of the sheep, O blood sweat of the MAN
On the Cross then by GOD—forsaken!
A SHEPHERD has gone to defend all alone
The sheepfold by death overtaken.

"The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep." Heb. xiii. 20.

When GOD sought a King for His people for aye,
He went to the grave to find Him.
And a SHEPHERD came back death dead in His grasp
And a following flock behind Him.
O love of the sheep, O life from the dead
O Strength of the faint and the fearing!
A SHEPHERD is King, and His Kingdom will come.
For the day of His Coming is nearing!

Comparisons and Contrasts

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus. Hebrews iii. 1.

THE epistle to the Hebrews abounds in comparisons and contrasts, and glorious indeed they are. "WHEREFORE" with which the writer opens both exhortations and appeals in this inspired letter refers the reader back to the glories of the Person of CHRIST as set out in the opening words of the first chapter. His Person, work and present position are there clearly displayed in transcendent glory.

His *Person* is shown as excelling all others; His *work* as accomplishing what none other could do, for no prophet, no priest, no sacrifice could purge away sin and secure eternal

redemption; and His *present position* as witnessing to there remaining no more sacrifice for sin for ever.

A people thus redeemed by Him, knowing both His glorious Person and finished work, the writer addresses as "holy brethren" and as "partakers of the heavenly calling", and this in contrast with all they had known as God's earthly people. Precious promises had been made to Israel as a nation, "blessing in the basket and the store, fruitfulness and joy in their posterity" (Deut. xii.) if they would obey the law given them by the hand of Moses. They would be a holy nation, a people for His own possession, a special people, obedience being their special mark. But failure and neglect of their unappreciated privileges had marked them from the very beginning until the inevitable judgment followed. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities" (Amos iii. 2), was the sentence, since privilege brings responsibility. They had said, "It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinances?" When reminded of His love, "I have loved you saith the LORD" (Mal. i. 2), their callous enquiry was, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?"

But now, in this epistle, the writer is addressing some from that nation who, confessing their sins, had turned to the God of their fathers. They had bowed to God in the acceptance of CHRIST and are "holy brethren". "sanctified by the offering of the Body of JESUS CHRIST."

Wonderful as it is, we sinners of the Gentiles, who were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, may take to ourselves the same title as these Christian Hebrews to whom this letter was addressed. For God in His great mercy to all has found a way of bringing Jew and Gentile to Himself united in one body. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He has saved us." It was to Gentile believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST that the Apostle Paul by the SPIRIT, declared, "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. i. 4).

Therefore, we also with the Hebrews may take the exhortation and appeal as holy brethren and partakers of the heavenly

calling. By contrast with the earthly hopes of Israel based upon the promises made to the fathers, all of which will be realized one day by a repentant and restored nation, these Hebrew Christians and ourselves are called with a heavenly calling; and as such are now strangers and pilgrims.

It is in view of this, and of our need to continue in this pilgrim condition, that the writer makes the first great appeal and exhortation to the readers, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession." To continue; to hold fast our confession without wavering; to follow holiness without which no man shall see the LORD; to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called; is it possible for all this to be accomplished?

We may have noticed the absence of any apostolic name or claim of authority in the opening of this epistle. This is due in one respect to the purpose of first presenting the personal glory of the SON of GOD, and also of setting Him out clearly as *the* Apostle, *the* SENT ONE of GOD, the declarer of the incomparable love of GOD, and the Author and Completer of the whole life of faith.

So we are called to consider Him as the SENT ONE of the FATHER in all vicissitudes of His pathway through this world; the example He has left us that we may follow His steps; His patience with sinners and disciples; and as our strength and stay all along our pilgrim way.

Consider Him too as the High Priest of our confession; as ever living to make intercession for us; as full of compassion and ability to succour. What a blessed contrast He, as our Great High Priest, presents to the Jewish priests compassed with infirmity and needing sacrifices for themselves, and unable to continue in the priestly office by reason of death. He *liveth*, and is "JESUS CHRIST the SAME yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Consider Him as the Leader of His company, the Forerunner Who has entered into heaven itself for us.

"Consider Him" is the exhortation "lest ye faint and be weary", not only as the pattern and example of endurance but as the One "able to succour evermore all that come unto GOD by Him" with all the mercy and grace so sorely needed by us

as strangers and pilgrims here on earth. So the letter closes with the prayer, "The God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through JESUS CHRIST; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

C. Moss.

Prominent—Picturesque—Powerful

BY QUARTUS

IN one pretty Sussex village the most picturesque and prominent object is the most useless thing in the district. Towering above the village on the top of the hill stands a windmill, one of the proper old-fashioned style, pictures of which adorned the story-books of our youth. To the traveller, whether by road or rail, these outstanding objects on the landscape, with their great arms or wings spread to catch the breeze and set in motion the mills beneath them, always suggest the charm of the countryside. He does not dream of complaining of either their prominence or picturesqueness, for are they not the outward and visible signs of inward energy and usefulness?

The windmill in this particular village is simply a relic of bygone days, and a reminder of what has been done in the place when corn was ground, millers, carters and bakers being kept busy. To-day the arms of the windmill are nailed to the sides of it, and while from a distance it looks as picturesque, and is as prominent as ever, its working value is nil. *It stands upon the old ground but is quite useless.* No corn is ground, no flour is milled, no bread is baked, no hungry families supplied from it. Like one with a name to live but in reality for all useful purposes dead, and existing as a relic and reminder of what was once done in the place. Prominent still, picturesque and admired in the eyes of some, but powerless spiritually and for all practical purposes of feeding and blessing others useless.

These were the thoughts stirred by the sight and inspection of the useless windmill in a pretty village.

Eloquence, personality, literary ability and geniality may lead to prominence and picturesqueness in the sight of man, but "the LORD looketh upon the heart," "by Him actions are weighed," and the words of the royal penitent in Psalm li. are still true, "Behold, Thou desirest *truth in the inward parts.*"

Sparkling Gems

Prayer is the ship which bringeth home the richest freight. It is the soil which yields the most abundant harvest.

* * *

We have reasons for almost everything, but we have no reasons for pride. Pride is a thing which should be unnatural to us, for we have nothing to be proud of.

* * *

Pride is too tall to walk upright. It is most likely to tumble down, because it is always looking upwards in its ambition and never looks to its feet. There only needs to be a pitfall in the way, or even a stone, and down it goes.

* * *

There is nothing more eloquently condemned in Scripture than pride; and yet there is no trap into which we poor silly birds so easily flee, no pitfall into which, like foolish beasts of the earth, we so continually run.

* * *

Every man who comes to CHRIST will find that CHRIST is able to save him to the uttermost extent of his sin, unto the uttermost length of his trials, the uttermost depth of his sorrows, unto the uttermost duration of his existence.

* * *

There is no way of salvation apart from the satisfaction of Divine justice. Either the sinner must die, or else someone must die for him. God has a debt against us and He never remits that debt; He will have it paid. CHRIST pays it and then the sinner goes free.

* * *

A view of CHRIST on Calvary is always beneficial to a Christian.

(Selected by C. A. Hammond.)

Caleb

(*My servant who hath followed Me fully*)

By THE EDITOR

IN days and circumstances most definitely calling for the exercise of real faith in God, Caleb is marked out as a man "who wholly followed the LORD," this being recorded of him no fewer than six times in Scripture. His name, however, does not appear in the list of heroes of faith given in Hebrews xi. But it is significant that God Himself takes special note of Caleb in spite of his New Testament obscurity, and speaks of him as "My servant Caleb . . . had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully" (Num. xiv. 24).

When the names of those whose rebellion excluded them from Canaan occur in the story those of Caleb and Joshua are excepted "because they have wholly followed the LORD." Further, while Joshua is seen occupying a foremost position among the many thousands of Israel Caleb apparently lives in obscurity all his long life, only marked out by the characteristic reference "he hath wholly followed the LORD" attached to each mention made of him in the wilderness journey. This may be encouraging today to the obscure believers, of whom the bulk of the LORD's people obviously consist, in that obscurity is no hindrance to their wholly following the LORD, if that is their purpose of heart.

As Bunyan's shepherd's boy truly says in the *Pilgrim's Progress*,

"He that is down needs fear no fall ;

He that is low no pride ;

He that is humble, ever shall

Have God to be his guide."

This Caleb discovered by experience as he wholly followed the LORD in those trying days of his journey to Canaan, and St. Paul also reminds us, that "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that *we* through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4.)

At the end of his pilgrimage when having entered the land of Canaan, Joshua his old and faithful companion

blesses Caleb as he allots to him the appointed grant, officially stating it to be "because he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel" (Joshua xiv.).

In Caleb the *vision* of faith, the *patience* of faith and the *courage* of faith are equally thrown out in bold relief against the apparently overwhelming difficulties, delays caused by the failure of fellow pilgrims, and his action displayed in choosing the mountain fastness of the sons of Anak to conquer in his old age. Little wonder it is recorded "And he expelled thence the three sons of Anak" (Judges i. 20).

In the pen portrait (Num. xiii., xiv.; Josh. xiv.; Judges i.) of Caleb he is shown to be a man of real confidence in God; of deep consistency in following the LORD, both in mid-life and in extreme age. What was the secret of it all? Questions which may well be asked and profitably considered in this connection are: When and how did it become manifest? When and how was it put to the real *test*? When and how was it *vindicated*? Last, but not least in importance, Why is it placed on record?

1. *When and how did this following of the LORD by Caleb commence?* He does not appear to have been a Hebrew by birth, the "of" the tribe of Judah in Numbers xiii. 6, being more accurately translated "for" (by Dr. Young, J. N. Darby and other scholars). But somewhen he had evidently cast in his lot with the people of God on their journey to Canaan, and had surpassed them all, with a few exceptions, in his faith in the purpose and ability of God to bring them into the land. He appears in the story as Caleb the son of Jephunneh a Kenite. Now Moses' father-in-law, Jethro the priest of Midian was also a Kenite (Judges i. 16) and here seems the probable starting point of Caleb's connection with the host of Israel. "Moses said unto Hobab the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, (therefore his brother-in-law) 'We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.'" "We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel."

This pressing invitation Moses' brother-in-law declined saying: "I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred."

Hobab we are told was a Kenite, and Caleb is constantly referred to as belonging to this tribe, and though we are not told whether it was here that Caleb joined the pilgrim host yet the connection most possibly was made then when his father declined to accept the pressing invitation of their now distinguished relative by marriage. The faith of Caleb would in this case closely partake of the same character as that of Moses, with some of whose history the family would not fail to have been acquainted during his forty years sojourn in Midian.

2. *When and how was this wholly following of the LORD openly shown?* On the occasion of the dozen men being sent to survey the land of Canaan, Caleb then being forty-five years old, is the answer. They were ordered to report and a majority report, called here an evil report, left God out and discouraged the company. Caleb and Joshua then presented the minority report which brought God in saying, "It is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us" (Num. xiv., 7 8). It was here that his faith's vision was clearly and publicly shown. The majority report was one presented by faithless and unbelieving men, while this minority report of Joshua and Caleb was that of men of faith who believed that God was both able and willing to keep His promises concerning the land of Canaan.

3. *When and how was this wholly following of the LORD tested?* As all believing pilgrims well know, not only is the vision of faith essential to the journey but the *patience* of faith is also being constantly called into exercise. Abraham, the father of the faithful, had his faith deeply exercised again and again, and also the Author and Completer of the whole life of faith Who Himself stayed the whole course, enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself, being troubled, tempted and tried in every way. The Apostle Peter exhorts all tried saints to recognise that the trial of their faith is precious; and St. Paul speaks of God as being "the God of *patience* and encouragement" to the Roman believers. Caleb's faith was sorely tested and became not only a vision but the patience of a faith deeply exercised as years rolled on

by the delays caused by failure of others as old and older than himself. "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger," was an expression of the *patience* of Job in his days of adversity. So it fell out in the life of Caleb as "he wholly followed the LORD," and he is therefore most surely rightly numbered among "them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. vi. 12).

4. *When and how was vindicated this vision and patience of faith in the case of Caleb?* Most surely in the *courage* of faith displayed in the day of opportunity. Hear his noble reply to his old and faithful friend of the minority report, Joshua. "Lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; . . . if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able . . . as the LORD said." This is the language of one who held on his way and waxed stronger and stronger; and the courage of faith shines out clearly as the mountain stronghold of the sons of Anak is craved by Caleb for his portion. "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing" (*vigorous in old age*, J.N.D.) sang a Psalmist, and the man who "wholly followed the LORD" fully exemplified this in his course.

5. *Why is all this placed on record?* Surely to stir us up that we "be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises"; and of the father of the faithful of whom it is written: "and so, after he had *patiently endured*, he obtained the promise" (Heb. vi. 12, 15).

If we, like Caleb, wholly follow the LORD, He will take note of it. Of Caleb the first record is that spoken by God Himself, "My servant Caleb hath fully followed Me." Others too will observe it. Moses, too, says of Caleb, "Thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God," and Joshua, in blessing Caleb forty years later, again mentions "he wholly followed the LORD GOD of Israel." God *notes* it, others *mark* it and are encouraged by the good example shown to fellow pilgrims

bound for the good land. "If the LORD delight in us then He will bring us in" said Caleb, and the long life of consistent following was governed by the confidence that He did.

Does the LORD delight in us, His people? Caleb might say His actions have proved it, do still prove it, and will continue to do so, for He changes not. The Christian believer is fortified by the LORD's own assurance, "The FATHER Himself loveth you because ye have loved Me"; "the SON of GOD loved me and gave Himself for me"; and the HOLY SPIRIT Who quickens, seals and enables us is the One of Whom the Apostle writes as to "the love of the SPIRIT." And so still,

"Through the night of doubt and sorrow
Onward goes the pilgrim band;
Singing songs of expectation,
Marching to the promised land."

The Israel of God

(*Galatians vi. 16*)

THIS expression "*the Israel of God*", is unique and significant, and surely sounds a warning note for such as should recognise the *distinction* between the *Church* and the *nation of Israel*. The inspired writer of the epistle has been showing what a difference the Cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST has made in the outlook of fundamental faith, and he concludes by pronouncing the blessing of peace upon "*as many as walk according to this rule*," (that is, the rule of the new life manifested in the new creation, wherein neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avail). "and also upon the Israel of God."

In Acts xv. 11, the apostle Peter says, "But we believe that through the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST we (believing Jews) shall be saved, even as they (believing Gentiles). What a confession this was for a staunchly exclusive personage such as Peter. The grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST had made a radical change in his outlook, though later on he had to be publicly rebuked by Paul for going back on this very thing.

In Galatians ii. 18, we read: "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor" and this comes in after Paul had given an account to the Galatians of what had transpired between him and Peter on the very question of Judaising the believing Gentiles.

It is obvious that God bore with the stiff-necked and rebellious nation till after His apostles had passed away, and until by its own rebellious attitude and action against Him, it brought upon itself the complete fulfilment of present prophecy against it. The apostles themselves clung to their national pride as long as God's forbearance lasted, and the Christian Jews remained Jews in principle to the end of their New Testament history even to being zealous of the Law.

The epistle of James, the first epistle to Christians, is addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, which surely implies the Christian Jews of the dispersion. It is with such that the Church began. They still had their synagogues, (James ii. 2 has synagogues in the original) and their gatherings had a measure of Jewish character. There is no trace of the distinctive doctrines of grace expounded by Paul, nor even of the discussion concerning the relation of Gentile converts to the law of Moses, which ended in the council over which James himself presided (Acts xv.). Paul's epistles either to the Galatians or to the Romans were not written when James wrote.

James' theme is the outward religious service that ought to characterise the *nation* in a converted state, as the outward expression and proof of faith, and it was only failure to continue in the things that had been learned that prevented such from taking the lead as a *believing nation*.

Peter's first epistle is also addressed to those of the dispersion, but it is written on a broader basis, comprehending Gentile believers also. (ii. 10), and is written from an assembly on Gentile ground (v. 13). Its general tone is preparation for a pathway of suffering, over which victory is obtainable by faith.

Peter's second epistle, and Paul's second epistle to Timothy, contain much in common. Both writers are aware of approaching martyrdom, and they both deal with the origin

and consummation of the apostacy in which the professing Church's history ends. But there is no suggestion of dejection or pessimism in either of them. The true believer relies on GOD and His promises in all circumstances; and the wisdom as well as the long-suffering mercy of GOD is plainly manifest in the way in which He has allowed things to develop for the learning of those who have come after all these things. The Way, the Truth and the Life, of which the LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself is the embodiment, are made plain so that "he who reads may run" in the confidence of faith.

What an unholy mess traditional interpretation has made of that which simple faith accepts without question. A noted Christian minister wrote recently in a well-known and widely circulated paper, that the Church *began with Abraham*, and when asked by one of his readers if he was not actually contradicting the LORD's own words about the future building of His Church, and furthermore denying that Pentecost was the Church's birthday, he replied that to him the Church and the Israel of GOD meant the same thing. Does not this unfortunately express the attitude of a large proportion of Christendom? The Jewish nation is taken for granted as being permanently set aside, and Christianity, so-called, as having taken its place and become the heir to all the promises made to that nation, though it is written:—"The gifts and calling of GOD are without repentance." The professing Church has become "earth-dwelling" in its aspect, and intends to try to make the earth a pleasant place to settle down in, and to prepare it for the establishment of GOD's earthly kingdom: the heavenly side of His purpose having no part in its dreams. To such of course the Coming of the LORD means only *one* thing: hence resurrection, judgment, the recognition of the kingdom and the eternal state, become all muddled up into one confused happening!

G. S. PURNELL.

Many appear to fail to grasp our LORD's teaching in His exposition of the seven parables in Matthew xiii. There He clearly distinguishes between the kingdom of the SON of MAN (verse 41) and the kingdom of their FATHER (verse 43): two regions of the same kingdom, earthly and heavenly respectively.—ED.

Responses to the Lord's Love—2

(continued from page 43)

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

FIVE times the writer of the fourth gospel describes himself as "*the disciple whom Jesus loved,*" and in each instance there are associated circumstances, with practical lessons for us. In so describing himself we do not conclude that the LORD JESUS loved him more than He loved the rest of His disciples. In fact John records that "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" before he uses the expression about himself in this intimate personal way. (John xiii. 1. 23). It seems to the present writer that John's beautiful personal phrase grew out of what he had learnt from verses 1-22 of this chapter, and in particular from verses 1-17.

"*He loved His own.*" They were His by His choice and call; His, too, prospectively by the price He was about to pay for their redemption; His as the gift to Him by the Father (see John xvii. 24): His for all eternity. They "were in the world," with all its opposition to GOD and rejection of the LORD, the world which was corrupt and full of defilement. In themselves, the disciples were weak and failing, lacking in intelligence and unfaithful. One would betray Him, another would deny Him, all would forsake Him. Yet He "*loved them unto the end.*" What does this expression mean? His love for them did not end with His death, nor with their deaths in due course. It merely continues unchanged until the fulfilment of His prayer "FATHER, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John xvii. 24). and His love will endure for eternity.

All these things are true today of all who believe in Him as their *Saviour* for *we too are His own*, still in the world, and we are included in His prayer for we are among those who have believed in Him through the word of the apostles. How blessed to be so loved! But if all the LORD'S OWN were the objects of His love, why did John speak of *himself* as "the

disciple whom JESUS loved"? We need not occupy our thoughts with the negative side of the answer, which may perhaps have been that the others did not appreciate the love of JESUS but thought more of their attachment to Him, but of this we may be sure, namely, that John delighted in the knowledge that JESUS loved *him*. There is much to be said for teaching little children the simple hymns "*Jesus loves me, this I know*" and "*I am so glad that Jesus loves me.*" It is sad that as we get older, more sophisticated, more occupied with doctrines, we tend to lose the simple joy of this sublime assurance; not that we doubt His love, but that we allow the joy of it in our souls to be obscured by other things.

