

Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

Vol. LIX

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

OUR COMING LORD

"Yea, I come quickly. Amen; come, Lord Jesus"

(Revelation xxii.20)

To Thee, the Coming One,
Jesus, our Lord,
To Thee, God's only Son,
Jesus, the Lord,
Sing we now joyfully;
Nearer each day are we —
Nearer to Home and Thee,
Saviour and Lord.

Faith shall be turned to sight,
When we reach Home;
Ended the darksome night,
When Thou dost come.
A morning bright and clear,
When we Thy shout shall hear —
That voice well known and dear,
Calling us Home.

No sighing then, nor tears —
All joy at Home!
No sorrow, cares, nor fears —
Oh, take us Home!
Lord, full of love and grace,
Reveal Thy glorious face,
And all Thine own embrace;
Oh, come, Lord, come!

C. H. VON POSECK (MISS)

AWAITING GOD'S SON FROM HEAVEN

"They themselves relate . . . how ye turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to await His Son from the heavens, Whom He raised from among the dead, Jesus, our Deliverer from the coming wrath"

(I Thessalonians i.9, 10, New Tr.)

Nearly nineteen centuries have passed since our beloved Master said, "Behold, I am coming quickly"; and still the shadows of earth envelop us, and still we plod along the toilsome wilderness waste. Each morning the light appears, but we do not see the face of our Beloved. Each night the silences come, but in vain we listen for a well-known Voice, calling, "Come, loved one, up to Me where I am."

The simple fact of a hope deferred stares every reader in the face. On the one hand, an unqualified promise made by One Who cannot lie, Who would not deceive: "I will come again". On the other hand, the interval of a second millennium is drawing to its close, and the heavens are still closed above us, and He Who is coming has not yet come.

What effect has the incessant passing of time upon our souls? Does it dull the keenness of our watchfulness? How often during a wakeful night, as the hours creep slowly by with leaden feet, the eye loses its vigilance just as the dawn is about to break, and the willing spirit is quenched by the fainting flesh! Alas, alas, is it possible that the Master may come and find me sleeping? And are you, my reader, awake, watching and waiting?

We need to challenge our hearts whether we are asleep or awake, forgetting or awaiting our Lord's return. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And because the moment of His return is at hand, there is the more danger of our being tired of waiting, and of our falling into a drowsy indifference.

In I Thessalonians i., awaiting God's Son is classed as an essential element of Christian confession. In Thessalonica,

this hope was not merely a secret belief, but also an open, public witness. Throughout the whole district, it was obvious to all that the converts were expecting the advent of the Son of God, as truly as they had turned to God from idols, and were serving the living and the true God. Their "patience of hope" was a prominent feature of their renewed lives, visible to men, pleasing to the Lord.

Awaiting God's Son is the expectation of a Person. In such a "hope" there is a living force. The Coming One touches the emotions and awakens the heart in a way the coming of the new year, the birthday, the harvest fail to do. The Son of God loves us, and gave Himself for us, and is coming for us. We are waiting here for the Lover of our souls Whom our souls adore.

May the Lord Himself search our hearts to discover whether there is within us an unsatisfied longing to see His face and be for ever with Him. Let our constant prayer be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus". "Thou art my Help and my Deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God".

God's Son! Oh, come!
 Let Thy sweet voice resound
 And thrill each waiting heart
 With joys Thou only canst impart
 When Thou dost come!
 Come, Saviour, come.

W. J. HOCKING

(Reprinted from *The Bible Monthly* — 1935)

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"

(John v.17)

Luke xii.22. "And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is

more than meat, and the body than raiment”.

It is surely a matter of wonder and thanksgiving that there should be preserved to us a record of so much that Jesus said to His disciples. His words convey His mind for them, and the message is not one that He can give to the world of unbelief which stores its material means of life and yet is vulnerable to death. He turns to them with that protective care which would show the way of freedom from anxiety. It was the faith-path of dependence upon God. He descends to the simple things for illustration. Food maintained life — but it was not the life itself. Raiment only clothed the body — but it was not the body. God was available to faith. He could care for both life and body.

Jesus gives progressive examples — leading their thoughts on by His own means in a way of reasoning. How He wanted them to understand! “Consider the ravens”, He said. There is no preparatory work in their day — “they sow not nor reap . . . have neither storehouse nor granary; and God feedeth them”. They were actually an unclean bird, yet God made provision for their lives! His care for His own was emphasized by comparison. If we consider the increasing forcefulness of the examples given by the Divine Worker it will be seen with what thought and energy He proceeds to the opening up of the truth of *faith* — “the victory that overcomes the world”.

The thought of the powerlessness of man is introduced — he cannot but fail in using *care* to add to his own height — and this is of least importance concerning his body. “Why take ye thought for the rest?” The vegetable world is called in evidence — “consider the lilies of the field”. Far less in activity than the ravens — without mobility — open to the elements — yet beautiful beyond comparison with the royal splendour of Solomon. Clothed by the One in whom the disciples were invited to trust, they were a cloud of witness in all the valleys. “Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin”. The activities of man who toils and woman who spins are embraced in evidence of divine care

and design in clothing the grass of the field. "Consider" a beauty, which man could never produce, taken by the beholder as a matter of course! *Give thought* to the clothing of the transient grass by the Hand of God, and hear the word of His assurance, "How much rather *you*, O ye of little faith!"

Were they not to see in His handiwork visible expression of His interest and, indeed, of His providing love! While the world (the nations) sought only the material things for fleshly satisfaction and personal aggrandizement they were to see beyond the visible and so discern the spiritual. There was available to them, in the vision of FAITH, the beauty of a Father's providing — "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things". So, in the abundance of His un-failing love, they were to have no anxiety. Accepting, gladly, His assurance to those close to Him in that day, shall we not follow with them in seeking the things associated with His kingdom — the principles which obtain where He, and He alone, is in authority! In so doing the needs become the responsibility of the King Himself, who assures His dependants, "all these things shall be added unto you". To seek His things, and to trust His remembrance of our own, is to know a response "far exceedingly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians iii.20).

The sympathy and love expressed in verse 32 is very touching. The Kingdom would seem far away — the oppression of world sin would threaten them — faith might weaken under the strain. It would then be that His words would come to them, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom". He meets them as they are — He walks with them in their weakness. They *are* a "little flock", but they are HIS OWN FLOCK — and HE their Shepherd! Their reliance is not to be in numbers but in Himself. What power shall thwart the Father's good pleasure — He will bring them into the good of the Kingdom. For them, fear had no possible foundation.

It was in view of this divine undertaking that He shows

them their present heritage in terms of their present activity. Their love, like His own, would flow out to all in need. They would sell their "possessions", and these, in character with the grace of Christ Himself, were by no means inconsiderable. Paul could proclaim his poverty as making *many rich* (2 Corinthians vi. 10). That giving, for the spiritual enrichment of so many, was the measure of what he had possessed, through the munificence of God.

The Lord Jesus continues with the symbols they would understand. "Make to yourselves purses which do not grow old, a treasure which does not fail in the heavens". It would be an investment secure in the Memory of the Eternal! Moreover it would remain their own — a treasure incorruptible, as compared with which the diminishing reserves of world interests were in jeopardy and doomed to failure. It was not that they could *buy* eternal things with earthly possessions, but, where their true affections were centred, there would be found their lasting wealth. Their love for Him would result in activities in character with the Kingdom, and these would mount in value. No thought of love for Him is lost — there is no act in His Name that does not add to that growing treasure! All is the produce of His own love — of which our own is but a reflection — yet He counts it treasure — our treasure — received and garnered beyond the grasping hands of time.

"Let your loins be girded about, and lamps burning; and ye like men who wait for their lord, whenever he may leave the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately" (verses 35-36).

The symbol becomes more personal. There is individual application to the truth of heavenly treasure. Is there no value for Himself in our personal waiting? Does not each one who waits gird *himself*, and is not the burning lamp of individual testimony in the hand of *each*? There is the thought of joy, personal to Christ but shared, too, by those who wait for His glad approach. They are shown as servants, waiting still, but the joy of awareness of His coming, in the aura of

His own joy, presents a familiar scene of harmony and humble welcome which they knew very well, and which *He* knew would banish all thought of fear — or of criticism. They are shown as watchers for *One they love* — we, too, are in the path of this blessing. Is not *He* the great fulfilment of our hope! He has His own joy in awareness of our waiting love. He expresses to them (and to us) this joy in His own inimitable way. “Verily, I say unto you that He will gird Himself, and make them recline at table, and coming up will serve them”. *He* has been the sole object of their watching — *they* are shown as the objects of His response in refreshing and satisfying them. For this attitude of watching is *very* near to His heart. True love to Him is not circumscribed. It could never be restricted to days or to ceremonies of religious observance. It is the principal emotion in the life of a believer. There is no substitute for it, and it is far deeper than mere words.

He may come “in the second watch, and come in the third watch” (verse 38). These are the night watches of testing — there is weariness in waiting and even indifference as to His coming. The thief comes in the unwatched hour of world distraction and allure. There is paramount need to be ready. It is the word of warning love, lest we lose the blessing of His rewarding reaction to all who watch for Him. Blessed, indeed, are those bondmen who, with all their treasure in the heavens, watch on — in daylight hours and through the night in sustained unflagging anticipation — for the *One* who comes is the rejected Son of man, and He comes in glory. “And ye, therefore, be ye ready”.

EDWARD T. WOOD

GOD AS POTTER

“O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in My hand, O house of Israel”.

Jeremiah xviii. 1-10. Also Isaiah lxiv.8, Rom. ix.21.

In these days, when it is the fashion to explain all happenings by blind natural forces, it is well to be reminded by such a scripture as this that God's word speaks quite differently. Blind forces are at most a secondary cause — a means which God uses to accomplish His will.