That we may appreciate His love for us more deeply, let us consider four points brought out in verses 1-13 of John xiii, which precede the first occasion on which John's phrase occurs. We must first know we are "His own." This has already been referred to. Then (verse 10) we are "*clean every whit.*" Have we that assurance? This same apostle many years later wrote "the blood of JESUS CHRIST His SON, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7). The sacrifice offered by the LORD JESUS is so completely efficacious that every one who believes in Him is completely cleansed in the sight of God from every sin. This is our standing before God, what the LORD has done for each of His own whom He has loved. The LORD used a simile in this verse (verse 10) which would be easily understood by his disciples. He said "He that is washed"—that is "bathed," a different word in the Greek from the word used in verses 5, 6, 8 and later in verse 10—"is clean every whit." Having had a bath, and walking through the (unsanitary) street, they would need the washing of their feet on entering a house (compare Luke vii. 44). So the believer in the LORD JESUS, though "clean every whit" through the perfect work of CHRIST, contracts defilement while engaged in the affairs of this life, because we are "in the world," and needs the application of the word of GOD to the conscience to wash away the defilement that enters through eyes and ears and in other ways. This is a service we ought to render to one another in all humility, remembering that, unlike the LORD, *we need our own feet to be washed* by another, perhaps

by the very one whose feet we feel we should wash, and it may well be that he should wash ours first. The fourth point in these verses is "*Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am*" (verse 13). The authority of the LORD JESUS over us, and the subjection and loyalty due from us in consequence, are often in danger of being overlooked by us in the enjoyment of our knowledge of Him as our ever-loving SAVIOUR. The grace that He, their LORD and MASTER, showed on this occasion in carrying out the service of a menial slave, was still another proof of the love with which He loved His own.

The apostle surely had these points before him when he described himself for the first time as "the disciple whom JESUS loved" (verse 23). Yet the cost to the LORD of the work on the Cross which would be the basis of it all was not then known to John, as it is now known to us. If we appropriate all these things now to ourselves in the light of the full revelation of the Person and work of the LORD JESUS we find ourselves conscious, each for himself or herself, that "*I am a disciple whom Jesus loves.*" May the LORD indeed grant that our hearts enter into this more deeply! On the other hand, if we fail to appreciate and appropriate the four points mentioned we shall also fail to think of ourselves with full enjoyment as disciples whom JESUS loves—though it will still be true, for "He loves His own."

On this occasion when John speaks of himself as "the disciple whom JESUS loved" we find he is as close as possible to JESUS, "leaning on His bosom," and so deeply assured of His love that he can ask the LORD the question which none of the other disciples dared to put (verses 23-25). Here is response to the LORD's love to which the LORD immediately answers. *Communion with the Lord* accompanies the intimate consciousness of nearness to Him which the personal knowledge of His love produces in the heart. The more our hearts realize His love for us the nearer we shall draw to Him. This will be evident in our daily walk and ways, our testimony in the world, our service to the LORD's people, but the point before us is that nearness to Him in response to His love will give us the privilege and joy of learning His mind. Is this

communion with Him the privilege of a limited few? Surely not. It is open to every one of "His own" but the enjoyment of it varies with our appreciation of His love for us. It is not a matter dependent on our knowledge of doctrine or "church truth" (all very important in their place)—but of knowing that He loves us.

On the second occasion (chap. xix. 26) we find that John's response to the LORD's love takes the form of association with the LORD at the very climax of His rejection and humiliation. John was standing by the Cross on which the LORD was crucified (as a malefactor in the sight of the Jews and Romans around), and was being mocked and taunted, as we know from other gospels. Here is a remarkable response to the LORD's love. Why is it that we often flinch from testifying that we are disciples of the LORD JESUS? It is easy to be a disciple among our brethren, or on Sunday when many "respectable" people go to "places of worship", but it is a test of our sense in our inmost souls of the LORD's love for us whether we are openly His disciples when surrounded by those who make light of Him or take His Name in vain. If we desire to have greater boldness as witnesses for Him in this world where He is still rejected, let us keep constantly before our souls the fact that "I am a disciple whom JESUS loves." The LORD valued John's faithfulness and rewarded it by entrusting to him one who was very dear indeed to His heart, His own Mother. It seems to me that in this incident we have three things making a sequence, viz., the personal sense of the LORD's love for me, faithfulness to Him in His rejection, and a trust from the LORD. Sometimes we feel that the LORD is not entrusting us with any work for Him. We would like to be of more service to His people, or to help the lambs of the flock, but He does not seem to give us the opportunity or the ability. Let us work backwards. "Am I losing sight of His love for me?" or "Am I being unfaithful to Him in my contacts with the unconverted?" The LORD keep us very sensitive in these things! Response to His love here takes the character of faithfulness to Him in His rejection, and the LORD rewards it by a special personal trust.

The next instance where John uses the expression is in chap. xx 2. The disciple whom JESUS loved is found in association with Simon Peter. Here John describes himself also as "the other disciple", which links this incident with chap. xviii. 15-17. Peter had denied the LORD and John was aware of it. Peter must have been sick at heart, but John evidently regarded him as one whom the LORD loved (see a previous article on chap. xi.). John did not boycott Peter or refuse to be seen in his company. He knew the LORD loved Peter as one of His own, and that Peter loved the LORD. In due time the LORD Himself would take action for the complete restoration of Peter, but both here and at the beginning of chap. xxi. John is with Peter. John's assurance that he himself was "the disciple whom JESUS loved" led him to show *grace and affection towards one who had failed* shamefully in faithfulness. Here is another practical example of response to the Lord's love. Let us not miss the practical lesson by importing from another gospel the fact that Peter had already wept bitterly, which is not recorded in the gospel of John. The beloved disciple's attitude towards Peter did not spring from these tears but from the points referred to above as detailed in this gospel. Here again we find a reward (as it were) attached. He and Peter jointly find the tomb empty, though not yet understanding the full implications. They went home believing that the Lord had been taken away out of the sepulchre -- yet, when they later learnt the reality of His resurrection, they had the details of what they had seen in the tomb to meditate on (compare verses 2, 8, 9, 18).

(To be continued)

J. C. KELL.

Mr. W. J. HOCKING, for many years Editor of the *BIBLE MONTHLY*, passed quietly into the presence of the LORD on April 10th. His sterling qualities were largely hidden by a self-effacing manner. He was a man of God in the Scriptural sense of the term, namely, one who stands for God in an evil day; a gifted teacher too, whose life adorned the doctrine; so unworldly-minded that when deserved honours were conferred upon him, few were aware of them until his obituary notices appeared.

Fuller notice (D.V.) by the Editor in next issue of *Letters of Interest*.

Tola the Judge

(Judges x. 1, 2, 16)

BY THE EDITOR

TOLA, the Judge, lived and died in obscurity so far as records go, but his name is preserved in the Scripture as that of a man who for twenty-three years of his life served God and His people. His lot was cast in rough, rude, warlike days, very troublesome times indeed, when the lamp of faith flickered or burned but dimly. "There was no king in Israel, and every man did what seemed right in his own eyes." The *Book of Judges*, in which the story of Tola occurs, is a series of historical happenings not recorded chronologically, affording glimpses here and there of real faith in God, but on the whole giving a sad picture of spiritual declension. Lawlessness and idolatry were rampant.

Before the book closes, even the grandson of Moses the law-giver appears on the page as an established idolatrous priest serving the well-nigh apostate tribe of Dan. How bad a man can be when doing what is right in his own eyes, and how patient and longsuffering God is even with such rebellious creatures is the theme. Hence the disorder, discontent and distress prevailing, which is called "the misery of Israel".

A remarkable expression occurs in the tenth chapter where we read: "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel," the reference here being to God Himself. "His soul," the soul of God, implying an intensity of deep feeling; "was grieved," a real concern springing from love and interest (we do not grieve over those in whom we have no interest); "the misery of Israel," the wretchedness and misery caused by alienation from Him. Well may one of our English poets sing:

"The love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the ETERNAL
Is most wonderfully kind."

"His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." What a God this reveals! Anger, exasperation, wrath and severity may be justly aroused by cruelty, idolatry and rebellion; but

concern, compassion and grief spring from love and interest. "His soul *grieved* for the misery of Israel," and as David centuries later exclaimed in a moment of inspired wonderment: "And is this the manner of man, O LORD GOD?"

It was this care, too, for Israel, this grief on account of their wretchedness and misery which made Tola *arise* to defend Israel. "There *arose* to defend Israel" conveys a slightly different impression from the customary "the LORD raised up So-and-so." It rather reveals a man feeling the sorrow, shame and sin of the times, grieving over the dishonour to the GOD he loved and served, and one who is in the line of GOD's own feeling about the misery of Israel.

But what can Tola with his handicaps do? Tola, we learn, sprang from a very unlikely quarter from which to expect a deliverer of Israel. He was a man of Issachar, a tribe characterised by lack of enterprise, love of ease and indolence, as Genesis xlix. reveals. He was saddled with a pessimistic name, given possibly on account of some physical infirmity, signifying a worm. Yet Tola served GOD and His people for nearly a quarter of a century. This is all we are told of him, but not all we may learn from his brief story.

Tola's life and service illustrate a principle of GOD's method still in using men in His service, as St. Paul teaches in 1 Cor. i. 27-29. "GOD hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and GOD hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath GOD chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence."

Tola, as we have remarked, appears as a man feeling, in his measure, the sorrow, shame and sin of the people of GOD, grieving over the dishonour to the GOD he loved, one who was in the line of GOD's own feelings when "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." Are there any such to-day as they ponder the condition in which the people of GOD are found? But what can I, Tola, a worm, do in such circumstances is not the question, rather. What can GOD do through me?

Once to instruct a wilful but successful prophet we read, "GOD prepared a *worm*" for His purpose, and Tola, the worm,

being ready to defend Israel, GOD uses and sustains in His service for three and twenty years—indeed until he died. GOD *can* use any, and He *does* use every suitable instrument, however lowly and apparently handicapped.

Everything depended upon being in the current of GOD's mind, in the line of His purpose for Tola in his day, and also for ourselves in our day. Then, as the Apostle Paul so exultantly said, "I can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth me"; for when I am weak, then am I strong, since He has said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

The story of this obscure but useful servant of GOD is one of those things "written aforetime that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope." However unfavourable the circumstances and obscure the position, it still remains to be seen what GOD can do even in these days through one fully yielded to Him, and sharing His interests in the welfare of His people.

Should Not Our Hearts Rejoice

HOW often on life's journey we resemble the two disciples on the road to Emmaus—we "Walk and are sad". The manner of our communications one with another are such that we are burdened, filled with sorrow and disappointment; as though the One who "Hath done all things well", had not done so well after all.

There are occasions, no doubt, when we should mourn and afflict our souls because of our own careless ways or on account of the failures of our brethren, seeking GOD's face and blessing for ourselves or for them. In Eccles. iii. we are told there is a time for every purpose—"A time to weep and a time to laugh". The 126th Psalm speaks of a time to laugh—the weeping time generally precedes the joy, as the fifth verse shows. We read, "When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing."

Has not the LORD turned our captivity? And should not our communication one with another be of such a nature that

our mouths are filled with laughter and our tongues with singing, in a spiritual sense?

The difficulty really is too often we are "Slow of heart to believe." We are in much the same position and attitude of heart as the disciples of old; conscious of the power of evil around us, we know the CHRIST of GOD, our only hope is hated and rejected and there we stop. As we commune one with another it is too often concerning the evil which surrounds us and casts a shadow over our souls; our communications deepen the shadow until it becomes truly oppressive instead of being dispersed.

I have said, "there we stop," and so it is; one would think that like the two on the Emmaus road we had never looked into the empty tomb, had not yet heard that blessed voice, "Peace be unto you." Or those soul-thrilling tones of gracious reproach, "Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless but believing."

There is a measure of excuse if the gloom of sorrow and unbelief had settled upon the hearts of those two as they trudged toward Emmaus, but there is none for us. Our place in God's programme is a different one. They were still in the shadows of Calvary; the lying accusations, the contradictions, the brutalities and blasphemies which had characterised their MASTER'S trial and crucifixion had affected them, and the force of evil as a heavy pall was not yet lifted from their hearts by those soul-entrancing words, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth!" The confirmation of His resurrection triumph had not reached them, and the sunbeams of glory radiating from the Victor's brow had not yet dispersed the gloom!

But though we still walk in the same valley where the shadow of Calvary may, indeed should reach our souls, yet for us the LORD'S resurrection has been fully authenticated and the sun has risen upon the mount of glory, flooding with its radiancy our pathway through this vale of tears! The full significance of His triumph as far as it concerns our eternal redemption has been recorded for us upon the pages of holy writ and preached from the house-tops in the power of the

HOLY SPIRIT by those who have tasted and experienced the blessedness of that triumph, so that we are without excuse.

But, "Fools, slow of heart to believe" is applicable to us as to those who walked beside our Divine SAVIOUR on the road to Emmaus. We too need His reviving communications that our hearts might indeed "burn within us". Then surely we will be moved to say, "Abide with us."

Blessed LORD and MASTER indeed abide with us lest the shadows of evil and the gloom of unbelief return to weigh down and oppress these feeble, failing hearts. What but Thy blessed voice can disperse the clouds and mists that linger in the valley we are treading?

O LORD, deign to walk beside us on life's road, keep us near Thyself, let Thy communications be frequent that our hearts may often "burn within us". LORD JESUS, by Thy SPIRIT open unto our minds and hearts the blessed Scriptures that we may enter in some feeble way into Thy sufferings, and that it may be borne in upon us that Thou hast truly entered into Thy glory. Thus will our spirits be sanctified and lifted out of this sphere where the fogs of unbelief and the shadows of sorrow so often dim or blot out Thy glorious light; lifted up into that heavenly sphere where Thou art.

E. O. HEWLETT.

Responses to the Lord's Love—3

(continued from page 60)

The last chapter of the gospel brings before us at least three other incidents illustrating John's response to the LORD's love. We find him in company with six other disciples, including Peter. A sense of the LORD's love to me, and that He loves His own which are in the world, will lead me to seek *the companionship of His own*. And not only so, but as a disciple whom JESUS loves, I shall be *quick to recognise Him* in His actions and to own Him LORD. It was the disciple who was primarily occupied with the fact that JESUS loved him who was quick to say "It is the LORD" (verse 7). Later in the chapter we find the disciple whom JESUS loved *following the risen Lord*. He had learnt, in blessed nearness to the LORD.

the secrets of His heart (as it were); he had followed Him in His rejection into the palace of the high priest; he had stood by the Cross; he had seen the empty tomb, and the Risen LORD; he is following Him still. In what way does the LORD show His appreciation of such response to His love? He speaks to Peter of him in such a way as to bring before John's heart the hope of His coming again in John's lifetime, "if I will that he tarry till I come." The more deeply we lay hold of the love of the LORD for us the more vivid will be the expectation of His coming again.

Finally, the assurance that he was "the disciple whom JESUS loved" led John to testify of these things, and to write these things" (verse 24). We are inclined to think of *public testimony* first, but the order in which these matters are mentioned by the apostle, under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT, is clear. John's deep consciousness of the LORD's love for him was used by the HOLY SPIRIT to give him the intimate insight into the thoughts and words of the LORD JESUS, and the communion of the FATHER and the SON, which specially characterise this gospel. In our measure it will be the same in our case. Deep assurance in our own souls that the LORD loves us will make all the difference to our testimony in our daily walk, our presentation of the gospel message, our service and attitude to the LORD's people.

There are doubtless many other lessons to be learnt from all these incidents but the writer has found it both refreshing and instructive—also corrective—to consider them as illustrating *response to the Lord's love*, and the ways the LORD rewards such response. May the LORD give us all such an assurance of His love for us individually that these responses may be reproduced in us.

J. C. KELL.

Head or Headquarters

BY QUARTUS

JERUSALEM, JUDEA, ANTIOCH, ROME, CONSTANTINOPLE, CANTERBURY, LONDON, are all great names in the history of Christendom, each at some period suggesting to certain minds

a kind of headquarters of the faith and order of Christianity. The first three have long since dropped out of the reckoning though once exercising great influence over many Christian minds. The next three, however, are still regarded by thousands of professing Christians as occupying in a special degree the place which the first three held in the first century of the Christian era. Upon what may their respective claims be based is a reasonable enquiry; this we proceed to show.

JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM could rightly claim that here the church began on the Day of Pentecost; that here the gospel was first preached with the power of the HOLY SPIRIT then sent down from heaven; that here the Apostles remained long after the faith had spread almost universally; that here James the LORD's brother presided over the first, and only authentic Council of the church; that from here the first encyclical was sent forth to the faithful with the solemn authoritative imprimatur "It seemed good to the HOLY GHOST and to us"; and it was here the Apostle of the Gentiles spent a fortnight with Peter, the undoubted chief of the Apostolic college; here also St. Paul returned with Barnabas and Titus, two men of some importance in the church, and interviewed James, Cephas and John who he says "seemed to be pillars of the church" there. One ceases to wonder that to many in those days Jerusalem appeared to be the headquarters of the church and faith of Christianity. However the Apostle Paul left it on record for all time, "*But Jerusalem which is above . . . is the mother of us all.*"

JUDEA

"The apostles and brethren that were in Judea . . . and certain men which came down from Judea and taught the brethren."—Acts xi. 1; xv. 1.)

JUDEA was a place full of thrilling associations with the Christian faith. It was in Bethlehem of Judea that our LORD came into this scene; it was from Bethany He left the world to go to the FATHER; it was in Judea that some of His greatest works were done as signs by which He manifested His glory as the Apostle John records. Jericho in Judea was the great

residential suburb of Jerusalem and when "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" many of these would most certainly continue to "go down from Jerusalem to Jericho" the city of palm trees as in the story of the Good Samaritan. These naturally are among the brethren that were in Judea. Living in Judea might well seem to invest their teaching with some importance as coming down from headquarters. But it was then, as now, the HEAD Whose importance to the members of His body far surpasses any local temporary headquarters. Hence when "certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved, Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them."

Their doctrine was all wrong, mixing Judaism with Christianity, even though they hailed from a place with such respectable associations as Judea undoubtedly possessed. In those early days, as St. John in his Epistles strenuously urged upon his readers, it was the truth taught by a teacher which accredited him to the faithful. indeed the only credentials acknowledged by the Apostle.

ANTIOCH

*("And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
—Acts xi. 26.)*

It was here that Barnabas and Paul ministered for one whole year and established the multitude of converts made through the missionary work of a number of men of Cyprus and Cyrene who had been driven from Jerusalem by the persecution following Stephen's martyrdom. ANTIOCH rapidly became a centre of Christian witness. It was the third largest city in the world then, people of all classes being attracted there. In the church too there soon appeared prophets and teachers, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, foster-brother of King Herod and others, while a great body of people filled with missionary zeal and noted for generous care for poorer fellow Christians in a few years caused Antioch to be regarded as the mother church of Gentile Christianity.

At first Jerusalem was regarded by thousands as the centre

of the faith, but after the fall of the city in A.D. 70 and the weakening thereby of Jewish Christianity, the great cities of the Empire, Antioch at first, then Rome and later Alexandria gradually tended to be regarded as centres for the surrounding churches scattered abroad. From Asia Minor to Rome the apostolic custom of sending letters of commendation as mentioned in 2 Corinthians iii. was steadily observed; these with discipline within, and persecution without, serving to maintain the fellowship and to preserve outward unity.