The occasion which produced the above divine utterance was an appeal by the Lord to Israel through His prophet to turn from their evil ways. Jeremiah was sent down to the potter's house, and there watched a potter remake a vessel which did not turn out as he had intended. The ease with which he remade it served as a basis for God's appeal to Israel.

Their disobedience led Him to threaten severe judgments against them, which would be carried out by nearby nations, particularly Babylon; but they had only to heed His word, and all this would be changed, as easily as the potter remade his vessel. No matter what Nebuchadnezzar's purpose was, God could turn that aside or defeat it. So, on the other hand, a promise of blessing for a nation would be reversed if it turned to evil ways.

What we are emphasizing here is the *power* of God to manipulate the destinies of nations and surely of individual men also; it is not meant that His ways today are the same altogether as then. Indeed, it is important to remember that today grace is triumphant because of the cross, and God is entreating men to turn back to Him, rather than judging them for their wickedness. "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world", the Lord Jesus said.

Yet His providential moral government of the world remains, and both men and nations reap what they have sown. Many examples of this might be given, but it is not our present subject. And the reverse of this, which so often seems to hold good, is because Satan is still at large.

Another example of the use of the potter figure is in Romans ix.21. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of

the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"

This scripture needs to be studied carefully in its context, and also in the light of Jeremiah's words, because men have read into it what is not there. Instead of drawing from it the doctrine that God has doomed some men from the beginning to destruction, we see that God's word to Jeremiah is the very reverse of this. The figure of a potter is used there to show God's readiness to turn from His purpose of judgment if only men will repent. Implacability is an attribute of wicked men (Rom. i.31), not of God, Who delights in mercy. See Jonah iii.10, iv.11.

The A.V. translation "one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour" is unfortunate, because "dishonour" in English implies something shameful, and our minds thus easily insinuate moral baseness into the being which God has created. Perhaps "unhonour", if one may coin a word for a moment, gives the thought better. Out of the same lump a potter can make a beautiful vase and a common pot. Now God as Creator has this absolute *power*, but His *ways* in creation are in accord with His own nature, and He made man very good, like everything else (Gen. i.31). Man has indeed turned aside to listen to Satan, but God's activity ever since has been with a view to His creature's redemption.

After establishing God's absolute authority under the potter figure, Paul goes on to apply the figure, not indeed exactly as Jeremiah xviii does, but in a manner which receives much light from the prophet's language. "What if God, willing (i.e. desiring) to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He hath afore prepared unto glory."

Now if the A.V. in verse 21 is faulty, it is very accurate in verses 22 and 23. "Fitted" to destruction, rather than "made" for it — a different word from that which Paul

employs in verse 21 — a word meaning an adaptation of something already *made*, rightly suggests that “destruction” was by no means the original or intended destiny of those described as “vessels of wrath”. In view of God’s words to Jeremiah, it is plain that by refusing God’s call to repentance they have become fitted — indeed, we may say they have fitted themselves — to become the objects of God’s judgment, fitted to destruction. Yet still God’s longsuffering waits, just as in Jeremiah’s own day He sent message after message to His guilty people, urging them to repent. Christians are very apt to think that the world is now so evil that the Lord cannot tarry much longer. Yet some lands that have long been in darkness are now being reached with the gospel, and are responding to it in a way which we in western lands have ceased to expect. Is it for this reason that He still delays?

Concerning the “vessels of mercy” the apostle speaks of them as prepared beforehand for glory. There is nothing like this said of the lost, for God takes no pleasure in the execution of judgment, but for the saved not only is glory prepared, but they are prepared for it. This is a revelation of His eternal purpose to be received in humble gratitude by all believers. But it recalls a scripture which is seldom referred to, namely I Peter iv.18, “If the righteous scarcely (i.e. with difficulty) be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”

These words suggest a very different picture from that easy salvation which some preachers portray. It is not for nothing that Peter says earlier that it is God’s power that keeps the believer’s feet on the heavenly road. Our hearts are so wayward, our flesh so strong, our adversary the Devil so resourceful, that our salvation is no easy matter. How thankful we should be that God Himself has set His heart on bringing us to glory! But if it is difficult to bring safely through those who have committed their souls to the Saviour’s care, what hope can there be for those who turn their backs on Him in order to enjoy the pleasures of sin

for a season? As a man said once in the writer's hearing, "If only there were some place between heaven and hell for a man like me!" But there is no neutral position.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

GOD'S CALLING, INHERITANCE AND POWER

(Ephesians i.18,19)

THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING

I conceive that Paul is referring in measure to what we have already found in the early part of the chapter. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." At any rate, I think verse 4 is before his mind's eye here. Verse 5 brings in His place as Father. "The hope of His calling" is founded on the full blessedness that pertains to us according to that purpose of God which is already ours in Christ — already made known to us and received by our hearts — the calling of God that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love . . . The calling was the effectual work of God's grace, and the riches of the inheritance rather the glory suited to such a calling. But, besides this character of glory, there is, first, the hidden portion suitable to being chosen to be holy and without blame before Him in love — called to be the reflection of His own holy, loving nature, which, of course, we have got in the life of Christ, and which we shall have perfectly developed when changed into His own image, from glory to glory. For His calling has its own proper hope of what we shall enjoy in His presence.

HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS

Thus there is, secondly, the inheritance. He wished them to know the riches of its glory, to know it better. But he uses a remarkable expression — "the riches of the glory of

His inheritance *in the saints.*" You must carefully guard against a prevalent error on this subject, namely, that the saints mean the inheritance. This is not at all the force of the phrase: nay, I have no hesitation in saying that it would falsify the chief blessedness of the Church's calling. If we look at the Old Testament, we find that Israel were His inheritance and His people; and that God, by virtue of Israel, took possession of the land. When the day comes for God to be king, and more than king, when He takes under His government the entire universe, how will this be done? Will it be by Israel? No; but by virtue of His heavenly saints — the Church of God. The expression seems to be purposely large. Most decidedly it means the saints changed or risen, so as to be in the likeness of Christ, in an entirely heavenly condition. Such is the mode in which God will challenge and assume the inheritance by and by into His own hand. When He took Canaan, He did not come down and possess it by heavenly power, but by means of His people. But when God expels the wicked spirits from any connection with the heavenly places, when He puts down all power on the earth — everything that contradicts Himself, and reduces the whole universe into subjection to the name of Christ, who are destined to take it in His name, as Israel entered on the land of Canaan? The risen saints. Hence the meaning of the words, "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

The common notion that the saints constitute the inheritance is unscriptural. For most carefully throughout the New Testament, the saints are always represented as (not the inheritance, but) the heirs, "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." They are nowhere treated as the inheritance, but, on the contrary, what is revealed as the inheritance means the things in heaven and things on earth; and the Church is ever and sedulously separated from them. This I consider to be a point which cannot be left as an open question; the testimony of the word is too abundant and precise . . . When looked at in this point of view, it quite falls in with the structure of the chapter. As we have found

“the hope of His calling” in the first clause answering to what we had in the earlier verses, so the “glory of the inheritance” answers to the middle verses of the chapter. God means to have the whole universe blest and happy under Christ; not merely glory given to Him in heaven, or a people subject to Him here below. We have here an incomparably larger view of what God intends. Christ is to have universal blessedness and glory, all things in heaven and earth being put under him; and we have obtained in Him this inheritance.

THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER

The remaining point is, “the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places” (verse 20). Why not draw attention to the power that was put forth when He made the world? When Israel are addressed, He speaks of Himself as the Jehovah-God Who clave the Red Sea, and brought His people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

But what to us is the Red Sea crossed? The resurrection of Christ; not the incarnation nor even the cross of Christ, though we could not do without either. The cross, though the most essential of all things for God’s glory and our need, does not give us the power of God. It shows us what God calls His weakness, and if I look at Christ there, He was “crucified through weakness.” It was One who submitted to everything, Who put Himself in the power of His creatures; Who went down under the judgment of God and sank even under the puny hand of man. But when we look at the resurrection, all trace of weakness is for ever passed away and nothing is seen but the most triumphant power of God; a power far beyond anything connected with either the law or creation. It was a question of going down into the grave, not merely of a man, but of the man Who had borne in His person the sins of every soul that believes in Him.

And so completely was God glorified about these sins that He takes up the despised, rejected, forsaken man from under the unheard-of burden, and puts Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

We have there the astonishing contrast between the grave in which Christ lay and the glory into which He is now exalted, still as man — the glorified man — far above all creatures, be they ever so high or blest: above creatures which were far above man in one sense and had never known taint or fall: above the principalities, authorities, dominions, powers on high, the heavenly orders, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that which is to come (verse 21). There will be the display of angelic hosts then, when the Son of man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him. But He is raised above them all now. To be above them as God would be nothing new; He is so always. But He has carried humanity above them; He is there exalted in our nature — risen, of course, but still the nature of man. He has given us present association with the throne of God. For the application of all this is given to us here — “the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought *in Christ*, when He raised Him from the dead.” It is not merely the exceeding greatness of His power towards Christ, but towards us in Christ. The power that wrought in our deliverance from Satan, that gave us our place as saints before God, is the self-same power that raised up Christ from the dead and put Him in the most glorious place in heaven. Is there anything difficult after this? If we knew we had at command the power which called the world into being, should we not laugh at impossibilities? . . . But we have an energy greater than that which was put forth in creation — no less than what raised up Christ from the dead. The word of God positively tells us so.

W. KELLY

*(The above are extracts from
Lectures to the Ephesians, by W.K.)*

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of being with Himself — the same Jesus Who came into this world of sin and sorrow, “Who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him!” (Acts x.38). The One Who, at the culmination of that beautiful pathway of perfection and devotedness to God and man, offered Himself a spotless sacrifice for sin upon Calvary’s cross! This is the precious Saviour whose face we are to behold.

Yet, in the interval that remains before we are taken actually into His presence, it is our privilege to behold Him with the eye of faith, in that wonderful place of exaltation in heaven, and to exclaim with adoring hearts in the language of Holy Scripture, “We see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” What divine satisfaction for the heart! What a peace-assuring reality! Well may such a divine vista dispel every doubt and fear and draw our hearts closer to Him until we are with Him and like Him for ever!

For ever our still wondering eyes

Shall o’er His beauty rove;

To endless ages we’ll adore

The riches of His love!

A. E. BIRD

THE PERSONAL RETURN OF CHRIST

When the apostles on Olivet looked after their ascended Lord, “two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts i.10, 11). Well they knew that it was a real personal departure of their Master; just as certainly will His return be real and personal.

W.K.

LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

XLII. *Doing the Father's Will as the Darkness came*

Green pastures and still waters abound for the sheep of Christ in the pages of John's Gospel, but nowhere so richly as in the record of the last few hours the Lord Jesus spent with His disciples before the end. Nearly one quarter of this Gospel is devoted to that night in which He was betrayed; and His every word and act in those memorable hours yields a pure and holy perfume as we "beat it very small."

The Holy Spirit delights to reveal for our adoration what was before the Lord's mind in each step He took (*cf.* John xiii.1-3; xiv.31; xviii.4). The cross was near at hand; it was man's hour and the power of darkness; how needful then that we should know how supremely Lord of all the circumstances He was amid such scenes!

The Lord Jesus recognized the decisive moment when He said, "Arise, let us go hence!" The hours of communion with His own were tinged with the sweet sorrow of parting; yet what a contrast with the night without was that upper room! But He would not linger there; Judas had gone out, and for what purpose He knew. Soon the traitor would be guiding a band of men, not to the upper room, but to Gethsemane, and Jesus will not disappoint him. But before rising to go, He revealed to His friends the holy motives which led Him so to do.

"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence" (John xiv.30,31).

There was no blemish in this burnt-offering: the secret springs of conduct are made manifest, and all is most holy. How often even when man is at his noblest, there is a stain of human weakness and pride upon his motives! But Satan cannot find the smallest handle to use against the Lord. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me."

The Lord would prepare His own for what was about to happen, lest the tempter should persuade them that force of circumstance or human malevolence had triumphed over their Master. And so He admitted them and us into the counsels of His heart: "but that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do."

Blessed Lord, how we thank Thee for these words! In that dark path that lay before Thee we see displayed in its fulness Thy love to the Father, a love that delighted in obedience, "love that on death's dark vale its sweetest odour spread." Oh, that we might so learn from Thy perfect example that the world may read our love to Thee in our obedience to Thy word!

In the light of these words, the significance of the next acts of the Lord recorded by John may be seen. What He had said should have sufficed for His disciples, but how was "the world" to know that it was of His own will that He submitted to the events of the next few hours? This is answered in John xviii., where His next steps towards the altar are traced. Judas and the band of men approached with all the outward evidence of power — lanterns, torches and weapons, but it was Jesus Who took the initiative and, fully conscious of all that was involved, "went forth" to meet them. It was His voice that was heard first.

Every detail shews how fully He was in control of all that took place, and before He resigned Himself into the hands of men, He made good His own word. The very men who had come to arrest the Lord of glory shall first own His majesty, and be taught that they had no power at all against Him, had not He Himself chosen the path of love and obedience to the Father. So they go backward and fall to the ground before Him at the simple word, "I am He." So, too, they see His power displayed in healing Malchus' ear, and hear Him say, "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" Not till then are they allowed to take Jesus and bind Him and lead Him away.

But there was another word of His to be made good before He left His own. And it touches our hearts to learn that the last exercise of His authority that night was to place His mighty hand of protection over "the little ones." He said to the officers, "If ye seek Me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none."

How blessed to be owned as one of His by such a Lord and at such a time! by One Whose glory had but to shine forth for a moment, and His enemies fell to the ground before Him! by One who was on His way to the cross as the sacrifice to secure eternal salvation!

But let our last thought be, not of our own blessing, but of the perfections of the Lord we adore. How truly was He clothed with majesty as He "went forth" to meet Judas! But His glory was only used first to demonstrate to all the world that it was love to the Father that led Him to yield to them, and then for the protection of His helpless followers.

"Wherever we follow Thee, Lord,
Admiring, adoring we see
The love which was stronger than death
Flow out without limit and free."

L. C. HOCKING

(Reprinted)

A THREEFOLD CORD

Here is one of these threefold cords of Scripture that are not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes iv.12). In Luke i.78 we read of the **DAYS**PRING; Job speaks of a **DAYS**MAN (Chapter ix.33); while Peter refers to the **DAY** STAR (2 Peter i.19). Is there any connection between these three isolated scriptures? I suggest there is the same connection as with the three parts of a great river: the source, the course and the estuary. Let us think of God's grace as a mighty river flowing forth to us in this way.

THE DAYSPRING

This suggests the *source* of all blessing. Zacharias was celebrating the birth of his son John. Moved by the Holy Ghost he speaks of the blessing in store for Israel, the people of God, in the reign of their Messiah (Luke i.68,69). John's special mission as the prophet of the Highest was to prepare the way for Messiah, to announce salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the *dayspring from on high* hath visited us (verses 76-78). Thus the blessing of Israel, their deliverance from their enemies and the forgiveness of their sins, was traced back to the heart of God. The expression "tender mercy of God" is translated "bowels of God" by J.N.D. and W.K., and its root meaning sets forth deep, heartfelt compassion. We remember how it is recorded of our Lord that He was moved with compassion: His very innermost being was stirred with tenderest feeling.

The use of the word here in Luke suggests that God's heart was moved to its utmost at the sad state of His people, and this led directly to the visitation of the Dayspring from on high, the coming to this earth of God Himself manifest in flesh. He came to those acknowledged as His people, but His own received Him not, yet (how thankful we are to say it!) as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to be the children of God, to those that believe on His name (John i.12). All blessing then, whether nationally for Israel in a future day, or spiritually for us now, has its origin in the very heart of God, being brought to us by the divine Visitor, the Dayspring from on high.

THE DAYSMAN

Zacharias goes on to speak of the great purpose of Christ's coming, "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (verse 79). How could this gracious purpose be brought about?

This takes us on to the second strand of our three-fold cord, the *Daysman*, Whom Job in his misery and distress longed for. He was like one sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, and he longed for a deliverer. In the beginning of chapter 9 he raises the all-important question, How shall man be just with God? And at the end of the chapter, as he thinks of God in His power and majesty and of himself in his wretchedness and sin, he says, "He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any *daysman* betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" (verses 32,33). Job was not at ease in God's presence: he knew he could be held guilty, and he saw no mediator who was competent to come to his aid.

It is interesting to notice that in his search for God's forgiveness and blessing, Job tries out, so to speak, various ways that men have tried throughout the ages and that can end only in disappointment and disaster. First is the road of self-justification. "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse" (verse 20). Job is brought to realise that blessing does not come this way. A sinner speaking of "perfection" in the presence of a holy God!

Secondly, troubled in spirit and suffering in body, and with the consciousness of God's hand upon him, he says, "If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself," what then? Suppose I try to ignore my trouble and leave God out altogether? But he has to say, "I know that Thou wilt not hold me innocent" (verse 28). There is no road back to innocence: we have a conscience, and what we need is righteousness, not innocence.

Thirdly, Job tries the road of reformation or self-cleansing. If sin has defiled me, and I am not fit for God's holy presence, let me make myself pure. But he comes to this conclusion, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (verses 30,31). All moral and religious efforts to improve the flesh are in vain.

Realising the futility of all human effort to obtain the divine favour that he craved for, Job longed for one who could competently take up his case — a *Daysman*, an Umpire or a Mediator, One who could indeed lay His hand upon both. How privileged we are to look back to the coming of One who could do just this, lay one hand upon God in all His holiness and majesty, and the other upon the poor sinner in all his guilt and need! “For there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all” (I Timothy ii.5,6). Through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ, God is just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus (Romans iii.26). What an immense privilege to be able to say with Paul, “Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians iii.9).

What a wealth of blessing is ours as believers! We are “justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans v.1,2). Perfectly cleared as to our sins, we have a perfect standing in the favour of God, and we are able to rejoice in the prospect of the glory to come.

THE DAY STAR

This prospect carries us on to the third strand of our three-fold cord, the *Day Star* which Peter speaks of. He states that the prophetic scriptures, that point on to the establishment of Christ’s glory on earth, are like a lamp that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the *Day Star* arise in your hearts (2 Peter i.19).

The blessing of God’s earthly people, who alas rejected the Dayspring from on high at His first visitation, awaits the rising of the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings, when He comes the second time to establish His kingdom in glory and power on the earth. But the believer, watching during the night which is already far spent, sees the morning star which heralds the dawning of the day. He has the

secret of Christ's heavenly glory and of our heavenly place with Him: the hope of His coming shines brightly in his heart, and he knows that soon, with all the redeemed, he will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, to be like Him and with Him for ever in the glory of the Father's house.

Thus the cycle is complete, from glory to glory. For of Him (the Source, the Dayspring), and through Him (the Daysman, the Mediator), and to Him (the coming One, the Day Star), are all things: to Whom be glory for ever (Romans xi.36). As one has expressed it:

Christ is our end, for Christ is our beginning,
Christ our beginning, for the end is Christ.

R. A. CREETH

THE CHRISTIAN'S EQUIPMENT

(Notes of an Address on 2 Peter i., by Mr. G. F. Cox — at Eastleigh, 1929 or 1930)

From the first verse of chapter iii. we learn that this second epistle was addressed to the same people as the first, namely to converted Jews (see I Peter i.1). That is why the apostle uses such a peculiar expression as is found in verse 1: "obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." That applied to them because they were the children of those to whom God had given the promises. Faith recognised the righteousness of God shown in fulfilling His word, and blessing His people. That is the force of the word "righteousness" here.