But the spell which Antioch once exerted over the minds of many in that day, has with Jerusalem and Judea been dissolved so that they no longer are regarded as they once were as being headquarters of the faith.

ROME AND CONSTANTINOPLE

In the year 330 CONSTANTINOPLE, the New ROME, was dedicated by Constantine as the rival of Imperial Rome where Christianity had been domiciled before receiving any visit from an Apostle. No doubt the "strangers of Rome" among the crowds in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost carried the gospel there upon their return. It was to these that in A.D. 56 St. Paul addressed his great doctrinal epistle from which we learn that the faith of the Roman Christians was then spoken of throughout the whole world.

But to the Easterns, Constantinople became the successor of Antioch, the centre of the Orthodox believers, and mother of the Greek and Russian churches. For the appearance of Constantine on the throne brought relief from persecution, relaxation of discipline in the true sense, and an influx of worldly position by the patronage of the Emperor. It has been well and often remarked that while persecution purifies, patronage corrupts. So, great changes in the outward profession of Christianity speedily followed, not for the better.

Rome had great prestige, but Constantinople had a more extensive and far more popular jurisdiction than old Rome possessed, and Christianity became regarded as a portion of the State, and its ministers as being officers thereof.

Christianity having been firmly established for three centuries in Rome she had inevitably become to be regarded as

the centre for the West; and by the great schism of the ninth century leading in the eleventh to the final separation between Greeks and Latins, steadily developed into a world organisation and a virtual monarchy. A baptised Caesar with a Christian name was now claiming to be the Vicar of CHRIST and Rome to be the church exclusively. To-day this claim is alas accepted by millions to be the headquarters of Christianity and Peter claimed as her first Pope. Scripture however fails to substantiate these claims, and the acid test is, "*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*" (Isa. viii. 20.)

CANTERBURY

IN OUR OWN TIMES CANTERBURY with her appeal to Scripture, sacrament and tradition is regarded by many thousands of English-speaking Christians as the mother church of Anglicanism, and claims by the branch theory to be one with Rome and the Easterns. True, the claim is rejected by Rome absolutely, while only in a partial degree being admitted by the Orthodox.

With a cleaner record than Rome, greater liberty than the Eastern varieties of Christianity, more learning and culture than either, Canterbury enjoys a full measure in the world of the prestige of old Rome. The recognised centre in the Empire and Commonwealth of this far-flung religious communion Canterbury is decidedly on the religious map in the twentieth century.

The declaration by her bishops at the great Lambeth Conference in 1920 is revealing as to her estimate of the position enjoyed by her. "It is not by reducing the different groups of Christians to uniformity, but by rightly using their diversity that the Church can become all things to all men. So long as there is vital connexion with the HEAD there is positive value in the differentiation of the members." They go on to argue that this differentiation is not incompatible with union in one visible society.

But, is the church intended "to be all things to all men"? Who said so, except the assembled bishops? Certainly not Scripture.

Is she not rather an unearthly body witnessing to her absent **HEAD** under the guidance of the **HOLY SPIRIT**, the true Vicar of **CHRIST**, Who also indwells her? Jerusalem, Judea, Antioch, Constantinople, Rome and Canterbury. Yes, maybe, but who ever heard of London as a headquarters of Christianity?

Yet one has heard of Christians, English-speaking, who own no allegiance to Rome or Canterbury, asking in connection with some ecclesiastical matter, What does London say? One such company has even been described as the "London party", whose decisions in matter of discipline and doctrine must be accepted under pain of suspension.

THE HEAD

How wisely Lambeth stressed "vital connexion with the **HEAD**" yet gave no explanation of so important a point for every Christian. Neither was it stated that such connexion is not mechanical but organic, and wholly spiritual. In his epistle to the Colossian saints and faithful brethren, the **Apostle** sounds a warning note against a grave danger in those days and not less in our own. It is against the danger of "not holding fast the **HEAD**, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of **God**." Chapter i. 18 leaves us in no doubt as to Whom "the **HEAD**" refers. By the analogy of the human body where the head is the source of all interest, wisdom, direct union and direction for all the members, we may clearly learn its application to the Divine Society, the Church which is His body. To it He is the source of unfailing interest in all that concerns it; He is also the unerring fount of wisdom, Who has therefore given gifts in order that His members may grow up to Him in all things; the union with Himself is secured and maintained so that each and everyone is "one **SPIRIT** with the **LORD**"; He is also the sole source of direction for the members of His body in their activities and fruit-bearing for "Without Me ye can do nothing" (St. John xv. 6).

Therefore we are bidden to "hold fast the **HEAD**," which implies the refusal of any medium between **CHRIST** and the soul of the believer. To test everything by Him ecclesiastically or otherwise is a proof of holding fast the **HEAD**.

Not headquarters on earth, but holding fast the HEAD, Who is in heaven, to Whom all authority is given, is peace and spiritual prosperity for the lowliest, humblest, weakest member of His body.

The Passover Lamb

(*Exodus xii.*; *1 Corinthians v.*)

THE Passover was the first of the feasts instituted by JEHOVAH for His people, while they were yet in the land of bondage. Its celebration marked the beginning of a new epoch in GOD'S dealings with them. It was to be a feast of remembrance kept on the first month, to serve as a constant memorial of the manner and the means of GOD'S wonderful work of delivering them from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. In the subsequent history of GOD'S earthly people, the keeping of the Passover is associated with times of revival (*Josh. v.*, *Ezra vi.*, etc.), and will be kept again when GOD brings His people back to the Land (*Ezek. xlv.*).

For us as Christian believers, it has importance as setting forth the LORD JESUS as the LAMB of GOD. The Passover Lamb would remind the Israelites of their deliverance from slavery, and the title of CHRIST as the "LAMB of GOD" reminds us always of Him Who shed His blood for us on Calvary's Cross. When John the Baptist bears witness to JESUS as the LAMB of GOD, he also testifies that He is the SON of GOD. May we not say that GOD took pleasure in this title which our LORD JESUS assumes as having particular reference to His sufferings and death on the Cross, by which GOD'S glory and man's blessing was secured?

In Revelation xxi. the bride is there spoken of as the LAMB'S wife, and here again the title reminds us of the sufferings which He passed through to acquire for Himself His heavenly partner. Through eternal ages the LAMB will be the centre and object of worship and praise, absorbing the affection of the hearts of all the redeemed myriads in that timeless day of His glory. In that place of light, love and joy, in perfect conformity to His own desire for each one, the LAMB shall engage each heart, the HOLY SPIRIT leading every heart to worship, in

willing homage at the feet of Him Who was slain (Rev. v.). Never shall that Name be forgotten, it will remain in imperishable remembrance to all eternity, touching a sweet if solemn chord in every heart, to remind of the travail deep and sorrowful, which He endured for us.

Earthly kingdoms may rise and fall; we feeble mortals may be distressed and fearful in these troubled and difficult days; but let us never forget that there is One who is over and above it all. In calm repose, then let the peace of GOD preside in our hearts as trustful and confiding we seek to walk with GOD, looking for the blessed hope, and living in the light of His glorious Appearing.

O SAVIOUR come and claim us,
Thy glory we would see:
Changed to Thy blessed likeness,
Conformèd unto Thee.

LORD JESUS crowned in glory,
At GOD'S right hand in heaven;
Adored by all who love Thee,
All praise to Thee be given.

O LORD, our hearts expectant,
Anticipate that day
Of bridal joy and gladness,
For which we watch and pray.

How full Thy joy to greet us,
Called out by sovereign grace!
To be presented faultless,
Before Thy FATHER'S face!

In glory bright, eternal,
When earthly things are past;
With Thee in light unfading,
Our hearts shall rest at last.

GOD'S rest with Thee and Thine, LORD,
In that blest Home above!
To know in sweet communion,
The fullness of Thy love.

L. HOWSON.

Sparkling Gems

A few more tears, a few more shadows, and then the voice of GOD shall say: "Come up hither", and into the presence of our LORD we shall go.

* * * *

What we want is to preach CHRIST in season and out of season.

* * * *

Oh! that the loss of a soul may arouse us, that we may know what it means!

* * * *

There is no doubt that every believer can find something to do for CHRIST, if he is thoroughly in earnest and ready to do that work to which GOD calls him.

* * * *

It is a good deal better for Christians to say, "Let *us* do it", than to say, "*You* do it".

* * * *

We ought to shine in this dark world as lights set upon a hill that cannot be hid.

* * * *

If I am a child of GOD and yet make an idol of my *money*, of my *gifts*, of my *time*, or of anything in this world, then I shall be sure to lose it. GOD will take it away in love to me—although I shall not think it love at the time. But if I work for GOD, if I spend money, gifts, time, everything I have for Him, then I lay it up in heaven and that is a very good bank. It will not fail and I shall have a whole eternity to enjoy it! I shall have it there when I go. This is arithmetic which anyone can understand.

* * * *

Read the 103rd Psalm and mark how the Psalmist bids us "forget not all His benefits". Someone has said we cannot *remember* them all, but we must *not forget* them all.

* * * *

The thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians is one of those chapters we ought to read very often. I think there are some chapters in the Bible we ought to read on our knees and this is one of them.

(Selected by C. A. Hammond)

The Comforter—The Holy Spirit

(*St. John xiv. 26*)

BY THE EDITOR

THE characteristic blessing of the Christian dispensation is the presence of the HOLY SPIRIT "Whom," said our LORD, "the FATHER will send in My Name". This promise was fulfilled by the coming of the SPIRIT on the day of Pentecost to form the church, and abide in, and with, all true believers for ever. As definitely as at the Incarnation of the SON when "JESUS was born in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the King", so did the HOLY SPIRIT the COMFORTER come on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem.

Everywhere in Scripture the HOLY SPIRIT the COMFORTER is referred to as a Person, therefore, as One possessing mind, emotions and will. Hence, we read of "the mind of the SPIRIT" (Rom. viii. 27); "the love of the SPIRIT" (Rom. xv. 30); and the will of the SPIRIT "dividing to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. xii. 11.) The personality of the HOLY SPIRIT as exercising His will is shown by His action when the gospel came to Europe, "forbidding them to preach in Asia", and not allowing them to go into Bithynia (Acts xvi. 6, 7). Most marked of all is the word in Acts xiii. 2-4, "the HOLY GHOST said, separate ME Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them (a sign of full fellowship with them, they sent them away, (lit: they let them go). So they, being sent forth by the HOLY GHOST, departed." Here, most clearly, is the will of a Person shown in the call and commission of these apostolic servants of GOD. The SPIRIT it is who calls, and dismisses them, to special service, while the church recognising this "lets them go" with expressions of their fullest fellowship in their mission. This calling and commissioning is what the SPIRIT of GOD keeps in His own hands delegating it to none, it is His prerogative, as being the Vicar of CHRIST during His absence on high.

The HOLY SPIRIT came as our LORD promised, to be the COMFORTER, GUIDE and HELPER of His own in the world as

the expression of His own love to the uttermost (St. John xiii. 1). So in the Epistle to the Romans (viii. 16, 26) this gracious ministry is in a sense paraphrased thus, The SPIRIT itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD. Likewise, the SPIRIT also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the SPIRIT itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The word COMFORTER is but an attempt to translate the title of this Divine Person, the PARACLETE, being the word used by our Lord in St. John concerning Him. It also occurs in John's first Epistle referring there to the LORD JESUS and is translated ADVOCATE. Neither COMFORTER nor ADVOCATE fully expresses its meaning. Both and even something beyond, would be required to do this. As J. N. Darby remarks, "It is one who carries on the cause of any one and helps him. This CHRIST did on earth; this (1 John ii.) He does now in heaven, and the HOLY SPIRIT on earth: 'manages our cause, our affairs, for us'. If 'solicitor' were not too common, it just answers the sense."

When introducing the subject of the sending of the SPIRIT, the LORD made the startling announcement to the disciples, "It is expedient for you that *I* go away: for if I go not away, the COMFORTER will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." It seemed hard to believe that another could take His place who had been all to them for the past three years or more. Expedient, profitable! Yet He had prefaced this announcement with the solemn asseveration, "Nevertheless, *I* tell you the truth," the *I* being very emphatic in the statement.

How could it possibly be, may well have arisen in their minds as the words fell upon their ears. "He shall be in you," is the answer to the question whether raised then or now. "Now *we* have received, not the spirit of the world, but the SPIRIT which is of GOD that we may know the things which have been freely given us of God."

They had been, as Peter described the larger band of disciples, "men which have companied with us all the time the LORD

JESUS went in and out among us," Who were now to learn that it was expedient, more profitable to them "even though they had had known CHRIST after the flesh, yet now henceforth to know Him so no more".

The presence of the HOLY SPIRIT as the characteristic blessing of the Christian dispensation is shown not only as indwelling individual believers so that they are each a temple of the HOLY SPIRIT in which GOD is to be glorified by life and testimony in the service of CHRIST, but as constituting the whole company of believers an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT. He indeed taking a position as the one, the abiding, and the only centre of authority, in matters of faith and doctrine. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the churches," is the word in the Apocalypse to the seven churches in Asia literally then, significantly and symbolically now.

For alas! the characteristic sin of Christendom from almost as soon as the Apostles had departed has been its attitude towards the HOLY SPIRIT. It is true that out of all the apparent disagreement and disruption which now marks the outward professing body, there will come the glorious Church with no sign of age or weakness, which CHRIST will present unto Himself; but what of present individual responsibility? The unity of the body is maintained by the indwelling of all its members by the HOLY SPIRIT Who formed it.

But that very fact only accentuates the importance of not grieving Him by coldness and worldiness in forgetting the love of our espousals to CHRIST the Lover of our souls, the Bridegroom of the Church. For it is the HOLY SPIRIT (Who sheds abroad the love of GOD in our hearts, and therefore, because He loves is grieved by any lack of response as He seeks to engage our thoughts, our hearts, our lives with the absent LORD Whom He is indwelling us in order to glorify.

The HOLY SPIRIT may also be quenched, or stifled, by our own careless indifference to His voice in the Scriptures, as also by our testimony being hindered by submitting to restraints in worship, fellowship and service unwarranted by Scripture.

Are There Two Bibles?

By QUARTUS

FATHER, are there two Bibles?" was the enquiry of a small child at dinner time recently, after returning from the morning meeting.

"Why do you ask, my dear?" said the father.

"Because that man read something that wasn't in mine—it was quite different," was her reply with a rather puzzled expression on her face.

The man in question had been reading from J.N.D.'s translation, an immense help in private reading and study, but never intended for public reading. Indeed, the translator himself always used the English Bible, the Authorised Version, in all his public ministry.

Even very young ones like the child mentioned can be puzzled, older ones confused, and everyone irritated by the unseasonable practice of reading from other than the Authorised Version of Scripture in the public assemblies. As a lad, the writer himself was often puzzled by this which also stirred questioning in his mind as to the trustworthiness of the Bible itself. Yet this foolish habit persists with some.

The spate of translations following the R.V. and Darby, Young, Weymouth, Moffatt, American Standard, Wands and Phillips, all valuable in differing degrees for private reading and study, will never displace the A.V. for public reading. Nor did their authors intend this to happen any more than Darby.

Take the New translation by J.N.D. with which many of our readers are conversant. First, as to its rendering let Darby speak for himself. "My endeavour has been to present to the merely English reader the original as closely as possible. Those who make a version for public use must of course adapt their course to the public. Such has not been my object or thought, but to give to the student of Scripture, who cannot read the original, as close a translation as possible. There are some remarks I would desire to make on the English Authorised Version, which would debar me from attempting to correct it. Its value and beauty are known, and I need not

dilate. I have lived upon it, though of course studying the Greek myself; I have no wish to underrate it."

When the Revised Version was being made, Darby's translation of the New Testament was critically examined and used by the company of Revisers. Two of the best of them, as a result, felt moved to write to Mr. William Kelly, who had himself revised Darby's *Synopsis of the Bible*, saying, "they were astonished at an amount of painstaking research exceeding that of most if not all".

Darby sacrificed literary style to literal accuracy resulting in a certain abruptness of style but compensated by invaluable footnotes which in the judgment of these competent critics betokened true scientific scholarship.

The late editor of the *Bible Monthly*, Mr. W. J. Hocking, expressed his thoughts very definitely upon the unseasonable habit of using the New Translation for public reading. This is what he wrote a year or two ago in a private letter, "I know of no valid reason why the New Translation by J.N.D. three-quarters of a century and more ago should now take the place in this and other English-speaking countries of our excellent A.V. for assembly use. In other countries, especially in Roman Catholic ones, its use in the assemblies may be fully justified on other grounds, such as the difficulty of obtaining for general use sufficient copies of a reliable Protestant Version printed in the local language.

But what serious fault can be found with the prevalent practice in this country of meetings for worship, for prayer or the LORD'S SUPPER, making use of the A.V. familiar to all?

To set aside altogether the translation to which saints in this country are accustomed, would prove a hindrance not a help to united assembly fellowship in their spiritual exercises before the LORD.

In Bible readings and in ministry of the Word, as well as in personal and private meditation and study, the intelligent use of J.N.D.'s version is of inestimable value through the help it affords to the correct understanding of the Scriptures as they were written by holy men of GOD inspired in their work by the HOLY SPIRIT. To provide such help was Mr.

Darby's sole object when his translation of the New Testament was first published." A word to the wise should be sufficient, so that all be for edification in the public assembly.

Reflections after a Reading on Exodus xxxii.

MOSESES, in the mountain with GOD, was an object for faith for Israel, even as CHRIST in glory is for us. But Israel, losing their faith, demanded something visible and tangible. Aaron allowed their request, and fashioned a calf from their gold—"These be thy gods, O Israel"—and made a proclamation—"tomorrow is a feast to JEHOVAH".

CHRIST is in glory. This was the theme of the apostles; this was the revelation that not only converted Paul, but held him on his course until it was finished with joy. Do we know CHRIST there?—or are we satisfied with the One who walked this scene, and died here for our sins? This would leave us tied to the earth, but the present Object for our faith is in glory. He is there to support us in the way by His gracious and never-failing intercession, but He is there also to detach our affections from this scene. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 19). He is there as Head of His Body, the Assembly, and from Him alone, in the power of the SPIRIT, comes nourishment and increase (Col. ii 19).

Israel's faith failed. They craved for some visible object that they might be attached to. It is remarkable that the SPIRIT does not credit them with faith from the crossing of the Red Sea until they reached Jericho. (Heb. xi. 29-30). The wilderness journey was given over to idolatry—the governmental dealing of God for this first failure. They made a calf in those days . . . "Then GOD turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven" (See Acts vii. 39-43). The character of idolatry is this, that it puts something, visible and tangible, in the place of a CHRIST Who, hidden in the heavens, may be known only to faith and by the SPIRIT.

This is what Christendom has done. While we may recognise it clearly in the ritual that is so attractive to the natural man, we must also recognise it in everything that man does, that is not in the power of the SPIRIT, or that usurps His authority and place. The tendency for this is in each of our hearts. We crave that which is attractive—not necessarily in open show, but perhaps in its more subtle form of that which pleases the mind rather than the senses. Our link, our only link in living power with our absent Head is the HOLY SPIRIT, and never, except He be ungrieved, can we know that communion with CHRIST which alone can lead us into acceptable worship or service. Everything that displaces the HOLY SPIRIT is idolatry of the same character as that into which Israel fell.