In this chapter the apostle brings before us those things we need if we are going to live triumphantly, vigorously, as Christians in this world. These people belonged to a nation which had departed from God. God had shown grace, and had brought them to a knowledge of Himself. They started to live as Christians in this world, and it is beautiful to see how God did not send them on their way in poverty: He had given them all things that pertain to life and godliness. When God delivered their fathers from Egypt He did not allow them to come out as paupers. He manifested His

power, and they came out, not as runaway slaves, but richly laden with the wealth of Egypt. The same is true of believers now. God has brought us out of bondage, and has made it His care that from the first we should be fully equipped, having from His hand everything suited to life and piety. When a man enlists in the armed forces, he is clothed and equipped entirely by the Government. When God starts us on our warfare we are fully furnished by the One Who has called us by glory and by virtue.

The apostle adds, "whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (verse 4). Of His own will He has begotten us by the word of truth. It is the effect of the word of God upon us. It is not "*the* divine nature" exactly, but that we have the life and nature of Christ. It is not ours to share in Godhead glory, but scripture says in the plainest way that by the exceeding great and precious promises given unto us we become partakers of divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. It is the action of the word of God upon us, calling us out from the world.

Having faith, other things are necessary with it, and every one is the complement of the other. So he says, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue". The original meaning of "virtue" is not what it is today, but rather virile strength, backbone, moral backbone. It is essential to our character as Christians to have backbone. To maintain the truth we are not to agree with all we hear, but moral courage is needed to weigh and consider.

Nevertheless we are not to be obstinate: that is the danger. Hence we are to add knowledge to moral courage. If we are to stand firm we must do so intelligently: we must have knowledge of what we stand for. We are to gird up the loins of our minds, not to think loosely. We should know in our own minds why we are to stand fast: then we shall not be easily moved. But we must be firm intelligently, not ignorantly or obstinately.

There is another danger — “knowledge puffeth up”. We may have a little knowledge, and be proud of it, feeling ourselves superior to those we think have a little less knowledge than ourselves. So to knowledge we must add temperance, or self-control. We must judge soberly. That needs patience or endurance. It is good to make a right start, but keep on with it; walk in the fear of God; be obedient to His word.

But we are not to let patience degenerate into slovenliness. Carelessness in the things of God is not patience. We may be patient because we do not want to bother to face up to a question. One thing is often forgotten: God may not look on a matter in the same way as I may idly do. We must remember that we have to give account of ourselves at the judgment seat of Christ. The apostle brings in here the need for patience, or endurance, not negligence which leads to simple idleness. And then he shows the need for piety: we have to give an account of ourselves to God. We must always remember God’s side.

The apostle then brings in two things which we are apt to think are the same thing — brotherly kindness and love. Do you say, What is the difference? We show brotherly love to a person because of what he is in himself or what we think is in him. Certain qualities in another attract us: we are drawn to him, and we passionately love him. But we cannot love all the children of God like that. Because qualities in some appeal to us, we are drawn to them and delight to show them kindness. This is brotherly love. But this is not enough. It may even lead to disaster, to the assembly splitting up into cliques and parties of those mutually attracted. Some might love me, some might take no notice of me: those that know me best might be disappointed in me and give me up.

Therefore, says the apostle, to brotherly love add love. This goes out to all Christians: we can love all because they belong to Christ. He won’t give me up because of what is lacking in me, and our love should go out to all for the sake

of Christ. This is the only thing that will keep us together. Love rises above all that we see in one another. Love flows out to others as we ourselves are occupied with the love of Christ. We are then to show love for Christ's sake, for brotherly love in itself is not sufficient.

The apostle proceeds, "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren (or, idle) nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 8). We need to give heed to these things. Some Christians are satisfied if they never do anything really bad, and go on with a certain amount of piety. This is not God's mind. Our Lord said, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear *much fruit*" (John xv.8). And the apostle's desire here is that we be neither idle nor unfruitful.

Have we been so walking, so serving Him, that an abundant entrance is furnished us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Therefore it is of the first importance to know how this can be obtained. This is the value of a scripture like this. We are told the things that are necessary for us. Have we some of the qualities and not others? Is there anything lacking in our practical lives? The apostle assures us that if these things exist and abound in us, the result will be that we shall be neither idle nor unfruitful as regards the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the true secret of fruitfulness.

We need to go through this passage verse by verse in the presence of God, asking ourselves, "Do I answer to this?" That is why God has given us this chapter. He loves us so much that His great desire is to see us making progress in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He who lacks these things is shortsighted: he cannot see things at a distance, only the things immediately before him. Is it that business, our family life, the affairs of this life generally, so demand our close attention, are so close to us all the time, that we become short-sighted and do not look on to eternal things, forgetting that we were purged from our old sins? Such an one so taken up with earthly things loses the sense of God's forgiveness, and has no eyes or thoughts for the things of eternity.

The apostle adds, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall" (verse 10). You may say, our election is eternal. So it is. But if it is eternal, how can we make our election sure? We cannot alter it. But then, do you know you are one of the elect? What proof is there in our lives of the fact that God has so blessed us? What possible proof can there be if the things mentioned in this chapter are not seen in our lives? Let us then give diligence to make our calling and election sure.

The apostle has been speaking of the things it is necessary to acquire one by one. In the latter part of the chapter he goes on to speak of the worthiness and the glory of the One to Whom we have come. In the beginning of the chapter God is calling by glory and virtue. This is a wonderful truth: glory which Christ ushered in. Where was this glory truly seen? In the Son of God, the Lord of glory and the heir of it. The apostle had before his eyes a sample of the glory and majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is an allusion to His future coming.

The apostles were eye-witnesses of His majesty. The Lord Jesus came in great humility, born in a lowly stable and cradled in a manger. He was despised and rejected of men and hanged on a tree. But, says the apostle, we have seen His glory. On the mount God's voice was heard, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased". The apostle brings it in here to show how worthy is the Person of Christ, and in order that we might be established in the present truth. We should esteem the truth concerning His person and hold it fast.

The apostle adds, "We have the word of prophecy (or the prophetic word) confirmed" (verse 19). The words of the prophets were confirmed by the manifested glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jews were called upon to suffer, more so than the Gentiles. The apostle assured their hearts that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. People often say, "No scripture is of private interpretation", but that is nonsense. The New Translation reads, "The scope

of no prophecy of scripture is had from its own particular interpretation". For instance, a prophecy about David or Solomon cannot be narrowed down to that particular occasion: it all looked on to the ultimate glory of Israel to be fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we should treasure it up in our hearts, and value it, until the realisation of our Christian hope.

The Jewish people hoped for the coming of Christ to reign in His kingdom. All that is changed. The Messiah came and was nailed to a cross. Our hope now is not exactly His reigning, but that He may come to take us to be with Himself in heavenly glory. He is the bright morning star shining in our hearts, but there is not yet the bringing in of the glory. It is difficult in reading these verses to drop preconceived ideas and grasp the truth. The apostle is speaking, not of the coming of Christ in His glorious appearing, but of the morning star arising in our hearts.

Meanwhile we are to hold fast to the truth He has given us, He Himself being the enjoyed portion of our hearts. God has given us power, and He looks for a life of piety, characterised not by weakness but by spiritual vigour. This is a day of weakness, of giving up, but there is no change in Him — He abides ever the same. It is on His resources that we must draw. If we want the approval of the Lord, we have not to wait until we get to heaven, but God would have us to enjoy even now an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom. Let us depend upon the faithfulness of God, and at the same time give diligence that these things are not lacking in us.

THE TOUCHSTONE OF TRUTH

(Note on I John iv.2,3)

Here is the test, the touchstone of truth. "Every spirit which confesseth Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God". This is the simple and proper way to render the words. The true spirit confesses Christ's person. It is of all moment to understand this, because laying the stress on "coming in flesh"

may overlook Who came thus. Undoubtedly His coming in flesh is very important, yet far more momentous is He who thus came. Who was He that came in flesh?

Persons in their senses would not say that you or I came in the flesh. Take the mightiest monarchs that founded world-powers — Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, Caesar. Take the greatest names in letters, philosophy, oratory, science, and what not. Nobody could with propriety speak of their coming in flesh. The reason is because we could not appear at all unless we came in flesh. The wonder, the truth, the infinite grace, is that He came in flesh. It was a divine person, the Son of God, the Creator. That He came in flesh is a most glorious thing morally for God and for man. Nothing in eternity past can compare with it save His death on the cross; nothing in eternity future.

Evidently the grand point is not merely what He became, but Who He is that thus came. Surely He might have come otherwise. He might have come in His own glory, He might have come in angelic glory (as in this guise He had often appeared for a little). He was pleased to come in flesh to glorify the Father, to vindicate God as such, to bless those who believe, to judge those who dishonour Him, to restore creation, and to destroy the devil and his works. All turns on His eternal being and divine glory. This is the doctrine of John all through the Epistle as well as the Gospel, and prophetically in the Book of Revelation; and here it is comprised in the criterion of God's Spirit distinguished from the spirit of error.

W. KELLY

(From "Exposition of the Epistles of John")

A GLORIOUS SIGHT

(Read: Hebrews ii.9)

"We see Jesus!" Such is the epitaph inscribed upon the tombstone of a devoted servant of the Lord long since gone to his rest.

"We see Jesus!" How blessed! For those who love Him and still remain on earth, how glorious a prospect is ours

(Continued inside front cover)

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from the Scripture of Truth

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“send in the account”. Thus to Philemon Paul writes, “If Onesimus owes you anything (i.e. if he has stolen anything), send the account in to me, I will pay it.”

The scripture we are considering, then, means that a sinner before the law was given was like a man who owed a lot of money, but until his bills came in, had no idea of the real extent of his indebtedness. A main purpose of the law was to make men conscious of the real heinousness of sin.

E.H.C.

BITTERNESS, ETC.

(Note on Ephesians iv.31)

The very nearness into which the family of God is brought may become a snare unless there be watchfulness and a simple looking to Christ. But the Holy Ghost gives quarter to no evil feeling whatever. These are the *breaches* of our nearness; in the next chapter (verse 3 and seq.) we shall find the *abuses* of it.

If we come to particulars, “all bitterness”, I think, denotes every form of the sharp, unsparing mood which repels souls instead of winning them, and makes the most of the real or imagined faults of others. The “wrath and anger”, next following refer to the outburst of passion, and the more settled vindictive resentment, to which the indulgence of acrimony gives rise, as “clamour and evil speaking” are their respective counterparts in words: all flowing from the deep-seated fountain of “all malice”, which is finally condemned in our verse. Thus, as we were warned against dishonesty in word and deed, before the allusion to the Holy Spirit’s seal, so now, after it, hatred in its various parts and expressions is denounced.

(From “*Lectures on the Ephesians*”, by William Kelly)

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17)

Luke xii.41. "Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" It is not easy for us to endure interruptions. In Luke's record the Divine Worker was interrupted many times. Here, Peter's interruption is recorded and, with His customary patient grace, the Lord Jesus responds to it. This response takes the form of a penetrating question: "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?" If, as it would seem, Peter desired exclusive rights for "us", then the answer of the Lord is discerning indeed. "Who then" save those watching for their coming Lord — through the long day and still longer night — waiting, in expectant love, for His hand upon the door? So Peter's question, allowed of his Master, becomes a link uniting the character of the watching ones with that of the faithful and prudent steward. True service to Himself is acceptable only insofar as it has its origin in devoted love to Himself.

Stewardship is not a mere human accomplishment. There are those who appoint *themselves* in this capacity, but the faithful and wise steward is identified with his lord and is "made ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season" (lit. "measure of corn"). The need for sustenance, to be provided with unflinching regularity, is stressed. It is the lord who supplies — and the household, too, is his!

Is there not a word for the conscience here? Who is this "faithful and wise" one? The Lord Jesus asks the question as though such an one were rare to find! Is it not one whose sole interest is in the household of his lord — who seeks his mind as to the food to be given, and as to the season in which to give it? There are seasons of testing — of failure — of persecution; times of sorrow, as well as seasons of joy and thanksgiving. The faithful and wise steward ministers his lord's provision "in due season."

The Lord's response to his question was not forgotten. About A.D. 64-66 Peter writes by Sylvanus to the scattered believers throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Among the many treasures of this epistle is his exhortation to wise stewardship. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter iv.10).

The portrayal of the "Servant" in the executive capacity of a "Steward" is the more profound as we continue to contemplate it. Peter referred to it as a parable, but was it not more than this? Let us bear in mind that the Lord Jesus never required in others those characteristics which He did not, Himself, display. One sees the clear link between the watching ones, waiting in loyalty of love, and the faithful steward, administering in the name and for the purposes of his lord. But will any deny that the Son of Man through all His days of service was waiting the accomplishment of His Father's purpose? We have only to move forward for a few sentences in Luke's moral order of record to hear Jesus say, "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (verse 50). What waiting love can compare with this! What incomparable devotion to His God and Father! Here, surely, is a dual presentation — the only perfect Servant, waiting the moment divinely appointed, and the holy Steward of divine purposes reaching forward to accomplish them by laying down His life.

In the records of the past — in the history of the people to whom He had come — there are shadows of Himself. From the point of view of the ordinary reader they present men, outstanding in example — their lives a precious influence for all time. But, in reality, and for the purposes of God, they were prepared persons, led to the full of their capacity, to foreshadow, however imperfectly, the One who would surely be the only perfect Servant — the Steward administrator without equal!

Abraham — "the friend of God" (James ii.23) — sought ever more closely those revelations of the divine purpose

which, progressively, brought out in himself the capacity for selfless service. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I tell thee of" (Genesis xxii.). In the early light of a morning, in utter subjection of service, Abraham rose up and "clave the wood for the burnt offering," and, with Isaac his son "went unto the place of which God had told him."

The act of "stewardship" had commenced — the *exposition* of the divine plan, adequate for the salvation of the world, was about to be unfolded to "the friend of God." But it was an exposition *enacted* under direction — it was not in lengthy words, but in the co-ordinated movements of this man faith-linked with God. A faithful and wise steward acts for his lord — in accord with the mind and purpose of his lord alone. Himself becomes absorbed into the plan — an integral part of it. Without him it would not be carried out. The questions of Isaac, also, show this. He, too, would wish to be in the good of this stewardship of exposition. "The lad" had at least reached his majority; Josephus (Ant.i.13,2) states his age as 25 years. To him, the purpose of the journey of three days was to offer a burnt offering to God who would, Himself, provide a lamb — it was to be a divine provision and he desired to be brought into awareness of it as a valued possession! He saw Abraham, his father, build an altar — he observed that the wood he had carried was being laid there. But now he was being bound helpless for the sacrificial knife, and they were his father's hands that bound him! The "steward" ministrations of the Father's giving was strong, indeed, at this stage of the enactment, but the divine presentation becomes stronger still as we read the twice repeated assurance "They went both of them together." The submissiveness of the son in the type was beautiful indeed, but how much more so in that which it shadowed — the unsought and infinite love of both Father and Son. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No one taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to

lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John x.17-18).

The spirit of waiting service and stewardship, so valuable in divine appraisal, was displayed in the life of Joseph. His submission to the mind of God aroused the hatred of his brethren. To have followed a course of neutrality to "their evil report" (Genesis xxxvii.2) would have avoided the shadow of death and the humility of slavery. Tested by evil, again, in the person of Potiphar's wife and falsely accused, he became a servant, even in the prison. "But the LORD was with him."

The qualities of faithfulness and wisdom are inseparable from the character of God. The Son of Man expressed these perfectly before men. His question "Who then is that faithful and wise steward" was answered in His own person in their midst. The eternal outcome is His glory and honour, for "The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand" (John iii.35).

Another, whose life exhibited these precious qualities, "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts vii.). It was under the discipline of God that Moses became "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." It was his servant relationship that God himself vindicated when He said "My servant Moses who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth . . . and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold" (Numbers xii.). He was thus enabled to be steward of God's design for His people. In this dependent service he was used to minister to Israel the purposes of God for them — their spiritual food "in due season," and in this same service he foreshadowed the Saviour God when he said, "Ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin —; and if not, blot me out of Thy book which Thou has written" (Exodus xxxii.).

“Who then is that faithful and wise steward?” Is He not the One Who said “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John vi.38).

One thinks of these foreshadowings of Himself, in the events and by persons of the past, and of “the Spirit of Christ which was in them . . . when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (I Peter i.11). Looking back, in the record given to Luke, we may see something of the aftermath of His faithfulness unto death — even the death of the cross — and find joy in His expression “Of a truth I say unto you, he will make him ruler over all that he hath” (verse 44). “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians ii.9-11).

EDWARD T. WOOD

THE LITTLE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS

Are we anywhere in scripture told that the little children of believers will be “caught up” with their parents when, according to 1 Thessalonians iv.16,17, the Lord descends from heaven to receive His saints unto Himself?

Scripture does not state verbally that the young children of believing parents will be included in the company of those who will be received up by the Lord at His coming. We believe, however, that scripture gives ample ground for the assurance that the little ones of believers will be included amongst those who are raised from among the dead or caught up to meet the Lord in the air, at His descent from heaven. Sinless infants will surely be reckoned among those “that are Christ’s at His coming” (1 Corinthians xv.23).

While the word of God teaches that all children inherit a sinful nature, transmitted by Adam to all his race (Romans v.12), it also recognizes in childhood an early period of innocence when there is no knowledge of evil, when conscience is not yet developed, and when a sense of respon-

sibility is unfelt. We read, for instance, of a time when children "know neither good nor evil" (Deuteronomy 1.39), nor how "to refuse the evil and to choose the good" (Isaiah vii.15). We read also of the special mercy of God to such. For instance, Jehovah had mercy upon the little ones in doomed Nineveh, who could not "discern between their right hand and their left hand," and He spared the city (Jonah iv.11).

And as in the Old Testament we see the pitiful regard of Jehovah for the very young, so in the New Testament we find the same compassionate regard displayed by the Lord Jesus for the little ones. When "infants" were brought to Him, and His disciples rebuked them, the Lord said, "Suffer little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii.15,16). Mark the Lord's word, "Of such is the kingdom of God." This was said of babes, not of adults. Adults needed to be born anew, of water and of the Spirit, before they could enter the kingdom of God (John iii.3,5). Grown-ups must be "converted" and become as infants before they can enter the kingdom of the heavens, the Lord also said, in another place (Matthew xviii.3).

From these and other scriptures it appears that our Lord taught that young children, unable, as at first they are, to distinguish between good and evil, are types of those who enter and compose the true kingdom of God, for only those enter that kingdom who receive it as a little child (Mark x.15). Also, we behold the blessed Lord illustrating this teaching by taking the little children in His arms, and laying His hands upon them, and blessing them abundantly just as they were (Mark x.16).

And when we consider the words and acts of our Lord in speaking about and receiving to Himself the little ones during His ministry on earth, can we imagine that He will overlook the little ones of His saints when He comes to conduct His own into the Father's house? If infants were "models" of those forming the kingdom of God on earth, will not such infants have some appointed place in Christ's

glorious kingdom on high? Whether in their graves or in their parental homes, these little ones will surely answer His call and ascend with the great company of adults to be forever with the Lord, the spotless purity of their innocence being irradiated with the glory of His presence.