If we speak plainly, what is it? It is every natural attraction that is not CHRIST; music, or sociability, or the smooth organisation of competent men; that adulteration of the pure Word which makes it palatable; the name of a servant exalted in the heart to take the place that CHRIST Himself should occupy (Song. i. 7-8). It is everything that displaces the HOLY SPIRIT; lack of subjection to Him in our gathering together; lack of regard for what He has caused to be written, that we might know His power unhinderedly. It is a turning again to Egypt in the heart, which the SPIRIT assures us was behind Israel's idolatry (Acts vii. 39), because we cannot bear the exercise of faith, cannot face the reproach of an absent CHRIST. For He is not seen and the world cannot understand and scorns, what it cannot see; but believers "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18). And what are we doing when we turn our eyes to temporal things? We are exchanging our glory for the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

That treasure which JEHOVAH had given Israel, and which was to adorn His own dwelling, is used to displace Him from His proper glory as the One who had brought them up out of Egypt. His own high priest takes the leading part in producing the idol, and uses his authority to attach to it the name of JEHOVAH. How grievously does Aaron go astray,

and yet how much we should have relied upon him! What a lesson for us all.

To learn the true character of this idolatry was a very bitter draught for Israel (verse 20). It had shamed them before all, and made GOD'S enemies to rejoice, and they might not escape His just government. And so it is for us. We learn how we have despised our absent LORD, setting up idols in our hearts, and we prove the bitter vanity of our own imaginations. But more bitter to natural affection is to regain the power of the truth. Levi discovered this. They said then, as the remnant of Israel will say later on, "What have I to do any more with idols?" (Hos. xiv. 8). To go back and put right what has gone wrong; to vindicate GOD'S glory in connection with what has been given up is an act that turns the sword against brethren, and divides the home against itself. It requires the power of the SPIRIT to act in this way, and only true devotion to CHRIST Himself can say, "unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word". Nevertheless, here alone is GOD'S blessing in these circumstances, and, bitter as they may be, the LORD Himself has passed through them Himself (Matt. xii. 46-50), and is able to succour and to sympathise with all who tread the same path. For the overcomer there waits the precious privilege that contrasts so strongly with the idolatry that has been thus effectively judged, to "put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar" (Deut. xxxiii. 9-10).

(Contributed by D.E.B.)

On the "Open Meeting"

(1 Cor. xii.-xiv.)

Reprinted by Request

ONE priceless privilege of the Church of GOD is the "OPEN MEETING" where an assembly consisting of few or many individuals is gathered on Scriptural ground in or to the Name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. There the HOLY SPIRIT,

the real Vicar of Christ, is present to guide the human spirits of the worshippers in worship, praise, prayer and, or, ministry, as He in His divine wisdom knows to be acceptable to God and beneficial for His people.

Christendom, however, has generally ignored this great privilege or abused it. If this assertion strikes the reader as being either untrue or uncharitable, will he calmly consider the conditions prevailing in the company of believers with whom he stately assembles himself? Then let such an one compare the public spiritual exercises with what is written in the three chapters at the head of this paper. It will be surprising if sharp contrasts between modern church practice and divine order do not force themselves upon the attention of the devout and intelligent observer.

That this subject should be a matter of concern to every Christian is evident from the Epistle of which these chapters form a not inconsiderable part. For the Epistle is addressed to "the Church of God at Corinth . . . *with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord*" (1 Cor. i. 2). Yet strangely enough the vast bulk of Christian professors make no attempt to be found in circumstances where the principles of 1 Cor. xiv. could possibly be carried out.

Rome, with her gorgeous ceremonial; the Anglican body, with her stately ordered services; the Free Churches (so-called), each with its individual and independent polity—none of these make pretensions to being companies of "purged worshippers" (Heb. x. 2) gathered to the Name of the LORD JESUS apart from all worldly systems, ideas, and material adjuncts to worship. On the contrary, institutionalism, business administration and every kind of material help in art, music and ecclesiastical furniture, that human piety can devise and money purchase, are pressed into the service of religion to assist in accomplishing the worship and service of God in a seemingly, reverent and satisfactory manner, according to their ideas.

Yet "God . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands" (Acts xvii. 24, 25). Also the ancient word abides with its piercing enquiry, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the LORD? Behold; to obey is

better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. xv. 22). Could words state the case more clearly to command the assent and consequent obedience of any willing child or servant of GOD?

What if amid the stately order of well-appointed and carefully arranged services, ostensibly in His honour, GOD beholds only the grossest disorder and spiritual disarrangement! Where, to-day in church, chapel, or undenominational mission, however well conducted, is to be found that godly order given to the Church of God in 1 Cor. xiv? -

With the fullest recognition and appreciation of the genuine piety and Christian work found in many communicants and members of congregations otherwise assembled, what can one truthfully say but that they have a zeal for GOD but not according to the knowledge of His written word. Else why the glaring discrepancy between GOD's church order and their own?

Our concern, however, here is not so much with these vast humanly-devised ecclesiastical systems of Christian worship, whether they be hoary with antiquity or dewy with modernity, as with those companies of believers who profess to *be* gathered to the Name of the LORD JESUS in obedience to His word and in subjection to the SPIRIT of GOD. Here, surely, agreement as to the priceless privilege of the "OPEN MEETING" may be expected; most certainly it will not be entirely ignored by such. At the meeting for the "BREAKING OF BREAD" (Acts xx. 7), the semblance of an "OPEN MEETING" is perforce maintained. But for other occasions of assembling themselves together, many, alas, appear to have quietly given it up entirely. Others confess to secret misgivings as to its practicability, and while not definitely giving it up, nor really admitting its impracticability, yet often arrange for an address at a fellowship meeting (so-called) as being on the whole likely to be more profitable for the edification of the assembled company. Three questions arise in this connection; first, *Is this kind of action right?* Secondly, *Why is it this is necessary?* And thirdly, *What can be done to remedy this?* The last of these rather answers the others, but it may help to consider them all.

1. Is it right to throw overboard what is presented to us in Scripture applying to the Church of GOD at Corinth and all that in every place call upon the Name of JESUS CHRIST our LORD, both theirs and ours?

Put thus baldly and bluntly the question answers itself—by a decided negative. No, no company of believers who therefore form part of the Church of GOD and locally are a witness to this, can ever afford to ignore or surrender one of the priceless privileges belonging to them.

2. Why is this necessary or rather considered necessary, then? Why is it that some find the "OPEN MEETING" impracticable and in their opinion unprofitable for the saints, and prefer an address by a brother to a meeting where the HOLY SPIRIT is present to lead in worship, praise and prayer, and supply living ministry suited to the actual present state of any and all gathered together?

To answer this requires plain speaking, moral courage and the fear of GOD. Briefly, emphatically, and yet humbly it must be owned that *ignorance, weakness, and, alas, wilfulness, are responsible for the breakdown of the "OPEN MEETING."* Consider for one moment just what an "OPEN MEETING" is. Ideally it is a time and place where the door is closed on earth and "a door opened in heaven." A time and place where GOD and the LAMB fill the vision of the soul; and yet one in which the humble, contrite human spirit feels at home as a grateful reverent worshipper. A time and place where the HOLY SPIRIT gives communion of the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST and of the love of GOD in such a fashion as leads to adoring worship and the tasting of joys which are ineffable. Then moments of spiritual insight and glimpses of the glory to be revealed are granted in the silences, or maybe are given in united outbursts of hymns of praise while by Scriptures read or ministry exercised clearer vision is gained of the things freely given to us in CHRIST; and so by all these the saints are led to what is the highest possible occupation in heaven or upon earth, namely, the true worship of GOD.

To quietly sit before the LORD in the "OPEN MEETING" and muse upon the infinite perfections of GOD revealed in CHRIST

by the SPIRIT's gracious promptings and assistance will always lead the heart to feel some measure of that awe and wonder which makes unfallen hosts (of far higher intelligence as creatures than ourselves) to unceasingly cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY Which wert, and art, and art to come. All Thy works praise Thee, O LORD, and Thy saints bless Thee"; while we in an even higher strain exclaim, "Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST Who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies according as He hath chosen us in CHRIST JESUS before the world began." *It is ignorance of the possibilities of the "OPEN MEETING" conducted according to GOD's order which lies at the root of its neglect and rejection by many, to their great present spiritual loss.*

3. *Weakness* also plays its pitiful part in the breakdown of the "OPEN MEETING." The feeble few, or the fickle many, from lack of due appreciation of the reality of the LORD's presence and of the SPIRIT's presence, are sorely tempted by the devil to look to man instead of the LORD. "If only we had some gifted men among us now, things would be different," they moan, as though forsooth the LORD Himself, the Giver of all gifts and gifted men, were not still among His little flock, according to His own gracious assurance given in Matt. xviii. 20. "*For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I am in the midst of them.*" But human weakness plays its sad part, and so instead of the saints being strong in faith, giving glory to GOD on account of His word, they become increasingly weak in feeling that the spiritual poverty is apparently, in their view, too much for the gracious Provider. Hence in looking to man they virtually cease to count upon the LORD. So the SPIRIT is straitened in them, and He can do no mighty work because of their unbelief. How arresting and startling in the gospel narrative is this word. "*And He could there do no mighty work . . . and He marvelled at their unbelief.*"

W.G.T.

(To be continued)

“That Day”

(John i. 39.)

THERE are certain days which stand out from the others in the lives of us all, and “that day” was to be one of those in the case of Andrew and his companion. It was to be one they would never forget.

They were standing near to their leader, John the Baptist, as he gazed upon the LORD JESUS Who was passing by. Musing aloud, they heard John utter in a spirit of worshipful contemplation, “Behold the LAMB of GOD!” It was enough to mark “that day” out for them, and the first point to be noted is that they believed the testimony thus given to the SON of GOD, and believing the

TESTIMONY TO CHRIST

which fell upon their ears, they received it. We live in different days, but the Gospel is still the word of power and testifies to the Person and Work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. “He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that GOD is true” (John iii. 33), and this leads now, as then, to the second thing to note as occurring on “that day,” namely, to following of CHRIST, or

DISCIPLESHIP.

This, we repeat, is the outcome of receiving the testimony of GOD as to CHRIST. In the inspired narrative we read, “Then JESUS turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?” This was one, and indeed the first, of several challenges to their hearts which our LORD made and still makes to disciples. “What seek ye?” Could we answer as they did, not seeking anything but to be with Him, “Master, where dwellest Thou?”

“Come and see” is the gracious invitation. “They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day.”

This following of Him, or real discipleship, is *the* test. “If any man come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matt. xvi. 24). “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke xiv. 27). Discipleship of CHRIST is a costly matter, and the flesh shrinks from it. We settle down instead

of following on, and then joy, communion and the fruitfulness produced by these are missing from our lives. A Laodicean day knows little of discipleship in its real character. Andrew and his companion, however, not only followed JESUS, but "abode with Him that day," and this makes our third note, namely,

COMMUNION.

A day's communion with the SON of GOD! Whether we adopt the view that in John's gospel Roman time or Jewish time is used (about which equally devout scholars differ), the outstanding fact remains that "*they abode with Him that day*".

One of them we know was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, the other was—whom? We cannot say, but is it not significant that the writer of this gospel refers to himself on a quite different occasion, not by his own name but as "that other disciple" (ch. xx. 4) and often as "the disciple whom JESUS loved." Undoubtedly "that day" spent in company with our LORD stamped a character upon him whoever he may have been, and this veiled anonymity seems to wear very thin as we listen to the words of the Apostle John where he says, "We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth" (ch. i. 14); and again, "The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the FATHER, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 2.)

During "that day" what words they were to which they were privileged to listen! A far deeper answer to their question, "Where dwellest Thou?" than they could have anticipated. He Whom they had followed, Who had drawn out their affection and reverent interest, was the One Who dwelt in the bosom of the FATHER, a place He never left, as well as in the humble lodging to which they accompanied him "that day." Here they learned something of the FATHER'S heart as they listened to the voice of the FATHER'S only SON.

"Thou wast the IMAGE in man's lowly guise
Of the INVISIBLE to mortal eyes.

SON of His bosom, come from heaven above!
We see in Thee, Incarnate, GOD is love."

These two disciples of that earliest day longed to be with Him. To-day, by way of dreadful contrast, we find discipleship waning, communion unsought, and ONE standing without graciously proposing Himself in these touching and expressive terms, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. iii. 20).

Fellow believer, let us remember He desires that we should abide in Him, and wants our heart's affection. From this there is fruit well pleasing, for "Andrew first finds his own brother Simon," and bears witness to the truth himself enjoys, "We have found the CHRIST," and he brought him to JESUS. So our last note on the happenings and outcome of "that day"

CONFESSION OF CHRIST.

Simon brought to the LORD as the result of Andrew's confession, and what rich fruit when a few years later three thousand souls confess the same ONE through his preaching. Would that our days were after the same sort as "that day" when the two disciples heard John speak and followed JESUS.

"That day," dispensationally, is a figure of this day of grace in which our lot is cast. Where there is true discipleship and real communion with CHRIST power to confess Him will always be manifest.

Is it not the real reason why there is so little power in our testimony, that this discipleship and communion are so little practised and enjoyed among us to-day? May the LORD mercifully awaken our hearts to this.

S. G. SCALES.

Crowns

THE Coronation of QUEEN ELIZABETH II no doubt turned thoughts of many to the glorious fact that

The Head that once was crowned with thorns
 Is crowned with glory now.
 A royal diadem adorns
 The mighty VICTOR's brow.

Many also rejoice that the One Who was described on the cross in mockery as "King of the Jews" will yet be manifested and owned as "KING of KINGS and LORD of LORDS" here on this earth, not only by Israel but by every nation, for "He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 25). At that time on His head will be many crowns—symbols of royal authority (Rev. xix. 12).

There are also crowns of reward, obtainable by us who believe in the LORD JESUS. They are not presented in the Scriptures as gifts of grace, which will be given to *all* believers, but as rewards for which we have to qualify, as is clear from the passages in which they are mentioned. While we know that it is GOD Who worketh in us both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure, we know, too, from sad experience it may be, that we can be spiritually lazy, or over-occupied with the things of this life, or self-indulgent, or so grieve the SPIRIT of GOD in other ways that we become unfaithful. These crowns of reward are therefore brought before us to stimulate us to effort in various spiritual ways.

THE CROWN OF REJOICING

There is first the "crown of rejoicing" (1 Thess. ii. 19). The apostle Paul, led by the SPIRIT of GOD, was writing to the church of the Thessalonians, a company composed of former idolaters, who through the good news preached by him in power, and in the HOLY GHOST and in much assurance (i. 5) had turned to GOD from their idols, to serve the living and true GOD and to wait for His SON from heaven (vv. 9, 10). They were His children in the faith (ii. 7), and as he looks forward to being in the presence of the LORD JESUS CHRIST at His coming he calls them his "crown of rejoicing".

Will not *all* believers rejoice at His coming? Yes, indeed, but the *crown* of rejoicing speaks of something additional. Paul's crown will be the Thessalonians, and surely multitudes more, who were converted through his preachings. But is it only Paul who will have such a crown? I do not think so, but I believe the "crown of rejoicing" is obtainable by every preacher of the gospel, every "nurse" (v. 7), every "father" (v. 11) who follows the apostle's example, though the apostle's crowns may well exceed in brilliance all others. It is however,

essential to consider the characteristics of the apostle's method, the love and patience displayed in his labour and toil. There was nothing perfunctory or formal about it. It was not just a matter of "taking the gospel on Sunday evening."

He did not shirk opposition or ill-treatment. He did not seek to please men — by entertaining anecdotes, attractive singing, or any other means. He did not flatter his hearers by belittling the sinfulness of sin, or avoiding reference to eternal punishment, or playing up to their natural senses. He did not seek their praise for his oratory or for the number of his converts, or on any other account (see ii. 1-6). He dealt with them in tenderness and love, and the word came to them in power, and in the HOLY GHOST, and in much assurance, for his manner of life among them was consistent with his preaching and teaching.

It is clear that this crown is for the evangelist and the pastor to aim at. We are not all evangelists or pastors, for we read "He gave some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" (Eph. iv. 11), yet we all have the responsibility of passing on to others the gospel of our salvation and of helping those who are younger than ourselves in the faith, by word and example. The same spirit should energize us, in doing so, as led the apostle to have the "crown of rejoicing" in view. Will it not be a special matter for your rejoicing if there is even one in the Presence of our LORD JESUS CHRIST at His coming who is there as the result of the gospel message spoken (or lived) by you.

THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

There is also the "crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. iv. 8) We are righteous now in the sight of GOD for "CHRIST JESUS . . . is made unto us . . . righteousness (1 Cor. i. 30). Righteousness is imputed to us "who believe on Him Who raised up JESUS our LORD from the dead: Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25). In eternal glory we shall be in GOD'S Presence in perfect righteousness. But again I say "the crown of righteousness" speaks of something additional. It will be awarded by "the righteous Judge" so, as stated earlier, it is clear that

the crowns are not presented to us as gifts of grace but as rewards for which we have to qualify. The apostle links up this crown with the statement "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course (or "race"), I have kept the faith" (v. 7). Elsewhere he said that he did not fight as one that beateth the air, nor run uncertainly. "They which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So run that ye may obtain." "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (see 1 Cor. ix. 24-26).

The life of a Christian is a continual *conflict* with foes within and without. The "old man" is to be reckoned dead, but we all find in our experience that he is continually raising his head. Satan and wicked spirits serving him may attack at any moment with their wiles or their fiery darts. God in His grace has provided us with all the equipment necessary to resist. We need the whole armour of God that we may be able to withstand. To fight the *good* fight requires constant watchfulness. Our enemies are quick to perceive when we are off our guard. God grant that it may be true of us, at the end of our life down here, that we have fought the good fight.

The *race* must be run with patience (or "endurance"), the eye of faith being on the ONE Who ran it before us and is now (as it were) at the winning post—the right hand of the throne of God—with His eye upon us. This race must be run according to the rules, all unnecessary weights and impediments being laid aside. It is a race that permits of no resting place en route. The apostle sadly wrote of the Galatians "ye *did* run well", but alas, they had not kept to the right track, and in diverging they were in danger of losing direction and failing to attain the winning post. Let us press toward the mark for the prize (Phil. iii. 14).

The faith is to be kept inviolate, that is, the whole truth revealed in Scripture. Some have made shipwreck concerning the faith: the faith of some has been overthrown by those who stray away from the truth: others have been found worthless as regards the faith (see 1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. ii. 17 and iii. 8). The apostle Paul had kept it. The exhortation in

these last days is to "hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11). What riches of the truth of GOD have been unfolded from the Scriptures during the last hundred and fifty years! So much truth is familiar to us to-day, but there is more involved in *holding fast* than in *passively accepting* these truths as facts. The LORD Himself differentiated between "having" and "keeping" (e.g. John xiv. 21). If "the faith" is held fast—if it is kept—it characterizes us in thought and word and deed.

What is the prime motive force for this sustained combat, this persistent running, this steadfast keeping the faith? The answer appears to be given at the end of 2 Tim. iv. 8, for the crown of righteousness will be given to *all them also that love His appearing*. The LORD JESUS CHRIST will be manifested. Every indignity, every false accusation, every form of humiliation and suffering to which He submitted Himself in grace will have its glorious contrast here in this world in that time of display. As SON of MAN He was denied justice; as SON of MAN He will judge all living nations. We who believe in Him as our SAVIOUR are looking not only for "that blessed hope"—His coming in the air to take us to be with Himself—but also for the appearing of the glory of our great GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Is it *our* great blessing or the display of *His glory* which has first place in our hearts? Love of His appearing, the motive force for fighting the good fight, running the race to a finish, keeping the faith, is the qualification for the crown of righteousness.

THE CROWN OF LIFE

Thirdly there is the crown of life. This is connected with enduring temptation and trial, whether from within (Jas i. 12) or from without (Rev. ii. 10). It is true that every believer in the LORD JESUS CHRIST has eternal life; true, too, that we shall know and enjoy the fulness of that life when He has taken us to be with Him in glory in a way that we cannot know down here. But, again, the *crown* of life seems to speak of something additional to be awarded. James tells us it will be given to the man who endures temptation. As long as we are in these bodies, in this world, we shall experience that every man is tempted . . . by his own lust (v. 14). Desires which

have their origin in the "old man" (as our Adam-descended nature is called in Romans) arise within us whether we are drawn away and enticed by them or not. If, on the other hand, we "endure" temptation we are "blessed", spiritually happy indeed. Freedom from temptation is not promised us, but we are exhorted to endure, not to succumb. The reward for such endurance is the *crown* of life, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him. Here we have the motive power. It is love for the LORD that will stimulate us to endure such temptation. If we forget His great love for us, and all that He endured on our account, if we forget that He still loves us and that He is for us in the Presence of GOD, our love for Him will grow cold and our resistance to temptation will be weakened or vanish away.

In Rev. ii. 10 this crown of life is promised for faithfulness through persecution even unto death. The epistle to Smyrna in which this verse occurs corresponds in historical sequence to the bitter and cruel persecution of the Christians under ten Roman Emperors, but no doubt the promise stands for all Christians who are faithful unto death in times of persecution. Through the sovereign grace of GOD Christians in most countries are not subjected to such forms of persecution nowadays, but where it does exist, and if He permits it to exist again here, the promise of a *crown* of life to those who are faithful unto death is sure. Meanwhile the same character of faithfulness ought to characterize us in the relatively petty persecution that we meet, if we are really faithful, in these days.

THE CROWN OF GLORY

Finally there is the crown of glory to be awarded by the CHIEF SHEPHERD to elders who qualify for it as shepherds of GOD's flock (1 Peter v. 1-4). Primarily this passage is addressed to those who are mature in Christian experience and knowledge, and fitted to supervise the younger ones in regard to their conduct and spiritual life. They are to act as shepherds ("feed" is an inadequate translation). Shepherd-care is perfectly outlined in Psalm xxiii. and much is also said about it in Ezek xxxiv. They should strengthen the spiritually diseased, heal the spiritually sick, bind up the spiritually broken,

bring back those who have been driven away and seek those who are lost. When we look around how many Christians there are who need this shepherd-care, and how few there are who practise it. To-day there is much of the spirit of indifference to such needs, which was rebuked in Israel by the SPIRIT of GOD through Ezekiel. This shepherd-care is to be combined with such conduct in the elders as to make them also examples to the flock. The elders are not to think of fellow-Christians as *their* flock but as the *flock of GOD*.

You may be thinking "But I am a young one, not an elder." Yet you are probably in contact with some who are even younger in the faith than yourself, and you can act towards them in a shepherd-like way, especially by setting a good example in your daily life and conduct. Shepherds of the true kind are very much needed to-day. You will not suddenly change into an elder and a shepherd by a kind of metamorphosis, like a chrysalis turns into a butterfly! You may do kind of service, and to act accordingly as He gives you opportunity, remembering also verse 5:—"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another and be clothed with humility: for GOD resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble".

An unfading *crown of glory* is promised to those elders who act faithfully as shepherds towards the flock of GOD, something additional to the glory which all true believers will share when with CHRIST.

SUMMARY

We have thus seen that all four apostles—Paul, Peter, James and John—who were led by the HOLY SPIRIT to write the epistles which form part of the HOLY SCRIPTURES speak of a crown of reward. The crowns differ in character and are presented as rewards for different things. Akin to these crowns in the *prize* of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS for which the apostle Paul, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, pressed onward. The anonymous writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* also told us that JESUS, the LEADER of our faith, endured the cross *for the joy that was set before Him*.

The LORD knows our weakness, and His servants bring these rewards before us, by the HOLY SPIRIT, to stimulate us. May they have this effect upon both writer and reader for His Name's sake.

J. C. KELL.

On the Open Meeting

(continued from page 84)

UNSUITABLE MINISTRY

THE wilfulness that persists in thrusting unsuitable ministry (so-called)—unsuitable as to character or time—upon a long-suffering and sometimes an impatient company of saints inverts the true order of things. Those who presume to instruct others should surely possess sufficient intelligence in divine things to know that the LORD *is present attending to what is said*; that the assembly is the local habitation of GOD by the SPIRIT; that ministry, holy ministry, is living ministry in the power of an ungrieved SPIRIT Who knows the exact needs, conditions and spiritual receptiveness of those assembled; and that in ministry he himself is presuming to stand in the fear of the LORD to feed the flock of GOD. Such consideration would weigh heavily on the spirit of all save the self-willed, self-sufficient, self-important, self-complacent, self-appointed minister whatever his natural ability or gift. Is it any wonder that the "OPEN MEETING" falls into disfavour when the assembly is treated to a re-hash of platitudes that have already done duty in the same way, at other places? The LORD is affronted in His own presence by one who claims by this action to be one of His own gifts!

Is it for the honour of the LORD, for the edification of His people, or for the gratification of a human spirit that is not subject to itself and loves a prominence which it could not obtain in any other sphere of human activity? Did we not know our own evil hearts we might be tempted to enquire, Why should a man be so anxious to intrude his personality and air his ignorance, or vanity, or both, in such solemn circumstances?

The ancient story of Ahimaaz, found in the mirror of holy Scripture, may throw some light upon this subject, and help us to see ourselves in that light. Says Ahimaaz to Joab: "Come what may, let *me*, I pray thee, also run." And Joab said, "Why wilt thou run, my son, seeing there is no news suited [to thee]?" (2 Sam. xviii. 22-23 (J.N.D. Trans.))

"But, come what may, let *me* run," entreats Ahimaaz.

Yet when he arrives in the presence of the king he has no real message to give, no tidings for David so eagerly awaiting them.

"Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing thou hast no tidings ready? But howsoever, said he, Let *me* run."

These words very aptly describe the mentality of those wilful men who *must* speak at every opportunity in an "OPEN MEETING" whether they have any message or not suited to the occasion and condition of those assembled. The others sit by and judge, says the Apostle, *and most assuredly they do*. Requests, surprisingly, urgently, but wrongly made to the writer that some be plainly told that their ministry forced on the gatherings is unacceptable, and that their very presence at an "OPEN MEETING" produces anxiety, have led to the writing of this paper.

A glance at the trilogy of chapters referred to 1 Cor. xii. —xiv., may well serve to close this short article, and place the "OPEN MEETING" in its true setting. In 1 Cor. xii., the divine equipment for spiritual exercises of every kind in the assembly is given, and necessarily much prominence given to the HOLY SPIRIT, the Vicar of CHRIST and Administrator in His Church on earth. Confession of the Lordship of JESUS; the formation of the body of CHRIST and its ability to function as such on earth; and the equipment for every variety of service by the believer to God and man are all set out in this chapter and shown to be all by the SPIRIT of GOD.

That God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body *as it hath pleased Him*; that GOD hath tempered the body together; and that GOD hath set some in the Church for special purposes runs throughout chapter xii. In chapter xiii., however, there is no mention of GOD, CHRIST or the HOLY

SPIRIT, but all the characteristics of the new nature are seen in operation, for **GOD** is love, and *love* is the dynamic in service to **GOD** and man. The moral character of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** shines throughout this chapter, so much so that if His Name were placed instead of "love" the beauty of the characteristic traits given would shine perfectly.

In chapter xii. the **SPIRIT**, in chapter xiii. the energy in which the believer serves **GOD** and man in the church and the world, and in chapter xiv. the expression by human response to the divine equipment is given.

In the last chapter (xiv.) no mention is made of the **DIVINE SPIRIT** to Whom such prominence is given in chapter xii., but here it is *the human spirit*—with which the praying, prophesying, singing and every spiritual exercise must be made—that is prominent.

Hence it is here we are emphatically exhorted that "all things be done unto edifying" to the building up of the body of **CHRIST**. No account is taken here of one seeking to build up a reputation as a teacher or speaker, this being beneath what is becoming. "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church." "Let all things be done decently (comelily) and in order." These are "the commandments of the **LORD**" and as such claim the loyal obedience of all who own His lordship over themselves. Let us not be among those who say, **LORD, LORD**, but do not the things He says. Let us not be among those who loudly declaim against believers in the various ecclesiastical systems as ignoring godly order by their human arrangements for worship and service, while at the same time we transgress what is decent, comely, and becoming in those so ready to teach others.

One very subtle and insidious method of seeking escapism from our own responsibilities in any matter is the evasion of reality by the resort to generalization, such as "Ah! well, we all come short." The healthy way of dealing with the whole matter of the threatened breakdown of the "**OPEN MEETING**" is to reverently enquire of Him Who is both **LORD** and **HEAD** of the Church, "*Lord, is it I?*"

W.G.T.

Separated Unto David

BY THE EDITOR

(1 Chron. xii. 8—16)

IN this Scripture we have a roll of honour—a roll of ancient chivalry. David's men, the record of their names, exploits, and rewards—men who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, or as the marginal reading, "men who held strongly with him," sharing his exile and his exaltation, too. Four simple descriptive phrases sum up the story: Attracted to him; accepted by him; active for him; and acknowledged by him.

David, the deliverer of the nation from the giant enemy, was an outlaw and exile, but also the Anointed King, and God's chosen man, though still rejected by the mass of the people.

The *attraction* he had for some, however, is seen in that to Adullam, Ziklag, and the wilderness of Judah came:

Men who were in distress, in debt, and discontented, or bitter of soul.

Men who separated themselves to David.

Men who came to offer their allegiance, love, and life to him.

Men who believed that the cause of David was the cause of God.

All came exercising faith in the rejected man who was to be the coming King. They recognised him as the Anointed One; they looked to the future when he would be vindicated; they counted Saul's honours as valueless; they esteemed the reproach of David's present position having respect to the exaltation to which he was destined in God's purpose.

Their *acceptance* by him was very gracious; "he received them"—"he became a captain over them." They were his band, led by him, governed by him, cared for by him, protected by him, as he reassured one of them by saying, "Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life, seeketh thy life: and with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

Their *activity* for David is shown by the long list of exploits performed by them, ranging from slaying three hundred men, to killing a lion in a pit on a snowy day, and in one instance standing fighting until the warrior's hand clave to his sword. Valiant men, brave hearts, mighty warriors were they all, having become so in the service of their rejected King. Their activities may be grouped briefly under three heads:

1. Definite combat with, and victory over, his foes.
2. Definitely holding on, and standing their ground.
3. Definitely refreshing him by their personal devotion.

What a contrast is presented between the least of these and Jonathan with all his wealth of woman-like affection and tenderness! The heart of love is sacrifice; and the measure of our giving is always what we retain for ourselves. The widow's mites given in the gospel story and our LORD's remarks thereupon settle this for all time. Jonathan practically gave up nothing at all for David, neither the society of the court, home comforts, nor substance. Yet he loved him.

Their *acknowledgment* by David is seen in the rewards, general and particular, granted them in the Kingdom.

First, their names are owned by him, and placed on record. He is not ashamed to acknowledge them when no longer despised of the nation, but owned as its Anointed King.

Secondly, positions in the Kingdom are assigned according to their deeds. There are distinctions and differences of degrees shown as their various deeds are enumerated by the chronicler.

All who shared his hardships, reproach, rejection and suffered with him are seen in the Kingdom; but there are *the first three*, and *the second three*, and *the thirty chiefs*, and *one specially honoured above the thirty chiefs*, though not attaining to *the first three*—he is set over the King's council.

So in the record of David's Kingdom, the rule mentioned by St. Paul centuries later is followed, "One star differeth from another star in glory." "Every man in his own order." Jashobeam, Eleazar, Shammah are *the first three*, for great and doughty deeds stand to their credit. But *all* are acknowledged, *all* are recognised, and *all* are rewarded by King David when upon the royal throne in his Kingdom.

All this, apart from its historical interest, has a most practical lesson for every Christian believer. There is another King, One JESUS; great David's greater Son and LORD. To-day He is refused by the world, rejected by men, "disallowed indeed of men but chosen of GOD and precious." To those who believe in Him He is also precious. And the Christian believer is one who gathers to the Exiled LORD, the rejected One by the world; esteems His reproach having respect to the recompence of the reward; chooses to suffer with Him and His people; knows Whom he has believed; and has been drawn by His love to Him from the service of the ruler and god of this world, to live for, to love and to serve the Captain of our salvation.

Three marks of a real Christian believer are personal attachment to CHRIST; personal allegiance to CHRIST; and personal activity for CHRIST.

Finally, in all our activity on account of our allegiance and attachment to CHRIST we shall have to combat, as David's heroes did, Egyptian hosts that would seek to make us forswear our loyalty; Moabites—like lions seeking to frighten us from confessing our allegiance! lions in snowy pits of uncomfortable situations where fierce passions lie ready to leap out upon us; and also Philistines encamped by the very wells of Bethlehem to draw us from our simple personal love to Him.

But the voice of the Captain of our salvation speaks reassuringly to our fearful hearts, and fills the old-time words of David with fuller meaning, as He says, "*Abide thou with Me, fear not: for he that seeketh My life seeketh thy life: but with Me thou shalt be in safeguard.*"

"The Time of Old Age"

(Job xv. 10)

"**W**ITH us are both the grey-headed and very aged men." These surely should receive our consideration when they are found among God's people; men and women, who for many years have sought to walk in His ways. They are worthy of all honour. The days of restless youth with their golden

dreams have faded into the remote past. Gone too, is middle life with its stress and conflict. Old age is come, and has brought its peculiar trials and exercises. GOD has evidently a special place in His heart for the aged. He was thinking of them in their weakness when He said "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you" (Isa. xlvi. 4). As a loving parent carries a tired child, so does our LORD carry us over the rough places of life and never sets us down. In David's "Old age psalm" (lxxi.), he twice prays that GOD will not forsake him—"Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth" (v. 9); and again, "Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not" (v. 18). Was it likely that GOD would forsake His aged and wayworn servant? Would not the GOD of his youth, be also the GOD of his declining years? Read the Psalm, and you will find his own experience supplies the answer (v. 14) to the end. Instead of forsaking His children in the evening of their lives, GOD comforts them on every side. No, GOD never forsakes His aged pilgrims. They may be forgotten by friends, or slighted as useless cumberers of the ground, but GOD does not fail them, and their SAVIOUR loves them to the end. (St. John xiii. 1.)

There is no reason why the Christian's declining years should not be bright. It is still true that "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs iv. 18). Our LORD still knows how to keep the good wine till the last. "We know Whom we have believed" and know that He is able to make the evening of our days bright with the shining of His love. Much depends on keeping close to the LORD and abiding in His love, or "planted in the house of the LORD" as in Psalm xcii. 13. Then can we claim the promise of verse 14: "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age." Barzillai, aged 80, rendered good service to King David when he was weary and an exile. Anna, also with her full sheaf of years, unable to get about the streets of the city, but confined within the Temple precincts, was able to testify of the CHRIST Who was even then present "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Happy service in spite of her widowhood, and the weight of her years!

If God's aged pilgrims "continually resort" to CHRIST as their "strong habitation" (Psalm lxxi. 3), they will be maintained in spiritual freshness and joy, but old age in itself is no guarantee of this. A long life spent in the fear of the LORD may close under a shadow if we imagine that it enables us to dispense for a moment with the services of our Great High Priest. He it is Who lives to save to the uttermost—through to the end—through every trial. We cannot do without Him. Far from making us independent, the mercy and grace that we receive, have Him as their source.

Dante, with his poet's vision, looked to the far end of life, and wrote "In this age, the noble soul gives itself up to God, and awaits the end of life with much desire. It is out of the Inn to return home to the FATHER'S HOUSE—to have crossed the wide sea, and now returning into the Harbour."

Experience and memory are treasures of the later years, and how precious they are! When we were young, we *hoped* that all things would "work together for good to them that love God." We are beginning to see the right side of the embroidery, and how the dark threads, and the bright ones, are weaving together to make a lovely pattern. We can also share our experiences with the younger ones, and encourage them in the path. How great a debt many of us owe to our Sunday School teachers who were no longer young, yet brought out of the store-house of memory and experience, "things new and old", and shared them with us. They were wise in the things of God and truth, and rich in experience.

A word in conclusion: Does the aged reader feel lonely, and the loved ones of earlier years all gone, while waiting and watching for the SAVIOUR to come? Take comfort then in the case of Paul (2 Tim. iv. 16) who in the hour of his need found the LORD stood with him. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. xiii. 5). "If I had my time over again," remarked one of God's aged servants, "I would go in for the ministry of encouragement."

It is true, and it is a comfort, that with the lesser *quantities* of fruit old age can bear for the LORD, the quality may be better, and the flavour more heavenly.

ANON.

The Years of Growth

IN the book of Numbers there are many instructions from God that are of great value for us to-day, for they illustrate practically the privileges and responsibilities that belong to the people of God. We learn these in the New Testament, and then, under the guidance of the SPIRIT, we find them displayed in operation in the Old Testament. Some details concerning Israel and the Levites are very interesting.

In the first chapter of Numbers, Israel are numbered "from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel." (v. 3.) What we have here is conflict to maintain the testimony. Israel were a redeemed people, and they as a nation were linked with the Name of Jehovah on the earth. This meant conflict; conflict to maintain their pathway through the wilderness, and conflict to enter into, and to preserve, their inheritance. And for this we find that twenty years had to elapse before they could take their place in the ranks. All this time they were learning, and growing in the knowledge of their privileges and responsibilities, until that day dawned when they were accounted able to take their place in a public stand with the people of God.

This is the position that belongs to "young men". Young, not perhaps according to natural age, but young in the faith. No longer "little children", but those who "are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." (1 John ii. 14.) These then are the qualifications for public association with the people of God in the conflict. They have overcome the wicked one. Amalek has been met and defeated. The flesh has been conquered through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, and through the abiding of the word of God, they are strong. Like the young Israelite, they have spent their years since their being born again in learning this word and proving it, until at the last it is an integral part of their life; it abides in them. With all the armour of God, with the consciousness of a defeated foe, they are now qualified for the battle.

The children of Levi were numbered separately. They were not for the conflict, they were the priestly family. "Number

the children of Levi . . . from a month old and upward shalt thou number them." (Num. iii. 15.) From a month old they were reckoned in the family, that is, as soon as life was established. The privileges, the provision that was made for the Levites, was their portion from a month old and upward. They may not have enjoyed it all, for that could only come with increasing age, but their position was secure because of their birth, and because life was there. Totally unfitted at that age for any conflict of service, yet their place was given them by **JEHOVAH**, and their name ranked equally in the family roll with that of the head of the family himself.

This was the place to which the Thessalonians came. They "turned to **GOD** from idols to serve the living and true **GOD**" (1 Thess. i. 9.) They were made worshippers because of the work of our **LORD JESUS CHRIST**, and needed no other qualification to serve, or worship, **GOD**. He alone has made us a kingdom, priests unto **GOD** and His **FATHER**. This is what answers to the priestly family, and our title to its privileges and its provision is our new birth. As soon as life, life before **GOD**, is established, the title is there, in just the same way as the Levites were numbered from a month old and upwards.

But it is a very different thing to be aware of, and to exercise, the responsibilities of this position. The Levites, in their service, were responsible to maintain the unity of the tabernacle system. Each had their particular burden, with its own exercise. They were all directly under the hand of Aaron to whom they had been given. If there was any failure, then the tabernacle could not be erected as **GOD** had commanded, and there would be something lacking in His worship. It was a very trying service, for there was nothing easy about maintaining this unity which was so precious to **Jehovah**. For it we read they were numbered "from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old . . . to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation." (Num. iv. 3.)