A particular age at which personal responsibility to God begins in a child is nowhere stated, and this age varies considerably even in children of the same family. Much depends upon the pious parental example and instruction it receives. Timothy from infancy was nurtured in a godly home, so that from a babe (brephos) he knew the Holy Scriptures (2 Timothy i.5; iii.15). Believing parents and guardians have their responsibility to bring up the young ones under their care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; for who can determine when the dormant conscience toward God in a little child will awaken, and begin to distinguish between good and evil?

But the Lord is wiser than the most devoted parents, and sees life where perhaps they see only death. Jairus and his wife were filled with astonishment and joy when He aroused from sleep the beloved child whom they were preparing to bury. She who was deaf to the voice of her parents responded readily to the call of the Lord. Even so the very young will obey the call of the Lord at His coming. W. J. HOCKING

SOME OF PAUL'S CONTEMPORARIES

1. AQUILA and PRISCILLA

Aquila and Priscilla are the only married couple of whom any details are given in the New Testament, and therefore what is said of them has a special interest. They were Jews who had lived in Rome, but when the Emperor Claudius made an order expelling all Jews from the imperial city, these two found their way to Corinth.

Soon after, another traveller, whose steps were governed by a greater than Claudius, arrived in that busy city, and thus came about the first meeting of the apostle Paul and the

two exiles. Finding they were of the same occupation, tentmakers, they lived and worked together, and although it is not stated that the conversion of Aquila and Priscilla to Christianity took place at this time, their subsequent history proves how deeply they profited by the apostle's teaching. How they must have thanked God for that apparently harsh and unjust decree of Claudius which had been the means of leading them into intimacy with the great apostle!

They found, too, opportunities of ministering to the comfort and perhaps health of that faithful servant of the Lord during the long and anxious time of his stay in Corinth. And when after eighteen months Paul went on to Ephesus, they were ready to leave their home in Corinth to accompany him on his journey across the sea. How real their labours of love for him had been, the apostle himself declared when writing to the Roman saints (xvi.3).

It needed not to be stated in so many words that Aquila and Priscilla had become Christians. "By this," our Lord Jesus had said, "shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one to another" (John xiii.35).

While at Ephesus this devoted couple found opportunity to serve the saints as they had served the apostle. They opened their house to the believers who met together there as an assembly (I Corinthians xvi.19). What were the labour and inconvenience that this involved, to the joy of following in the footsteps of Him Who said, "I am among you as He that serveth" (Luke xxii.27. See Matthew xx.26-28).

It was at Ephesus, too, after the apostle had left for Jerusalem, that Aquila and Priscilla heard the eloquent Apollos speaking in the synagogue, "knowing only the baptism of John." With a fine combination of courtesy and faithfulness they invited the gifted man to their home and expounded to him the way of God more perfectly. Thus these humble believers were able to help and instruct one who afterwards served the Lord publicly both at Ephesus and Corinth.

The greeting which Paul sent in the Epistle to the Romans to his old friends shows that at that time Aquila and Priscilla had returned to Rome, and had there continued their service

to the saints by making their house the meeting-place of a company of believers in that great city.

Their travels were not over even then, for when the apostle was himself in Rome, as a prisoner, he sent a message to them in the last Epistle which he wrote (2 Timothy iv.19). This was at a time of great persecution and of general defection, so that the apostle had sadly to write to Timothy, "this thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me" (i.15). It is good to know that in that dark day the apostle could still reckon among the faithful the two whom he had met at Corinth so many years before.

It is remarkable that Aquila and Priscilla are invariably mentioned together. They were truly one in all the activities of their service for Christ: whether in ministering to the apostle Paul's comfort and bodily needs, welcoming the local assembly to their home, or guiding a leading brother into a fuller knowledge of the truth, the Spirit of God has recorded both names so that we may have in them the example of a husband and wife, "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

It is also worth noting that the order in which the two names occur varies in the different references. In Romans xvi.3 and Acts xviii.18, where the care and hospitality shown to the apostle are in question, Priscilla is named first, but the order is reversed in Acts xviii.26, where we can readily see how becoming it was that Aquila should take the lead in the instruction of Apollos; and this is also the order in I Corinthians xvi.19, where their salutations are sent to another assembly. How perfect are the scriptures in their smallest detail!

2. TYCHICUS

Tychicus is another of the early believers of whom we are privileged to know a little. He was of Asia and is first mentioned in company with Trophimus of Ephesus as one of those who accompanied the apostle Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts xx.4; xxi.29). One of the objects of that journey was to convey to the saints at Jerusalem the loving

gifts of the Gentile assemblies, and in accordance with the apostle's practice of "providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men," representatives of the different assemblies accompanied him (I Corinthians xvi.3; 2 Corinthians viii.18-21). It seems probable therefore that Tychicus was one of those chosen for this purpose. It was not a service requiring great gift, but it was necessary that those chosen should have the full confidence of the saints and give evidence of trustworthiness.

As Tychicus accompanied the apostle on that eventful journey to Jerusalem he was an eye-witness of a supreme example of faithfulness. He listened to Paul's words at Miletus, "None of these things moves me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus." And again at Caesarea, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xx.24; xxi.13). He saw Paul's single-minded desire that by any means he might save some of his own countrymen, displayed under heroic circumstances when he asked leave of the Roman captain to address the angry mob of Jews from the castle steps (xxi.39). It is not difficult to imagine that this bright example of the lengths to which faithfulness could go helped to develop the same qualities in Tychicus.

How or when Tychicus reached Rome we do not know, but while Paul was a prisoner there someone was required who could be trusted to act as courier with those priceless documents, the Epistles to Ephesus and Colosse, and Tychicus is the obvious choice. Travelling in those days might be an adventurous undertaking, requiring resourcefulness and courage; it was necessary too that the messenger should be one who could not be turned aside from his duty by the excitements and attractions of the numerous cities through which his journey would lie.

Listen to what the apostle said of Tychicus — "a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant of the

Lord: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort (or encourage) your hearts" (Colossians iv.7,8; cf. Ephesians vi.21,22). Clearly he was not a mere postman, but one whose heart was in the work (humble though his part might seem to some) and who took the deepest interest in all that concerned the welfare of the assemblies.

The two other references to Tychicus shew him to be still the faithful messenger of the apostles. Times had changed, and Christians were everywhere exposed to hatred and persecution, but Tychicus could still be trusted to carry out his errands undeterred by dangers (2 Timothy iv.12; Titus iii.12).

Are not these few notices of this faithful brother preserved for us as a practical illustration of our dependence on one another and of how the humblest service faithfully performed is necessary to the completeness of the whole? The references to his lowly service illustrate what is said in one of those Epistles in the preservation of which Tychicus was allowed to have his part — "Christ . . . from Whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by *that which every joint supplieth*, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians iv.16).

3. EPAPHRAS

Another of whom we are permitted to know something is Epaphras, one who had served Christ in the assembly at Colosse, but who for some reason became a fellow-prisoner of Paul at Rome (Philemon 23). The deep concern of Epaphras for the spiritual well-being of the saints he had left is clearly revealed in the Epistle to the Colossians. No doubt he had discerned the springing up at Colosse of that departure from the Head of the church which was beginning to manifest itself there so insidiously and which Paul's Epistle was written to correct.

But it is instructive to note that the apostle only refers directly to the report Epaphras had given of their love in the

Spirit (i.8). What he had told the apostle was in no spirit of carping criticism, but in real love for the souls of the believers; and hence he delighted to speak first of all of what he could praise.

Epaphras might have felt that at such a distance from Colosse, and in prison, his labours for that assembly were ended. He did not think so, however; for he laboured for them still, he combatted earnestly for them — in prayer (Colossians iv.12,13). How vivid are the apostle's words, and how they rebuke us for those formal and cold petitions we know we often repeat!

His prayer too is recorded as an example to us; he desired for the saints nothing less than that they might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." It was a full and Spirit-directed prayer (cf Colossians i.9-11 with iv.12,13). Nothing less surely should be the aim and desire of all who endeavour to "feed the assembly of God," and who care for its state.

4. EPAPHRODITUS

Another instance of the real links of love which bound the early saints together is Epaphroditus, the Philippian brother. He had the joy of being the messenger of the saints at Philippi to bring the gifts which their love had prompted them to send to the suffering apostle at Rome (Philippians iv.18).

The journey had brought him into real peril of his life, and the Philippians, hearing of their messenger's sickness, were deeply concerned for him. Epaphroditus, for his part, was distressed to think of their anxiety, and so he returned to Philippi bearing the apostle's precious letter and his sincere commendation of his own service (ii.25-30).

What we are told of Epaphroditus is an illustration of the truth of I Corinthians xii.25,26; "the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

6. ONESIPHORUS

Onesiphorus is only mentioned once but what is said of him is illuminating. He had served the apostle well in Ephesus under unrecorded circumstances. When the apostle was a prisoner in Rome, and persecution so intense had broken out that many had been turned away, this faithful Ephesian brother was not ashamed of the apostle's chain, but diligently sought him out in his prison. What this meant to the tender and appreciative heart of the great apostle we can learn from his simple and expressive words, "he oft refreshed me" (2 Timothy i.16-18).

May we not be sure that there is great importance in the introduction into the New Testament scriptures of these and other examples of the fruit of the Holy Spirit's working in the lives of humble believers? Each had his part to play, and thus the bonds of love which are so proper to the assembly were strengthened.

L. C. HOCKING

(Reprinted from *The Bible Monthly*)

DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES

"Until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law." Romans v.13.

Does this mean that men who sinned before the law was given will not be held guilty before God? Certainly not, else it would conflict with Romans ii.12, "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." The fact is, that the word "impute" used here, which occurs in only one other place in the New Testament (Philemon 18), is different from, though related to, the word so often used in Romans iv.

This latter word is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament, and in Romans iv is also translated "count" and "reckon", as for example "faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness". We may say it means "reckon to" a person, while the other word means rather "reckon up", or

(Continued on inside front cover)

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Concluded from inside back cover)

consideration in the arrangement of our affairs. The care of the soul must be placed in the forefront.