We find specific answers to these types in the instructions to Timothy and Titus regarding bishops, or overseers, and deacons. In 1 Tim. iii. 6 we read "not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the

devil." This is one who is answering to the type of the godly Levite, bearing the burden of the assemblies, as did the apostle Paul. And for all desirous of this good work there is this qualification, "not a novice", which answers to the Levite being numbered to the service of the tabernacle after thirty years of life.

Every Israelite was one of a redeemed people, and had the privilege in all his life of testifying to this fact. By his manner of life, by his obedience to the word that had been given him from **JEHOVAH**, he witnessed that he was different from the people around him. And every believer, every one who has been "born again . . . by the word of **GOD**, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1. 23) has the same blessed privilege. So, too, every believer has been given the place of a worshipper, and may, if he be clean, feed upon the priestly food, which is **CHRIST** Himself. But it would appear that, as a general principle, there must be a period of growth, of trial, of experience, before one enters into a public place, whether in the conflicts that arise that concern the people of **GOD** and the testimony (as distinct from that which is incidental to the individual walk), or whether in connection with the wellbeing of the collective testimony. Prominence in these matters does not become one who has not passed from the spiritual state of "little children" to that of "young men". Not that one would suggest that a specific number of years should elapse after conversion, but the instruction of the type is surely that a measure of maturity is requisite, and we have the recognisable marks of these stages in maturity in the Epistle of John. We all know that the blessed **LORD** Himself was about thirty years old before He came out into His public ministry.

The habit of the world around us is to glorify youth. Let us beware lest this influence intrudes where it is not seemly, as in spiritual things. The natural tendencies of youth are towards desires which have to be shunned (2 Tim. ii. 22), and Titus was told to instruct "Young men . . . to be sober minded" (Tit. ii. 6). Taught by the word, they think rightly, and discover what are **GOD**'s thoughts as to His work and service. By heeding the word in this way, growth is made that will lead the **LORD**'s servant into paths of truly fruitful service. D.E.B.

The Christian in Two Worlds

WITHIN the period separating our LORD's resurrection from His ascension He appeared to His disciples on various occasions, gave them His blessing, and then disappeared. This was in order to establish His identity, to renew His commission, and to help them to pass from the realisation of His outward and physical presence to the realisation of His inward and spiritual presence. It was to teach them the nearness of the unseen world, and make them feel at home in it.

Although the Christian Scientist has "matter is nothing" as one of his slogans, very few deny the reality of the natural world! Our LORD was never indifferent to our lower needs, and when on earth He loved to minister to the hungry, the sick and the afflicted. As a matter of fact the Christian, like the unregenerate, has to devote most of his life to supplying his bread-and-butter, cloth-and-leather and bricks-and-mortar needs. The Communist goes farther still, and stultifies himself by claiming that the material needs are the *only* real ones, and that all spiritual experience is moonshine!

The Christian, too, owes allegiance to his earthly government—whatever that may happen to be. And we know that as soon as a modern major war breaks out everyone who can be of any use in the national effort is roped in and made to serve his government in its complex endeavour to overthrow the enemy government.

Practically every Christian has natural interests, apart from the work he is compelled to do to provide for his own material needs and those of his dependents. Among the natural interests freely chosen by Christians, because congenial to their temperament, are the romance issuing in marriage and the establishment of a family, literature, art, science, music, travel, gardening, and so forth. The preservation or the regaining of health is of course a natural interest of primary importance. A very great deal of the Christian's happiness in life is connected with his natural interests, for he is living in a material world and is still in the body; and well he knows it!

The Scripture exhorts us to receive thankfully from God those natural good things which He has given us "richly to

enjoy". We are to use the world without abusing it, and the pleasure which accompanies such use is not only lawful but may be helpful because making for a wholesome and *balanced* mental outlook.

But the Christian is a citizen of the spiritual world; and this world is just as real as the natural, and is mentioned or implied all through the New Testament which teaches with the utmost clearness the "heavenly calling of the Church". In fact our highest blessings and privileges as Christian believers belong to the spiritual realm, the "heavenlies". An American in Italy was asked, "How do you keep in touch with American life as you do?" He replied, "I have never been out of touch with it. I eat and sleep in Italy, but I *really live in America.*"

Philippians iii. 20 reminds us that the Christian is a citizen of heaven, that he belongs to a commonwealth that is heavenly, that heaven is his homeland, his own country. The Church is a colony of heaven on earth. Our spiritual life is governed by the laws of heaven. Our truest life is beyond human sight and the reach of accident or 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. And *absolute* obedience is due alone to CHRIST Whose subjects we are and Whose authority is *supreme*. We are to recognise, attend to and use the things of the natural world; *we are to set our hearts upon* the things of the spiritual world.

The Christian's chief business is the service of CHRIST, viewed in its fullest sense. Although Paul's experience, "To me to live is CHRIST", expresses for us an ideal, yet the gap that separates his experience from ours is not one of nature or kind but of degree; like the apostle's converts of Salonika, every Christian has turned to GOD to serve the living and true GOD. And his highest joy is the joy of loving the LORD, with mind and heart and will.

E. ADAMS.

A Letter in Rhyme and Metre

EARNEST Readers, I am writing at my muse's inspiration,
 To encourage and exhort you in your daily occupation;
 For I know that when misfortune with an iron hand assails us,
 Disappointment often follows, and our courage often fails us;
 But believe me if I tell you, nay, I need but to remind you,
 That if trouble and reversion in its cruel bondage bind you,
 There is One Who sympathises and makes all things turn out
 well.

Woe to those who are not tested, and by trial rendered purer,
 For GOD sits as a refiner, and His work is always surer,
 When with meekness we submit to His refinement, and the
 testing

Of our faith is very precious, on His skill if we are resting;
 Then with greatest resignation trust His loving Hand for
 leading,

And like gold tried in the fire, you will in the end succeeding,
 Praise the LORD for all His goodness, and for all that you
 befell!

I most truly know and realise 'tis hard to see the reason
 Why we should be tried and weighted down by sorrow in the
 season,

When around us we can see the wicked prospering, successful,
 But consider that their end will be unhappy and distressful,
 And compare it with the end of those from crucible refining,
 Who like bright and burnished gold with greatest radiance are
 shining,

In the happy realms of Paradise, where naught but joy can
 dwell!

Everlasting our inheritance, the worldly, poor and fleeting.
 Incorruptible, untarnished, is the crown GOD gives, entreating
 Us to trust with all our heart upon the One Who died to
 save us,

And to bring us to the mansions which in His great love He
 gave us.

Ought this not then as a stimulus to lead us to endeavour
 To be pleasing to Him always; to delight Him more than ever!
 Therefore let us not at all against His chastening rebel!

G. S. PURNELL.

Notes From a Meditation

(St. Luke xxiv)

HERE on the day of His resurrection the LORD takes the scene into His own hands. When arrested in the Garden, He recognised that moment as man's hour, the hour of darkness, "This is *your* hour". He was disposing of the scene there as it pleased Him.

So it continued until the three hours of darkness on the Cross when GOD *took it into His hands* "and it pleased the LORD to bruise Him . . . and make His soul an offering for sin". It is most desirable to note the special characteristic of that moment, for all through His life the FATHER'S countenance was beaming upon Him. Was He forsaken of His FATHER through life? Read His utterance in Ps. xxi [the SPIRIT OF CHRIST in the Psalmist]; but now, according to the prophetic voices, and the premonitions of John the Baptist, there He was—GOD'S LAMB, and at once becomes the conqueror by His death. GOD did not wait for the resurrection to sanction the death of JESUS but sanctioned it by rending the veil of the temple—His *private seal*, and the rapidity is beautiful to observe.

When with the appointed "third day" the time came for GOD'S *public seal* upon that death by the resurrection.

We cannot measure the time between the giving up the GHOST and the rending of the veil (Mt. xxvii. 50, 51) for that was the satisfaction of the throne. In two ways the LORD when here was doing the will of GOD. His business throughout life was turning darkness into light, that being the will of the FATHER, as at the Well of Sychar, while here as a living minister; as a dying Victim on the Cross He was doing the will of the throne where judgment was seated. This throne was satisfied when He gave up the GHOST. One was a doing of the will of the FATHER in grace [as at Sychar]; the other was doing the will of GOD in judgment [at Calvary].

Having passed through *man's* hour and GOD'S hour, here in Luke xxiv. we see Him in *His own hour* in resurrection life. His own hour is eternity. Blessed indeed to be in His company in the path of life entering a bright and intimate eternity with Himself, the LORD JESUS. (Contributed)

The Old Paths

(Jeremiah vi, 16)

By THE EDITOR

“**A**SK for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

Those addressed thus by the prophet were people who had somehow missed the path, got out of the way, and were in a deplorable spiritual condition. This is described in these scathing terms “from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.”

They were nominally GOD'S people, yet says the prophet “they refused to walk in the old paths, saying, We will not walk therein,” with the above sad result.

The frequent and abortive efforts for re-union in Christendom witness to the uneasy feeling that on the whole there has been a great drifting or wandering from the old paths and the good ways of apostolic doctrine and practice. Yet truth whether rejected wilfully, or drifted from almost unconsciously, does not alter its character. The old paths and the good way still remain inviting souls to find rest in doing the will of GOD as written in His word.

It is always to “that which was from the beginning” GOD by the SPIRIT and the written word directs His people in times of spiritual failure and decline, like those in which our present lot is cast. “Let him that nameth the Name of the LORD depart from iniquity (2 Tim., ii, 19).” Hence it must be individual work, the call being, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT saith unto the churches.” To such as give heed a seven times repeated promise is given “to him that overcometh.”

Along the old paths and the good way stand two signposts, OBEDIENCE and HOLINESS. The first that greets the traveller on the highway of spiritual blessing and rest, is that of OBEDIENCE pointing to the age long revelation recorded in 1 Sam., xv, 22, “Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt

offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The second is HOLINESS, as the Psalmist (xciii, 5) says, "Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever. And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the *way of holiness*, the unclean shall not pass over it (Isa. xxxv, 8)." And since separation from evil is GOD'S principle of holiness we find it written "Be ye separate . . . perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD" (2 Cor. vi, 17—vii, 1).

In the old paths and the good way we become, as a Psalmist says, *companions of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts*. It is in the keeping, the observing, of His precepts that this joy of companionship is realized. As in the dark days of Israel's history recorded by the last of the Old Testament prophets, when even the revived remnant of those who returned from the Captivity were failing, then "they that feared the Lord spake often to one another." It is not difficult to think what the subject of the conversation of this faithful remnant of a remnant would be. We are told they feared the LORD and thought upon His Name. The associations gathered around that Name—JEHOVAH were many and precious to such godly Israelites as these. JEHOVAH—jireh Who provides; JEHOVAH—nissi Who gives victory; JEHOVAH—shalom Who gives peace; JEHOVAH—tsidkenu What He is, the LORD our righteousness; JEHOVAH—shammah Where He is, the LORD is there (Gen. xxii, 14; Ex. xvii, 15; Judges vi, 24; Jer. xxiii, 6; Ezek. xlvi, 35). As they that thought upon His Name spoke often one to another they found it to be a real gathering centre for them in the day of small things in which their lot was cast. They possessed a common joy in it, shared a deep and mutual reverence for it, and sorrow at the dishonour done to it by the religious leaders of their day. In that day, as in this, such as were really exercised about the honour of GOD and trembled at His word, became those through whom the light steadily shone amid the growing darkness. They were those too, by whom witness was still borne to the great truths and principles upon which GOD

always blesses His people. It was then, as now, a day of difficulty and weakness, and an assurance given through a prophet three centuries earlier received by them a fulfilment. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Again for the comfort and encouragement of the individual who may be even hated by his brethren on account of faithfulness in spiritual matters a further word of strong consolation was given through the same prophet, "To this man will I look (saith the LORD) even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at My word."

And of the little remnant of a remnant in Malachi iii, 16, we read "the LORD hearkened, and heard"—these words are not identical. Hearkened has the sense here of attention arrested; heard expresses rather the loving interest in those who were not speaking *to* Him but to one another *about* Him. These were they who feared the LORD, trembled at His word, and loved to speak often one to another about Him. They had their reward in the mutual comfort of His love, but more awaited them, They shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels (lit. peculiar treasure).

"Ask for the old paths and the good way, walk therein and ye shall find rest for your souls." If reproached for the Name of CHRIST on account of devotion to His Name and word, there is another ancient word which has been a great comfort to such for faithfulness in keeping in the old paths and the good way, and this is what it says: "Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at His word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed" (Isa. lxvi, 5).

The Response of the Heart

AND there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come

peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the GOD of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it. Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy GOD helpeth thee (1 Chron. xii, 16-18).

There is a beautiful picture here in the heart's response to David's person. Some of Benjamin and Judah come out to the wilderness, to find David during the time he is cast out of the kingdom. But this evidence of their desire is not enough, and David challenges them, challenges their hearts and motives. How refreshing to his own spirit must have been the response. There was nothing in his circumstances to attract them, and there appeared no prospect of future glory, so that we may conclude that it was the person of David himself that really drew them. We read, "The spirit came upon Amasai." It was the delight of the Spirit to respond in this way to David, and the pledge of complete identification follows, with the promise of a peace that only faith could apprehend, for the reason for it, "Thy GOD helpeth thee," was known only to faith.

There is a sense in which we face a challenge similar to this every time we gather around the LORD in the presence of the tokens of His death. Today is still the time of His rejection, and there is no visible evidence of any glory to follow. The bread and the wine seem to say to us,—What are you doing here? There is nothing here but declared weakness, even unto death:—why have you come? And it is only as led by the SPIRIT that there will be a similar willing response in our hearts, for He who testified of David, testifies with perfect delight of David's LORD, who is also there, according to His promise, in the midst of the twos and the threes gathered to His Name.

"Thine are we, David." Yes, here are the memorials of that death by which we have been redeemed. That body, prepared for this very purpose, was laid down in death for us, and the precious blood of CHRIST was shed for our ransom.

In the presence of these memorials, we delight to own that we have been bought with this price; that we belong to Him who took our place in death. We are gathered because of this very thing, to remember this blessed Person, rather than to think of His glory, while at the same time it is our joy to utter His worthiness, to whom also we have been given by the FATHER, the recompense for His suffering and travail. This is the response of love to that great love that brought Him to deliver Himself up for us, that we can know and say, "Thine are we."

They knew Him by name. They did not come to the wilderness to someone unknown, but to one whom they knew by name. "Thine are we, David." And it is not to be doubted that the LORD'S heart is delighted today when we come to Him as to One well known. If we have known the value of His work, and have companied with Him in the way, then we may rest in the communion of His presence in perfect delight, finding His fruit sweet to our taste. It was not presumption of John to lean on JESUS' bosom, that place was ever open to a loving heart, and still is; all that He is, all that is conveyed in His Name, may be enjoyed in the quiet rest of His presence.

The deep inner conviction of the soul produces action consistent with the conviction. There is no such thing as an abstract relationship—that is, one only acknowledged intellectually—and life, and the assurance of life, is proved by what is manifested. "Thine are we" is the blessed assurance of relationship; "On thy side" is the inevitable manifested result. Inevitable, that is, where there is the true devotion of an honest heart. How can we deny Him who has brought us to Himself? If our heart is exercised, if our affections are warm, we shall rejoice to be known as His in the very place where He is rejected, and shall covet the commendation given to those who have not denied His Name. This is the claim on us of the bread and the cup, for, says the apostle, "we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14-15).

“Thy GOD helpeth Thee.” There are secrets revealed to love that the enemy is not to know yet, but will prove to the full in the day of our LORD’s glory. We meet around Him here until we are taken to that glory. This is the expectation of the place: “Till He come.” We know His worthiness today, and how all things are in His hand—hidden from others, it may be, but the blessed assurance is ours of GOD’s good pleasure in CHRIST. “The pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.” A peace in which we shall have a very blessed place with Him shall be the outcome of all His travail, and the recompense of His worthiness. And today, gathered around Him, we may rehearse His worth in His ear, for nothing delights His heart like a true and firm apprehension of His excellency. Our occupation with it before Him brings the response that “Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue” (Song iv, 11).

And thus, in the time of His rejection, may His heart rejoice in the response of those drawn, not to His power and glory, but *to the beauty and worth of His peerless Person.*

D.E.B.

Encouragement in Difficult Days

WE cannot fail to notice that much of the ministry of the Old Testament Prophets is occupied in denunciation and exposure of the people’s departure from the way of the LORD, and their consequent falling into evil ways, which brought the judgment of JEHOVAH upon them. But the eye of the Holy One of Israel was upon those who sighed and cried over these abominations (Ezek. ix, 4), and trembled at His Word, (Isa. lxvi, 2, 5) in contrast with those who would not regard His Word and refused His admonitions (Isa. xxx, 15).

If our hearts are straitened and distressed in the midst of the prevailing departure and indifference, let us return to the

rest and peace of GOD'S presence, there to find salvation and solace for our souls. Looking up with quietness and confidence we shall thus find spiritual strength to go on with the LORD. Shall we fall into the snare of pulling away the shoulder and stopping our ears? (Zech. vii, 11). It is fatally easy to go with the multitude and to find our own pleasure. (Isa. lviii, 13).

On the very eve of the LORD'S coming for His own, hearts grow cold towards our beloved LORD, spiritual insensibility has allowed the enemy to sow tares among the wheat, but still His voice pleads with us recalling us to Himself. Who or what is there that we would allow to take His place in our affections? Deep personal attachment to CHRIST is the antidote to all the poisonous and soul withering influences that abound today. Let us return to Him, taking with us words of confession, contrition and confidence, for He will receive us graciously (Hosea xiv), and cause us to revive and grow for His pleasure and joy. There will never be any abatement in His love and care for His own. Alas that we should be so easily ensnared by the subtle and insidious influences which abound on every hand, and little by little be drawn away from the simplicity that is in CHRIST. If we would keep ourselves in the love of GOD, we must pray in the HOLY GHOST, and watch thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Epaphras laboured fervently in prayer that his brethren might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (Col. iv, 12).

There cannot be spiritual progress without communion with the LORD, and a quiet unwavering confidence in Him. Neither can we live on another's spirituality, but must each feed on CHRIST for ourselves; reading the word with humility of mind and resolutely refusing to compromise the truth which shall abide for ever. Like Moses we must meet Amalek (a type of the flesh), with the sword of the SPIRIT, which is the word of GOD. The LORD is our banner and the flesh must perish for ever (Num. xxiv. 20). The LORD will certainly be with us if we walk with Him; may it be that we shall be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

L. HOWSON.

The Body of Our Humiliation

(*Philippians iii, 21 R.V.*)

THE body in which the Christian now lives belongs to his condition of humiliation and suffering in this present world. While in this "tabernacle we groan, being burdened," for the body we now have contains the sinful nature, and is associated with death.

It is true that the body is the instrument by which the evil nature within us executes its sinful desires. But it is more than this. The body is sometimes the *occasion* of sin. Is not the drunkard's body the exciting cause of his besetment? When the body is weak or sickly the temper is apt to be irritable. In fact, a good meal can sometimes alter the outlook on life!

The fact is that we are not built in watertight compartments. The body affects the mind, and the mind affects the faith; and vice versa. A part, at least, of Elijah's unbelieving dejection was due to physical exhaustion. And it would seem that Luther's burly and robust physique was in a measure responsible for the boldness of his faith. A Christian's actual output of work for his MASTER is usually far less than he desires, by reason of the heaviness of "that torpid ass"—the body. And a few with inherited infirmities or organic disease find it virtually impossible to engage in what is usually known as Christian work. They can just manage to "keep going" each day, and have to use their spare time in trying to regain sufficient strength to enable them to get through their daily tasks.