Here was Gaius, this good brother who had proved his brotherly kindness in unselfish caring for others, and especially for those who gave up all to serve the Lord Jesus; accordingly, the apostle wished him, prospering in soul as he undoubtedly was, to prosper **in all things**, and to be in health, so as to be cheered and free and unimpeded in his occupations.

Breakdowns in Health

In order that the soul may prosper, God sometimes withers up those things with which we are too much engrossed; and if this stroke does not suffice, He disciplines us with bodily sickness. The Lord takes away the idol we have set up and smashes it to pieces. This chastening is gracious on His part. Of course the process may be painful to us, but our hearts must thankfully accept what the Lord does to remove a snare from us and win back the soul to honour and enjoy Himself.

Sometimes a zealous man is set aside from public service in order that he may learn that God can carry on His work without him. His servant has been absorbed in teaching and preaching to others, and has slipped into laxity in the vigilance necessary for his own soul's communion. In His goodness and love, the Lord corrects this failure, and a little sickness is turned to much good for the soul.

But here, in the opening of this short Epistle, as the beloved Gaius was prospering in soul, the apostle wishes his prosperity **in all things** else, and in the health of his body too. W. KELLY

(Reprinted from The Bible Monthly)

THE LORD'S LAST CONFLICT WITH SATAN

(An Easter Meditation)

"I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of the world comes, and in Me he has nothing; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father has commanded Me, thus I do. Rise up, let us go hence." (John xiv.30,31)

I. HIS OWN PREDICTION OF IT

"I will no longer speak much with you." The communications of the Saviour's lips, so copiously flowing for the present comfort of His disciples, would soon cease. His bodily presence was about to be withdrawn. Interruption, effective and lasting, was at hand. "For the ruler of the world comes, and in Me he has nothing." Strange characterization of the enemy of the Shepherd and of the sheep alike! None other had ever so described him, save He Who is the truth. He was coming who hiddenly sways the world in all its motives and desires. It was to be an eternally decisive encounter and would absorb the Saviour wholly.

No response to Satan's Provocation

In that hour it should be proved finally that though the ruler of this world could find something in every other, he had nothing in the Son of God. Satan was coming as a thief, to steal and to kill and to destroy. He would steal Judas, kill and destroy him utterly. He was coming as the wolf to seize Peter (though afterwards he had to let him go), and scatter the remaining disciples. They felt his approach and fear overcame them, fear of the power of darkness which he wielded. The effects of this were plain for every eye to see. Yet the real conflict was unseen, beneath the silence, steadfastness, and submission of the Good Shepherd. By one stroke against Him Who had charged Himself with their salvation, the foe would attempt to destroy the sheep all at once and utterly, not one by one.

Nothing but love of the world would its prince find in

Pilate, the chief priests, rulers and people. Alas, he would discover unbelief and dread in the disciples of Jesus, but in the Lord Himself nothing. No wish of His own that should align Him divergently from God's will, even by a hair's breadth. Not now, as in the temptation in the wilderness, was it a question of any object of desire the world might offer, but of life itself in this world. Even so, there would be found in Him neither love of life in this world (revolted as it was from God), nor fear of men, nor of the world's prince, though he be armed with all the power of death.

Love to the Father Proved by Obedience unto Death

“But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father has commanded Me, thus I do” (verse 31). He refused the world, but would have those ensnared in its rebellion to know that He loved the Father, loved absolutely Him Whose will and character were as opposed to theirs as light is to darkness. He would shew His love by His obedience, suffering even unto death according to the Father's commandment. The world would then have no excuse for not knowing the truth which would set free every soul that received it. The full evidence would shine before their eyes from the cross. They knew already, as their mockery subsequently shewed, that He **trusted** in God; they should be left with this proof of His uttermost devotion, of His **love** to the Father. The demonstration should **stand** to judge or save; whether rightly understood or not; whether believed or not.

Everything in the Son was for the Father

As we consider our Lord's words, “Rise up, let us go hence,” may we not adapt the sentence, “The ruler of the world comes, and in Me he has nothing,” to express His own positive purpose in going forth? So that it was as though He said, I rise to go all the way with My Father, and He shall find that everything in Me is His own.

By the Father's own testimony this had been so at the end of (and surely throughout) thirty years' tabernacling in the flesh, of which hardly anything is recorded for your pleasure

and mine, dear reader. The Father said, "In Thee I have found My delight" (Mark i.11); so also in His public service that then began (Matthew xvii.5); and again on the day of the setting apart of the Lamb of God as our Passover (John xii.28; Cf. vv.1,12; Exodus xii.3). In our passage the Lamb Himself declares it should be so to the end. He proceeds in readiness to obey His Father's commandment, even to the giving of Himself. At the cross, underlying reproach and suffering unto death, temptation at its fiercest should assail Him. Surging like many waters against the strength of His love to the Father, this final attack of the deceiver and destroyer of men should fail to quench it. Then all that was in Him should be engaged in that deadly combat; all that He had should be given in that sacrifice; all the excellence of His moral perfection and all His achievement in obedience should rise to its zenith of glory. What should the Father find in Him? Everything. Himself, the Father, loved with all His heart, all His mind and understanding, all His soul and all His strength until in the white-heat of consecration, wherein He was tested unto death, His zeal of love consumed Him. And as the result, the Father's Name glorified, His will done, and His counsel established in the bringing of many sons to glory.

II. COMPARISON AND CONTRAST WITH THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

"And the devil having completed every temptation departed from Him for a time" (Luke iv.13). The Gospel narrative prepares us in these words for further assaults after the opening temptation referred to. The tempter's master-stroke was reserved for the last. An approach meanwhile, disguised under Peter's devoted concern for his Master's safety, presented insinuatingly the same temptation (Matthew xvi.22) as was urged later in stark directness when our Blessed Lord hung upon the cross. Less subtle was the tempter's disguise at the last. His holy Antagonist could not be deceived on either of these occasions, but how were those deceived of whom Satan

made use! First Peter, and afterwards at the crucifixion men of all kinds and conditions! Little they realized how completely their wills were bent to another's in combining to voice the deadliest temptation their master, the devil, could bring to bear on the Son of God. In Peter's case it was enough that the Lord disclosed Satan's presence and bade him be gone. At the cross, the taunts of men, breaking like succeeding waves, spent their force on a silent Sufferer.

Many Mockers Now, but the Same Mind as Then

"If Thou be the Son of God" (Matthew iv.3,6) were the words that formed the basis of the wilderness temptation. Similar words preface each jibe at the Crucified. "If Thou be the Son of God," "If He be Christ, the chosen of God," "If Thou be the King of the Jews," "If Thou be Christ" (Matthew xxvii.40; Luke xxiii. 35,37,39). The voices are the voices of the passers-by, the rulers, the soldiers and the malefactors, but the master-mind is Satan's. Thrice was the Lord tempted in the wilderness and variously; three times, yea four, at the cross, but it is the same temptation each time. "Save Thyself," rail the wayfarers (Mark xv.30); "Save Thyself," the soldiers echo; "Save Thyself," re-echoes the unrepentant thief (Luke xxiii.37,39). The rulers and chief priests voice their derision obliquely, in the manner of teaching the people: "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." This repetition reveals the object of the tempter—to concentrate his thrusts at one point. It also makes clear that his human dupes unanimously considered this sole sharp test to be one possessing a finality capable of disposing of His exalted claims once and for all.

The Old Temptation to Self-seeking Intensified

Those differing temptations of the wilderness attached themselves to His bodily hunger, His just aspirations to the universal throne, and His right to the worship and service of angels. The throne was His by divine prophetic decree. Angels at His birth worshipped Him as God; the ministry of their legions He could secure at will. Make use of Thy rights and powers for Thy glorification in this self-seeking world of mine, said its prince to Him, in effect. This evil suggestion was

little changed but greatly intensified when the Lord's hour was come and life was the forfeit of refusal.

The tempter and his human slaves counted this urge to self-preservation irresistible to any child of man. We may ask indeed, Why did not the shame of the cross, the denial of justice by "the powers that be," and the withholding of divine aid spur Him on to deliver Himself? There is only one answer. The Son of man was there; He came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. His soul took the appointed way, wrapped in its inflexible resolve to obey God in "saving others" eternally. Having resigned all else, He had only life to give. Here lay the preciousness. Living His life could never atone. Only giving His life could redeem. The will of God imposed this task upon Him now. So He sank in deep waters, unheeding every mocking voice and baffling the final onslaught of the destroyer. This clinging to the last possession of life in this world is the most powerful of human desires. Here is One, in "the likeness of sinful flesh," subjected to the strongest pressure of this appeal to love of life which the ruler of this world could exert—but "in Me he has nothing."

The Saviour Answered Then, but is Silent Now

The fasting Saviour countered each temptation in the desert with a word of God. This was His sword in this combat with the enemy. The temptations were devised in a shape conforming to His proper desires and inheritance, but He refused any gratification which as to time and means of accomplishment was not the will of God. He read that will in the word of God, and His use of it reveals this and opens also to our sight the inner motives of His soul. As He sets out upon the work His Father gave Him to do, we see that the word of God ruled every wish and purpose in His heart and determined every step He took. Throughout His ministry His message to men was the word of God. He confirmed with all His authority what had been written before He came, and He communicated fresh revelations which only the Son Who had seen the Father and knew Him could make.

Yet the things concerning Him had an end (Luke xxii.37), and the time came when men decided to extinguish the light of His testimony by killing Him. To submit to this, as at God's hands, was however the supreme test of His unaltered obedience. His hour was then come for suffering, and was endured by Him in a silence which signified at once the patient bearing of each taunt and the final refusal of its disguised temptation.