Believers sometimes fail to grasp the fact that nature ignores motives. Ill-health is the result of the violation of nature's laws, whether in the service of evil or of good. Some Christian workers may imagine that because they become ill in the LORD'S service they are entitled to expect a speedy, easy and almost miraculous cure. And they are painfully distressed when a cure tarries or never comes.

When healing comes, it is always GOD who gives it, for "in Him we live, and move, and have our being." He is the Author and Sustainer of all life, including the life of our body.

But He usually heals, both in the case of Christians and of non-Christians, through natural means, such as diet, rest, exercise, climate, medicines, surgery and mental suggestion, and by the operation of those vital forces within the body, of which He is the Author and Renewer. There are, of course, many authenticated cases of Divine or miraculous healing through the prayer of faith, such cases not being confined to any particular church or company of Christians. But the general rule is for a sickness to run its ordinary course in the case of the believer as in that of the non-Christian. It is a mistake to fasten the attention on the exception, and dishonest to erect the exception into a standard.

The apostle tells us, by implication, to "keep the body under." This cannot mean that we are to keep the body in a weak state, for he advises Timothy to take a little wine for his indigestion and frequent sicknesses. The meaning is that we should keep the body in the condition of a healthy, obedient and willing *servant*, under the control of our higher nature.

The spiritual body, the "house from heaven," for which the Christian looks, will be in perfect harmony with the spiritual life which it contains, will be in perfect harmony with its new environment, and will be perfectly controlled by the redeemed spirit. The body "is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power."

So we look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST: Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory" (Phil. iii, 20, 21 R.V.).

E. ADAMS.

Lest We Forget

(Another Reprint on Church Development and Departure)

THE Church of Rome in St. Paul's day was acknowledged by him as being Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. Composed of those who were "saints by calling," whose "faith was spoken of throughout the whole world," and who were in

full communion with the Apostles, she was indeed what Rome still claims to be. But what was the "faith of our fathers, holy faith," of which modern Romanists are never weary of singing? Examined in the light of the Scriptures the Roman faith in Apostolic days was such that no present-day Romanist would recognise it as his. A few of the doctrines firmly held by first century Roman believers were: Justification before GOD by faith alone; enjoyment of peace with GOD as the normal experience of a Christian; joy in GOD because fully reconciled to Him by CHRIST'S death; baptism unto death and not as a means of regeneration; assurance of "no condemnation" and "no separation," together with a joyous spirit of sonship leading to liberty of worship; assurance of salvation to every believer; and the exaltation of scripture as the means of joy and peace in believing. These are some of the early Roman Church doctrines which strangely enough are neither held nor taught by Romanism to-day. Scripture *and* tradition is what Catholic doctrine is based upon. Our LORD'S words in S. Matt. xv. 1-9, on tradition transgressing, adding to, and neutralising scripture, show the inevitable result in formalism and hypocrisy. Formalism and hypocrisy however, are not peculiar to Romanism; indeed, using geographical terms which have also acquired an ecclesiastical significance, *it might well be said that from Plymouth to Rome, and everywhere en route, this danger threatens. To be taught the fear of God by the traditions of men is fatal to spiritual life and godliness,* and was condemned by Isaiah in his day. While Rome, to-day as always, dogmatically holds and maintains the Christian faith as to GOD; the deity and humanity of CHRIST; the GODHEAD and personality of the SPIRIT; the inspiration and infallibility of scripture; the doom of the finally impenitent; she has obscured, overlaid and corrupted the truths of the gospel of the grace of GOD by adding to the Christian faith the commandments of men. Her peculiar doctrines of the Immaculate Conception of B.V. Mary; Papal infallibility; purgatory; indulgences; veneration of relics; invocation of saints; worship of images; and extraordinary devotions to the Mother of our LORD are additions to "*the faith once delivered to the saints.*" The cause is

found in the *weird doctrine of development* applied to revealed truth; the result is seen in the tendency to obscure the real features of Rome's original faith. The dates of the frequent and successive *Innovations* of the Roman church may prove interesting in connection with her development of doctrine.

The Invocation of Saints	...	...	A.D.	375
Prayers for the dead	...	...	...	400
Worship in unknown tongue	...	...	...	606
Supremacy of the Pope	...	...	...	606
Worship of the Cross, Images, Relics	...	...	...	787
Constrained celibacy of the clergy	...	...	...	1000
Canonisation of saints	...	...	...	1000
Infallibility of the Church	...	...	...	1075
Pope Urban II. instituted the first crusade for the material Image of the Cross, and since then millions of lives have been sacrificed	...	...	...	1095
Sacrifice of the Mass	...	...	...	1100
Seven Sacraments	...	...	...	1160
Transubstantiation	...	...	...	1215
Compulsory confession to a priest	...	...	...	1215
Elevation of the Host and the use of lights in the daytime	...	...	...	1220
Ring of bell at Mass	...	...	...	1227
Corpus Christi Day	...	...	...	1264
When the Host is transubstantiated by a priest it is <i>Caredet</i> in possession	...	...	...	1336
Withholding the cup from the Laity	...	...	...	1415
Purgatory	...	...	...	1438
Tradition	...	...	...	1546
Apocryphal books	...	...	...	1547
Priestly intention necessary to the validity of a Sacrament	...	...	...	1547
Venial sins	...	...	...	1563
Sale of indulgences	...	...	...	1563
Creed of Pope Pius IV., in which twelve new Articles of Faith were added to the Creed, composed A.D. 325	...	...	...	1564
Immaculate conception	...	...	...	1854

Papal infallibility	...	...	...	...	1870
Assumption of Virgin Mary	...	...	...	...	1952

The following is the answer given to a Roman Catholic journalist at an Anglo-Catholic public meeting by a clerical leader—a *Church of England* clergyman:—

“We are exactly 1,016 clergymen who have these last eight years subscribed to the faith of the Council of Trent, and pledged ourselves to preach it to our parishes. Moreover, some two thousand others are in sympathy with our aims, and join us every year with their parishioners in a Novena for the return of the Anglican Church to the Papacy.”

It is not at all surprising that the representative of the chief Roman Catholic journal said, “The writer’s first impulse was to fling his cap and rush out to tell his fellow-Catholics all about it.”

But what of the feeling of shame and dismay in the heart of evangelicals, and of all who grieve over Rome’s apostasy from her earliest faith!

And how loud the call to return to the utter simplicity of the gospel of the grace of GOD, and the transparent sincerity of faith and fellowship *solely based upon the Scripture of truth*. Can we hear it? We need to awake to the trend of things in the so-called religious world to-day, and to quit ourselves as men of GOD, that is, those who stand for GOD in an evil day.

QUARTUS.

Psalm xxiii is the sheep speaking about the SHEPHERD;
St. John x the SHEPHERD speaking about His sheep.

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“I shall not want” “I will fear no evil” are two precious negatives. If I do not want in the *present* and do not fear for the *future*, then surely I am in a happy position.

(Selected by C. A. Hammond.)

Thoughts on the Book of Judges

By THE EDITOR

The *Book of Judges* is one of the most interesting books in the Bible, with messages for all ages, food for the heart and mind, and illustrations of how, to the Jewish people, prosperity was a reward of faithfulness, and adversity the wages of disobedience. It is remarkable among other things for its variety; and the hinges upon which the history of Israel turns in the days when the Judges ruled are *relapses* through man's unfaithfulness to known duty and *revivals* granted through the pity and compassion of GOD in answer to their pitiful appeals from time to time. All through the four and a half centuries, under the twelve Judges raised up by the LORD for their deliverances from successive terms of servitude, the constant clashes were between what the ANGEL of JEHOVAH—one of the *Christophanies* before the permanent Incarnation of the SON of GOD—calls "My covenant and your league (covenant)," with resultant snares and adversaries entailed by disobedience and forgetting responsibility (ch. ii. 11-13).

The high calling based upon redemption by blood and power from the Egyptian bondage, confirmed by the miraculous wilderness providences and victorious entry into Canaan under Joshua, was forgotten by the generation then in the land, and instead of being a living growing testimony to JEHOVAH the GOD of all the earth, they became like the heathen peoples around forsaking GOD and sinking into idolatry and gross moral evils. This is the charge the ANGEL makes.

Yet the *Book of Judges* opens on a singularly hopeful note not, however, maintained throughout. It is, that although great human leaders have passed away the Divine Leader ever remains with His people, the opening verses of chapter one being, to a Bible student, reminiscent of Hebrews xiii. 7-8. There the people of GOD are exhorted to remember their leaders who have spoken unto them the word of GOD but are passed away; and are reminded that the Captain of their Salvation still remains for "JESUS CHRIST is the SAME yesterday, and today, and for ever." *Judges* commences with, "Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who

shall go up for us against the Canaanites to fight against them? And the LORD said, "Judah shall go up: behold I have delivered the land into his hands" (i. 1-2).

There is a similarity in the way both *Joshua* and *Judges* open with references to the passing away of Moses and Joshua whose leadership had, by Divine appointment, meant everything to the people; and in the immediate reminder in each case of their true King, they not having then sought another like the nations around to rule over them, and lead them to battle. So they ask Him for guidance and at once receive it; this being carried out and resulting in fellowship in service of Judah and Simeon, thereby the victory over long entrenched foes is granted them.

The *Book of Judges* falls into three distinct sections, chapters i-iii. 7 being introductory, and giving a general summary of the conditions prevailing when the Judges ruled, of which far too close a resemblance spiritually presents itself in Christendom today. The second section, containing the story of the disasters and deliverances under the various Judges, is in chapters iii. 8-xvi; and the appendix, chronologically misplaced, is given in chapters xvii-xxi; and it is there the whole sad secret of apostasy is revealed in words twice repeated, "*In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*" Such a policy is fatal in church and state.

The *Book of Judges* taken as a whole is a story of *Revivals* and *Relapses*, much as the spiritual history of Christianity would be if truly considered. On every page can be clearly read a tale of human disobedience leading to disasters involving untold misery followed by Divine direction which, when followed, led to deliverance. In each case the deliverance springs from the pity and compassion of GOD of Whom it says, "*His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel,*" (x. 16). It is "with mercy and with judgment," as the poet sings, "the web of time He wove."

Just as Israel were expected to maintain strict separation from the people of Canaan and their idolatrous ways and moral evils, so the Christian is called to eschew worldliness, to fight the good fight of faith, and thus to overcome the world. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," is our LORD'S declaration in St. John xvii. 16, followed by that other great word, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also

sent them into the world," (v. 18). In the world to be a testimony to Him Whom the world refused, therefore aliens from its pleasures, follies, interests and idolatries of wealth and position. Alas the history of the *church* in the world presents rather the *world* in the church.

Hence in *Judges* spiritual weakness and low moral conditions resulting from intermarriages, toleration of local paganism, and adopting the line of least resistance to encroaching evils lead the Israelites to forget their true calling and character, and why they are in Canaan at all. And in the Christian company is not the wide gap between profession and practice often lamentably evident? *Judges*, with its story of *Revivals* and *Relapses*, is up-to-date.

(To be continued D.V.)



“ The Fellowship of His Sufferings ”

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is unique and inscrutable in His Person, the sum of perfection and beauty, and witnessed to be flawless in all His ways when manifested as Man here. He is the only one to whom the epithet Perfect can be applied without qualifications. Yet we are reminded that our GOD, in His mercy to us, has given for our help the example of a man of like passions with ourselves, who trod the Christian Way as we do, and whose soul-consuming desire was to be so like CHRIST, and for CHRIST, that he could say, as he seeks to help us, “Be ye followers of me?” adding the proviso, “even as I also am of CHRIST.”

Paul learned much in those three days when he was without sight and did neither eat nor drink. The wound had gone deep, the lesson was being thoroughly learned, and he emerges from the experience with a clear knowledge of the forgiveness of his sins, of the fact of his union with CHRIST, and that at some day he would be conformed to the image of CHRIST in glory.

How much this conforming applied to Paul's inner life we have often been reminded, and his Epistle to the *Philippians* is the treatise on this subject he has left for our help.

But Paul not only desired to "know CHRIST and the power of His resurrection" in this way; his affection for CHRIST JESUS His LORD was so great that he desired he might even outwardly suffer and die in the same way as His LORD. "That I might know . . . the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" is part of Paul's in-wrought desire. Truly he knew what a privilege it would be to "follow His steps"!

How far this earnest desire was attained is reflected in the records of Paul's career and his Epistles, and a contemplation of some of these may both strengthen and humble our souls. The following are an indication of some similarity between our LORD'S sufferings and those of His faithful servant Paul.

Whilst our LORD came to be the SAVIOUR of the World, yet His first mission was to the Jews—"He came unto His own." Alas, He was refused by them, for "His own received Him not."

Paul, too, laboured first for the Jew, for on visiting a strange city he first sought the Synagogue, "as his manner was." But he, too, must feel the sadness of rejection, for time and time again his compatriots "judged themselves unworthy of eternal life" and rejected the message Paul brought to them.

Our LORD wept over Jerusalem saying, "How often would I have gathered thy children together!" Paul likewise carried this burden in his heart, for he could testify, "I say the truth in CHRIST, I lie not . . . I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart . . . for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh."

The LORD'S life "led only to the cross," but that death must be accomplished at Jerusalem. "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem," He testified. What were the emotions of His heart as He entered that hostile (yet beloved) City for the last time! And so with Paul. Jerusalem must be the place of his betrayal and apprehending, for he was fully aware of this and declared that he was "ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the LORD JESUS."

We do not know that Paul was actually betrayed by one who was his "own familiar friend" as was the LORD; but we have on record that he was on occasions "in perils of false brethren," and must have felt all the accompanying anguish of such an experience. (Alas for Israel when, in the coming Tribulation, the

False King will betray them and break his covenant with them! How much *they* will have to experience, not only outwardly, but *in heart* what they caused their MESSIAH to suffer!)

The LORD'S trial and examination before a callous Gentile Ruler and a wicked Usurper-King ("that fox Herod") were reflected in Paul's answers before Felix the Gentile, and King Agrippa the Jew. The trial of scourging by "Roman rods" ordered by Pilate was later known by Paul, for "thrice (says he) was I beaten with (lictor's) rods." The Jewish insults to our LORD also were somewhat reproduced for Paul when he suffered one of the few punishments the Jews were allowed to inflict—"of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one." ("Save one!" Then a suggestion of mercy was shown to Paul. But when our blessed SUBSTITUTE was "smitten of GOD and afflicted," the wrath of GOD was inflicted without mitigation. Solemn thought! No "save one" at Calvary!)

"All forsook Him and fled," says the Evangelist, and the LORD was left alone by those whose cause He had come to take up. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me," said Paul, when He had witnessed a good confession so that others might reap the benefit and "obtain the salvation which is in CHRIST JESUS with eternal glory." His gracious absolution, "I pray GOD that it may not be laid to their charge" may have been prompted by the remembrance of our LORD'S "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

"Away with Him, crucify Him! His blood be on us and on our children!" was the expression of a whole nation's hatred. What were Paul's thoughts when probably those very "children" cried against him, "Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live!"

This storm of hatred surely reached its height when the Divine Sufferer prayed, "Save Me from the lion's mouth." In mercy to Paul, however, he was, at that "first answer," saved from that, for he records, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

And now, CHRIST is above, delivered out of all, and far above the power of Satan or malice of men, "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." So Paul, in anticipation of his place in that same kingdom, could by faith rise in spirit above all around him—above all thought of despondency, or

sorrow, or death, and triumphantly, even exultingly, cry, "And the LORD shall deliver me from every evil work and preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen!"

Truly Paul was a "chosen vessel," and given a part in sufferings above that of any called to tread the same Christian Way; but even the consideration of these things may aid and encourage us in our little experiences, *for unto us also* "it is given, in the behalf of CHRIST not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for His sake."

J. R. GRADWELL.



One Thing

It is instructive as well as interesting to notice how often one's attention is called to "One Thing" in the Scriptures. It may be a thing to be desired and sought after, or a vital thing that is lacking in devotional accomplishment.

Abraham had the *one thing* without which it is impossible to please GOD, and the LORD JESUS reveals to His unbelieving audience the secret of Abraham's devotion, in the memorable words: "Abraham rejoiced to see My day, he saw it and was glad" (John ix. 56). Evidently Abraham's heart was set on one thing, which was the Lord's honour and glory.

Moses shows the *one thing* that his heart was set upon in the request given utterance to as soon as he had the opportunity, saying: "Shew me Thy glory" (Exodus xxxiii. 18). How wonderfully GOD has responded to this heart-felt devotion in that He "Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST (2 Cor. iv. 6). GOD has declared with a voice from heaven that JESUS CHRIST is His Beloved SON in Whom He is well pleased (Matt. xvii. 5).

David shows in the Psalms the *one thing* that his heart was set upon: "One thing have I desired of the LORD, and that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple" (Psalm xxvii. 4). He was inspired to say also: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until

I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psalm cx. 1). He understood the significance of this plain statement, while the Scribes and Pharisees could not answer the question which the LORD JESUS put to them about it (Matt. xxii. 41-46). David could say: "I have set the LORD always before me: . . . and declare that at the LORD'S right hand there are pleasures for evermore (Psalm xvi. 8-11).

Job recognized that there was only *one thing* that he needed in his distress to take away his fear. He longed for a "Daysman" to come between him and GOD on his behalf (Job ix. 33). He acknowledges the *one thing* that was the cause of his distress, the difference between himself and GOD, in that he was a sinful man and GOD was holy.

In the New Testament the LORD Himself commends the *one thing* that he found in Mary, that was lacking in Martha, saying that that *one thing* should not be taken away from her.

The apostle *Paul*, writing to the Philippians, describes the *one thing* that was his object: . . . "Forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS (Phil. iii. 13).

Can we not all follow the example of the apostle Paul in pressing towards that mark, which means living in the momentary expectation of seeing Him, and being transformed into His image (1 Cor. xiii. 49-58).

"*One thing thou lackest*," is what the LORD JESUS said to the one who asked him what he might do that he might inherit eternal life. He claimed to have fulfilled all that the law required from his youth. He was sad, and went away grieved at the thought of giving up everything that he valued, and taking up the cross and following JESUS. It was beyond all human effort, to follow the LORD JESUS to the death of the cross, as was clearly shown by all His disciples forsaking Him and fleeing when the supreme moment came (Mark x. 21-22).

One thing deprived Moses of the privilege of leading GOD'S people into the promised land—he spoke unadvisedly with his lips (Ps. cvi. 33). Let us take care that acting unadvisedly does not deprive us of any privilege that might otherwise be ours.

G. S. PURNELL.

The Place

(Genesis xxii. 3-4)

Abraham had been called out of heathenism from Ur of the Chaldees, to inherit the land of Canaan. There JEHOVAH had fulfilled His promise and given Abraham a son in his old age. In chapter xxii GOD calls upon Abraham to offer up to Him his only son, upon one of the mountains which He would tell him of. Manifesting prompt obedience, Abraham rises early and sets out on his journey. On the third day Abraham lifts up his eyes and sees "the place" afar off. It was to become a place of unforgettable memories to him, "the place" from whence he received back his son from the dead in a figure (Heb. xi. 19). So GOD could from eternity look to "the place" where His SON was to be offered up, and to the hour when He would make Him Who knew no sin to be sin for us (2 Cor. v. 21), "the place" where obedience received its due reward, and where JEHOVAH provided, and where, in fellowship with His servant, He speaks of "thy seed" which is CHRIST.

THE PLACE

(St. John xviii. 2)

"The place" where JESUS oftentimes resorted with His disciples, to which Judas comes that he might betray JESUS, and where all His disciples forsook Him and fled. Gethsemane was a place of particular remembrance to the disciples, for there they had often heard the gracious words that fell from His lips, words in season, bringing comfort and peace to them always. With what loving care had He instructed them, in plain and simple language (John xvi. 29-30) and that they might believe that He was the CHRIST, the SON of GOD. "The place" known to them as the spot where they often gathered around the LORD, becomes "the place" where He knew loneliness and betrayal.

THE PLACE

(St. Luke xxiii. 33)

"The place" called Calvary. This is where we gather in spirit on LORD'S Day morning, "the place," unique, solemn and hallowed, where we wait before the LORD, apprehending afresh the tremendous issues which came to fruition there. The waves

and billows flowed over Him there and deep called unto deep when He made His soul an offering for sin. He cries there with a loud voice, "it is finished," and bows His head in death. The majesty of suffering, the holiness of GOD, the awful weight of our sins, the unrelenting enmity of evil against Him: all gathered there in mighty conflict. But JESUS in perfect dependence, bows under the deluge that sweeps over Him. "The place" called Calvary is where love, grace and obedience triumph. To the world only "the place" of a skull, may it be "the place" to which we shall often lift our eyes.

Abraham looked forward from "the place" and rejoiced to see CHRIST'S day, we look back to "the place" and rejoice in Him, the living One, who became dead, and is alive for ever more.

Stephen the martyr (Acts vii. 49) quotes from Isa. lxvi., where is "the place" of My rest? No magnificent temple could ever be GOD'S place of eternal rest. Only in His beloved SON could GOD rest finding an added joy in the work of Calvary's cross, "the place" of perfect rest for GOD and for us to all eternity, where:—

"Thy soul's exceeding sorrow,
 Thy crying strong with tears,
 While keeping lonely vigil,
 Thy Father knows and hears.
 O LORD, "the place" called Calvary,
 Was shame and death to Thee;
 Stricken of GOD and dying
 As LAMB of GOD, for me."

L. HOWSON.

Notes on "The Lord's Prayer"

(St. Matthew vi. 9-12; St. Luke xi. 2-4)

This prayer the LORD gave to His disciples before His death and resurrection, and (needless to say) it perfectly suited the circumstances of that time. He had already made known to them that they had a FATHER in heaven. This was unknown to the Jews before CHRIST came to teach them, and only applied to those who were truly disciples of JESUS. JESUS had not yet been finally rejected by the nation of Israel, the kingdom was still in view and the prayer "Thy kingdom come" was appropriate. "Thy

will be done on earth as it is in heaven" follows on this and will be fulfilled when the kingdom is set up on earth by CHRIST, as it surely will be. Before the cross Israel was still in relation to GOD on the basis of works so the prayer asks for forgiveness on the ground that they forgive their debtors.

2. Subsequently, when the rejection of the LORD JESUS by Israel was definite, the LORD gives fuller instructions to His disciples regarding prayer. These are found in the gospel of John (chapters 14-15). First, He teaches them to ask "*in His Name*"; He refers to this six times in the three chapters. Presenting our petitions and thanksgiving to the FATHER in the name of HIS SON, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, is the special characteristic of christian prayer, but the LORD does not mention this in "the LORD'S prayer" because the latter was appropriate for the transitional period before His death as stated above. In these chapters in John the LORD also brings His disciples into the enjoyment of *much nearer relationship with the Father* than "our FATHER which art in heaven," for He says, "If a man love Me he will keep My words: and My FATHER will love him, and *We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*" That is a very near relationship and communion with the FATHER and the SON, which is not expressed in "the LORD'S prayer." He says again "the FATHER Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from GOD." After His resurrection He brings them even closer to the FATHER in association with Himself in the message given to Mary to deliver "I ascend unto My FATHER and your FATHER; and to My GOD and your GOD."

3. Instead of asking for forgiveness on the ground that we forgive others, every believer in the LORD JESUS and in His atoning death on the cross should know that his sins *are* forgiven, and the exhortation is "forgiving one another even as GOD for CHRIST'S sake *hath forgiven you*" (Ephesians iv. 32).

4. As to temptation "let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD" (see James i. 12-15). "GOD is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" etc. (1 Cor. x. 13). Also believers in the LORD JESUS *are* delivered from this present evil world, from the power of darkness, from the bondage consequent on fear of death, etc. (see Gal. i. 4; Col. i. 13; Heb. ii. 15).

5. Unlike the Jewish remnant—the disciples to whom the LORD taught “the LORD’S prayer”—believers in the LORD JESUS now should be “looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great GOD and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST” (Titus ii. 13), rather than for the kingdom. The Jewish view of the kingdom was a time of peace, prosperity and blessing for the nation of Israel, but the christian hope is for the LORD to come in the air for His own (1 Cor. xv, 51-52; 1 Thess. iv, 14-17); and for *Him* to be displayed in glory here on earth where He was once despised and rejected—to reign “till He hath put all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor. xv. 25 and many Old Testament and New Testament passages).

6. Nevertheless it would be well that our prayers should follow the *general pattern* of “the LORD’S prayer” in that

- (a) We should address GOD in the nearest relationship revealed to us (Paragraph 2 above).
- (b) Our first thoughts should be the glory of His Name and what is due to Him, before we think of our needs.
- (c) When we think of our needs we should not ask for things which are merely a matter of self indulgence (see James iv, 3), and so our prayer should be in principle for bread for this day.
- (d) In the spirit of shewing grace to one another we should not harbour bad feelings towards others.
- (e) Praise and worship should also mark the ending of our prayers.

7. The LORD Himself prayed three times “saying the same words” in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi, 44). The apostle Paul prayed thrice that the thorn in the flesh might depart from him (2 Cor. xii, 8). But it is altogether inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture and the privilege of a believer in the LORD JESUS to pray a fixed form of words day after day, still less to do so several times a day. Apart from “prayer books” we easily drift into more or less thoughtless forms of prayer. It is hardly too much to say that constant use of “the LORD’S prayer” has often reduced it to an empty repetition (see Matt. vi, 7), and that if GOD answered it literally and promptly the petitioners would be greatly disturbed, to say the least.

8. Finally, since the day of Pentecost (Acts ii), the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD dwells in every believer, and He leads out our hearts in appropriate prayer if we are subject to Him. After the coming of the LORD for His own (1 Thess. iv, 14-17), the "LORD's prayer" will again be appropriate for the Jewish remnant awaiting the Kingdom (i.e. The millennium).

J. C. KELL.



Land In Sight

We sighted land on the Friday morning after a week's tossing on the stormy Atlantic. It was a welcome sight, telling of the journey nearly ended and rest at last.

LAND is in sight! The home of the blest,
 We've sighted the land where soon we shall rest;
 The joys that await us no tongue can declare,
 We long to be anchored for JESUS is there.

Land is in sight, the voyage nearly o'er,
 No waves, and no billows, e'er break on that shore;
 There sorrow is ended, and tears all are dry,
 No cloud ever lowers to darken the sky.

Land is in sight, the long promised land,
 Soon we shall reach it and on its shore stand:
 But, oh! best of all 'twill then be to see
 The blest face of JESUS, with Him there to be.

Land is in sight, the journey nigh o'er,
 There farewells ne'er come, and friends part no more;
 There JESUS awaits us to welcome us home,
 Where from Him we never shall wander nor roam.

Land is in sight, the glory's before,
 Behind is the tempest, and wild billows roar,
 To Him be our praises, who's led us along,
 His love, grace and mercy, the theme of our song.

E. E. NICHOLS

Thoughts on the Book of Judges

By THE EDITOR

(continued from page 123)

THE story in *Judges* opens with the record of a general relapse into idolatry by the people of Israel. The cause of this is stated later by a Psalmist in words even more revealing than those in the narrative itself. "They did not destroy the nations concerning whom the LORD commanded them: but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols, which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance." (Ps. cvi. 34-40).

Eight years of bondage under the tyranny of the King of Mesopotamia, whom GOD used as an instrument of correction, brought not only a deep sense of their self-caused misery and distress, but awakened them to the only possible hope of any deliverance from it. So out of the depths they cried to GOD "Whose soul was grieved for the misery of Israel" (x. 16), "Who delighteth in mercy."

Othniel the first of the Judges appears on the scene, and it is to be noted "the LORD raised up the Judges" that it may be clearly seen that "Salvation is of the LORD, a principle everywhere stressed in Scripture. Not elected, chosen or appointed by the people were these Judges, neither did any take the position without Divine appointment, they were chosen, called and faithful.

Othniel, the first of this new order, was always reckoned by the Jews to be the highest of them all. The younger brother of Caleb "who wholly followed the LORD," Othniel seems to have belonged to a family which was included in the commonwealth

of Israel by grace (as Numbers x. 29; xiii. 6, where "for" not "of" the tribe of Judah would suggest).

The important thing in connection with his appointment is that the HOLY SPIRIT is here first mentioned in Scripture as the SPIRIT of JEHOVAH. It is not so much the thought of the *might* of GOD, as of the *grace and condescension* of the One Who in the covenant relationship taken by Him was their Redeemer pledged to the need of His people. Hence the fitness of the title taken by Him on the occasion of the raising up saviours, as the Judges were literally called to be.

Under Othniel Israel enjoyed a true revival and the land had rest for forty years; but upon his death they soon relapsed again into their evil state and "they vexed His HOLY SPIRIT and turned Him to be their enemy" says a Psalmist. It is a thing never to be overlooked by the people of GOD that relationship regulates responsibility. Israel then, in the days of the Judges, like Christians in our own times, occupied a place of special relationship to GOD, and this aggravated their offences. Hence the exhortation to ourselves "grieve not the HOLY SPIRIT" is enforced by the reminder "by Whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30).

Eglon, the King of Moab, was the instrument next used by GOD to recall the people to the loss and misery entailed by self will and stubborn rebellion. Eighteen years of oppression by Eglon gradually made the people of Israel realise afresh what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake the LORD and go after other gods. In Ehud the Judge, then raised up to deliver them, some words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians receive illustration. "GOD hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. i. 27), for Ehud the new Judge was a member of the smallest tribe in Israel and also a left-handed man.

The details of his initial exploit are such as do not call for a verse by verse exposition, but they do serve to prove him to be one of those who through faith "out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Heb. xi. 34). His personal exercise is soon

followed by blowing the trumpet of testimony and gaining an overwhelming victory for the people under his leadership. As a man of faith in the God of Israel, he cries, "Follow after me: for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hands."

The third of the Judges, Shamgar by name, is one of whom very little is recorded. Indeed, the exploit placed to his account appears to have been little more than a successful skirmish against the Philistine invaders. But the sacred writer says, "he also delivered Israel," and this was what the LORD had raised him up to do, and to be a saviour or Judge.

Othniel had his advantages, Ehud his disadvantages, and Shamgar his insignificance, according to their respective records, but each had his own place, did his own work, all of which is written for our learning and encouragement. As in our LORD'S parable of the Talents, "unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability" (St. Matt. xxv. 15), so it was in the case of the Judges, the LORD Who raised them up knowing their several ability. The lesson for ourselves, surely, is to fight the good fight of faith, fill the post assigned us, and according to our ability whatsoever we do, do it heartily as to the LORD, and not unto men . . . for ye serve the LORD CHRIST.



On Watching and Waiting

"Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors" (Prov. viii. 34).

IN Old Testament days godly men watched and waited for their promised MESSIAH (1 Peter i. 11); in these days believers are called to watch and wait for the blessed hope, the coming LORD. More than one word is used in the original of the New Testament to describe what the translators render as "awaiting," "waiting for," or "looking for."

Of three of these the first we will consider here is given in a Greek Concordance as

TO WAIT FOR, TO EXPECT.

In our English version the same one is variously given as "waiting for" (Luke ii. 25; xii. 36; xxiii. 51); and as "looking for" (Luke ii. 38; Titus ii. 13; Jude 21). To the aged Simeon in Luke ii. 25, it was revealed by the HOLY SPIRIT that he should not see death before he had seen the LORD'S CHRIST. In what sense then did he *wait*? Surely as one who expected: the secret of the LORD was with him, filling him with living faith and expectancy. As the HOLY CHILD JESUS lay in his arms and the supreme moment for which he had waited so long came, he blessed GOD and said, Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation. Anna, the prophetess (Luke ii. 36-38) spoke to a group of waiting ones "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

Another beautiful example of a "waiting" one is the honourable counsellor Joseph of Arimathea, "Jesus' disciple, who also waited for the Kingdom of GOD," of whom each of the Evangelists makes mention. To the Jews the cross was indeed a stumbling-block, not so to Joseph. How far his spiritual intelligence went we do not know, but when the new tomb is opened to lay the body of his LORD therein, Joseph is mentioned as one who expects the Kingdom of GOD, as also did the penitent robber when he prayed, "LORD, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

It is by our conduct far more eloquently than by our words that we tell to others, and above all to our LORD, how really we are expecting Him. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights shining, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their LORD . . . blessed are those servants whom the LORD when He cometh shall find watching" (Luke xii. 35-37).

We may well "wait" and "look" as those who "expect"; no signs are to be looked for, but "the LORD Himself shall come" and His voice will summons all His own to meet Him in the air (Cf. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

Another word occurring once only yet rendered also as "wait" in 1 Thess. i. 10, is described as

“ TO HOLD OUT, TO WAIT FOR AS FOR THE COMING
OF THE MORN.”

Those young believers at Thessalonica enduring bitter persecution and opposition for the sake of the Name of CHRIST are spoken of as “waiting for His SON from heaven, even JESUS.” This waiting had a special character in their circumstances, namely, that of holding out, waiting as for the dawn through the long darksome hours of the night. But that the night would end in cloudless day, they were confident as they waited for Him; meanwhile they so diligently served the living GOD that their “work of faith, and labour of love, *and patience of hope* called forth special thanksgiving to GOD from the Apostle who had brought the gospel to them.

A third word which calls for notice is not unlike our first one, but is described as

“ TO WAIT LONG FOR ” or “ TO AWAIT ARDENTLY.”

The simile of the bride waiting for the bridegroom describes not so much the awaiting an event as the waiting for a person, the object of one's love. Not just a desire to leave a scene of suffering, sorrow, trial and difficulty, but an ardent desire to see the One Who has engaged our affections and won our hearts to Himself. *Waiting for* the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST (1 Cor. i. 7); our citizenship in heaven from whence we *look for* the Saviour, our LORD JESUS CHRIST (Phil. iii. 21); these are where “to wait long for” and “to await ardently” perhaps more clearly emphasise the familiar words of the A.V.

Not only do we wait and ardently long for that moment of “the Rapture,” but the earnest expectation of creation *waiteth* for the subsequent manifestation of the sons of GOD (Rom. viii. 19), awaiting ardently that day . . . “and not only they but we ourselves . . . waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies, if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience *wait* for it” (Rom. viii. 25). Blessed is the man that heareth . . . watching . . . waiting.

“ We wait for Thee, Thou wilt arise
 Whilst hope her watch is keeping;
 Forgotten then in glad surprise
 Shall be our years of weeping;
 Our hearts beat high, the dawn is nigh,
 That ends our pilgrim story
 In Thine eternal glory.

S. G. SCALES.

Behold the Glory of the Lord

“ Behold the glory of the LORD filled the house. And he said to me, Son of man, the place of MY throne and the place of the soles of MY feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and MY Holy Name, shall the house of Israel no more defile neither they nor their kings.” Ezek. xliii, 5-7.

IN the midst of judgment GOD remembers mercy, and so it is that the bright beams of coming glories shine out from time to time in pages of judgment, like precious jewels that the dust of centuries or ruins of ancient temples can never hide (Nahum i. 7). Truly prophecy is like unto a light shining in a dark or squalid place, to cheer the pilgrim's heart until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts. It is indeed the constant assurance of Divine triumph in the end that makes its study of so real and profitable interest to the believer, who (saved by grace in this present dispensation of grace) is enabled to see beyond present things and is “ looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the great GOD, and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST ” (Titus ii. 13). Ezekiel had been sent of GOD with the most stern denunciation of judgment on the conduct of Israel, and the assurance of coming judgment already falling, and with strokes more severe to follow on the rebellious nation.

How his heart must have burned within him as he listened to this glorious message and glorious affirmation, combined with a vision of that glorious and holy future at the end of the tribulation and chastisement foretold to his contemporary prophet Daniel, but here displayed in vision before the eyes of Ezekiel. Even the plan of the Holy City and Temple whose latter glory

as assured to Haggai was to be greater than the former (Haggai ii. 9).

Should not our hearts burn within us as we (now so much nearer that coming day) can by the HOLY SPIRIT unfolding to us, see the glories concerning the LORD JESUS in things to come.

These words of final triumph and glory were given in a day of ruin and judgment, and though fulfilment was yet far off, godly souls embraced them. The possession of those precious promises made them a separated waiting people (Heb. xi. 13-16). The vision of the Coming One, the glory of the Holy city whose foundations were built by GOD was indeed "the light of the lonely pilgrim heart," as Habakkuk wrote, "Though it tarry wait for it, it will surely come," and looking on to it from a day while evil seemed in the ascendant he says, "yet will I rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD of my salvation" (iii. 18). Shall we fail in the patience of hope, and faith, or lack of interest in these blessed themes as though they were really far off, and our LORD delays His coming. Paul the apostle sought to encourage the saints in his day with his awakening word, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. xiii. 11). The day is at hand, and the Author of these promises assures us that the gracious and mighty One who is coming, yea, came once nineteen centuries ago, is coming again, and "Will not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth" (Isaiah xlii. 4).

Here let us pause a moment and wonder, Why so long? While evil lifts up its head and suffering saints still cry with Habakkuk "O LORD, how long?" Can it be that the bright beams of coming glory are faded out in the shadow of His cross? Must we give up hope with those who said: "We trusted that it had been He that should have redeemed Israel"? Are we to believe, as many seem to do, that the precious promises to Israel can never be fulfilled seeing that the King came so long ago and was rejected? "He came to His own and His own received Him not." The place of the soles of His feet is still defiled. The city that He owned to be the city of the Great King is in alien hands, and the house that He called "My FATHER'S house" destroyed (John ii. 16). Or worse still, shall

we say, "Why concern ourselves about the future of Israel?" No, let it not be so! For all that concerns the future glory of our LORD should be precious to us even as He is precious. How slighting such thoughts are of the gracious love of Him Who speaking to His FATHER said, "The glory that thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one" (John xvii. 22). The glory of that coming day He wills that we shall share with Him. Passing on a little, Ezekiel was bidden, "Shew the house to the house of Israel that they may be ashamed of these iniquities and let them measure the pattern thereof" (v. 10-11). Here we may trace an analogy that may lead us to shame and confusion of face, for we are living stones in a spiritual house, builded together for a habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT (1 Peter ii. 5; Eph. ii. 22). What answers can our consciences give as we consider the form and pattern of that house?

Sixty years ago I well remember a dear honoured servant of GOD used to say, "Everything committed to man's responsibility has failed, but GOD'S purpose stands." He could look back over half a century earlier to the happy time when GOD in His grace awakened in the hearts of many a renewed interest in the favour and pattern of GOD'S present spiritual building, and the heavenly calling of the saints, together with a new deep interest in things to come. Blessed be GOD, notwithstanding all our failure the purpose and foundation of GOD stands firm, and though there are vessels to dishonour to be purged out from and much wood, hay and stubble to be burned up, the gracious work goes on and its future is assured. Its unity will yet be seen in glory, and its purity eternal. A glorious triumph of GOD'S grace, "fitly framed together," a "holy temple in the LORD."

"Unto Him be glory in the church by JESUS CHRIST throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. iii. 21)

COMPTON MOSS