The Faithful and True Witness whether in Speech or Silence

To dwell a little on this silence, we recall how the wise but sombre Preacher said, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heavens . . . a time to keep silence and a time to speak" (Ecclesiastes iii.1,7). The doings and undoings and mendings-again of the world of vanity are before him, together with their effects upon the spirit of man. Our conflicting emotions and their causes are so much travail to be exercised herewith. If as an alleviation God has made everything beautiful in its time, there is yet no tracing of His inscrutable way of wisdom among them. He was hidden.

Now, One has come to declare His Name—One Who changes everything for faith. He stood, **full** of grace and truth, amid things which could only be vanity (emptiness) for those who sought satisfaction in them. Where they found vexation of spirit He was present to give rest of soul to every one who came to Him. Not only so, but the changing scenes and times themselves, when He entered them, were invested with a divine glory. They might seem only travail and frustration: travail and frustration would they be to any other than the Son of God, but His being in them transformed them until every whit uttered His glory. And what is created beauty (Ecclesiastes iii.11), evidence as it is of His power and majesty, compared with the very glory of the Father tabernacling among men—seen, heard and handled—in His beloved Son? If we may think of there being for **Him** a time to keep silence and a time to speak, then surely His speech and silence were equally parts of His witness. His silences, as effort followed effort at Calvary to break down His willingness to suffer, were answers

as clear and definite as His quotations from the word of God in the desert. They manifested the triumph of His resistance. Therein also the eternal strength and fulness of the love and holiness of God were glorified.

III. THE ONSLAUGHT ITSELF

Let us pass to the revealed particulars of those fateful mockings and ponder more deeply His responses of silence. The passers-by, to revile Him, distorted His words: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii.19). The destruction of the temple of His body by wicked men was in process before their eyes, but they discerned nothing of its truth. Their verbal perversion of the Lord's sign was clear evidence that its light had shone upon them, but they had not apprehended it. His violent death as its one half was lost upon them, and His resurrection completing it was the furthest desire in their hearts or expectation in their minds.

"Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days," they say, wagging their heads, "save Thyself" (Matthew xxvii.40). They had only gathered impressions of one who sought tarnished worldly fame by building again that which he himself had destroyed—a magician's meaningless feat to excite the curiosity, feast their eyes, and perhaps inflame their political zeal. Now they are quite sure it is an empty boast. They count Him a powerless pretender, and to vex Him call out, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Oh, the grief of being stared upon and laughed to scorn in His hour of suffering by such as these, thoughtless and uncomprehending! The only moments they would spare as they passed by were occupied in announcing their disappointment, like Herod's, at not seeing a hoped-for "miracle."

The Leaders Seek a Sign to the Last

There were those stationed there also, until they should see this business of crucifixion through, who had in mind many signs of which they knew and which perhaps they had even witnessed. They multiply His sorrows, reproach upon reproach. "In like manner the chief priests also, mocking, with the

scribes and elders, said, He saved others, Himself He cannot save" (Matthew xxvii.41). The chief priests especially should, more than any others, have understood the spiritual significance of the works His Father had given His Son to do. Their memory of His lavish mercy on the needy multitudes only betrayed them into condemning themselves out of their own mouths. Envy had entered and sanity forsook these learned scoffers at the cross. They were incapable of reasoning uprightly. For they hated Him. "Ah, so would we have it!" was their hearts' language (Psalm xxxv.25).

They probed not their own paradox to search its hidden meaning, so plain to the eye of faith. Here in the sacrifice of the Lamb of God by His own will was total salvation of eternal depth and fulness for men—the fulfilment and more of every hope for the soul which had ever been raised in human hearts. How such hopes had been kindled and fanned to flame in the hearts of all who mingled faith with the experience or beholding of those bodily cures by the Sent One of God! But those who should have been a holy priesthood add iniquity to iniquity. "If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe Him."

So they publish their shame. Did the guileless Israelite, Nathaniel, hear them? If so, how he must have been saddened. His clear eyes long ago recognized that royal Personality at first sight and confessed His title (John i.49). That veiled approach of divine majesty had been to him like the falling of the dew. But these mockers! Evidences overwhelming in number and force had not broken the truth to them. At long last they profess themselves ready to pin their faith to this worldly sign of self-salvation. It was their choice to retain their place and nation and to serve under a king who would forsake the will of God for his own safety. Let Him undo the cross, come down in His own Name, even in whirlwind and fire, and they will believe Him.

The Leaders Mock His Faith

Again, it was one of their duties as God's ministers to whisper in dying ears, Trust in the Lord. But here and now is

One Whose trust in His last hour is perfect. They behold Him; they bear witness to His trust in God, but for what? That they may cover Him with contempt and ridicule. For nails are in His hands and feet.

How slight those fetters are to Him! For a stronger than Samson is here; and a holier. Yet to say holier is to institute a comparison, and in this respect there is only contrast. To holiness Samson seemed a stranger; his only sanctification was outward and concerned physical things. These nail-fastenings of Jesus would be broken far more easily by His might if He exerted it, than the Philistines' green "withes" or new ropes by Samson (Judges xvi). Delilah's warning to him of his enemies' presence roused Samson's spirit to action, and called forth his strength to free himself. Now innumerable foes encompass the Son of man Whom God has made strong for Himself.

The torrent of their derision bursts forth. We are startled to hear it expressed in the very words of Scripture they had forgotten (Psalm xxii.8). "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God" (Matthew xxvii.43). Words of the all foreseeing Spirit to forewarn, unwittingly reproduced from the depths of enmity in human hearts inspired by Satan! Words sharper than drawn swords to thrust His soul through! He agonizes in receiving their wounds, but there is never a thought of tearing Himself away. He gave His back to the smiters before: He lays His body upon the altar willingly now and resigns His soul to be made an offering for sin. The cords that bind Him are faith that knew only how to obey God, and divine love that laboured only for man's salvation.

So the accepted leaders of His own people, the greedy shepherds (Isaiah lvi.11; Ezekiel xxxiv.2), talk to the grief of Him, Whom God is wounding (Psalm lxix.26) for the guilt of men. Wickedness could make no worse misuse of intelligence. Holy faithfulness could be subjected to no severer temptation than to drink this gall of human hatred seven times embittered. The scorners voice the malice of Satan; they also proclaim

their own enslavement and sin, the sin that brought Him to this fathomless anguish.

The Dying Robbers

The thieves crucified with Him reproached Him for His inability to save Himself and them. By such words how bitterly must He have suffered Who came to seek and save the lost, not only because they could not see anything in Him to desire, but because they wished only for a "salvation" which would plunge them again into the old life of sin! Yet the Father works to magnify His grace then and there in the exercising by His Son of the saving power which is His glory. As one of the robbers regards the face more marred than any man's, and hears the voice that spake as never man spake, the Father reveals His Son to him. The Son receives him, the returning prodigal, to bring him that very day to the Paradise, which is the Father's house. Now, the penitent recognizes a divine Saviour, and through Him the prospect opening of a life beyond death where Christ should be truly King and all that he himself had transgressed, righteousness and peace, should be established. He not only recognizes but desires both the Saviour and his kingdom. This, for the dying Saviour, was a table spread in the midst of His enemies. His holy love found refreshment, meat to eat, in the understanding and acceptance of Himself by the robber's faith.

The Guard of Soldiers

The soldiers, hearing the infernal chant of reproach, "Save Thyself," regard only its mockery of a kingly claim. Into this they enter as a jest. He is become the song of the drunkards, who offer Him a share of their sour wine. As in the case of the thieves, this darkness is not unrelieved, though it is not the soldiers themselves, but the officer in charge of them, whose conviction is recorded. When all was over, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke xxiii.47).

There is no mention of the relenting of a single individual among those who with higher intelligence of their nation's hope and varying measures of selfrighteousness reproached

Him, that is, among the priests, scribes and elders and the Jewish people. Notwithstanding their differences, all were united in a tragic unanimity: the accusers of Jesus and the procurers of His sentence (the priests), with their lieutenants, constituents and supporters, His executioners (the soldiers) and the unrepentant thief joined with Him in suffering the death-penalty—they all shared the guilt of voicing the mind and temptation of Satan, hurling the same fiery dart again and again, “Save Thyself.”

“But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not and in whose mouth are no reproofs” (Psalm xxxviii.13,14). Each time He was silent, perfect in holy purpose. Each taunt was an invitation to prefer self to the Father, self to the sinner, who otherwise could have no salvation. Each was a temptation to deny Himself and cancel all He had spoken, and undo all He had done—to forsake the work His Father gave Him to do. Resisting unto blood, He suffered silently in the most costly and precious obedience that could be rendered to God (John xiii.31).

Silent as Accused: Never altogether Silent as Witness

Finally, some reader may be wondering whether this emphasis on His silence at the cross does not overlook the “seven words” that broke the silence there. They all appear to have been near the beginning or end of the six hours upon the cross. So that during all but a fraction of an hour He was silent in fact. We may recall what Isaiah wrote (liii.7): “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” These words may even be understood of His trial as well as of the cross. During the final hours of His life in this world, He was characteristically silent towards it. He had nothing to say by way of justifying Himself. It was this that provoked the high priest to his adjuration and made Pilate marvel. He only acknowledged His own glorious Name and left His words and works to speak for themselves. Being the “faithful and true witness” He used both the trial and the cross as opportunities for good confession and for the display

to the end of the perfection of grace and truth. As the accused he answered nothing (Matthew xxvi.62-64; xxvii.11-14; John xviii.20, 23, 33-37; xix.9-11). He was silent also as the One assailed by temptation never before equalled and never to be equalled again.

One of old, Job, "My servant Job," whose like there was not in the earth, suffered the loss of all things except life under the assault of the same tempter. The response of Job's lips was, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord" (Job i.21). In this he sinned not: herein was Satan's defeat. But hidden in Job's heart God discerned self-righteousness remaining, though Satan had retired. To bring this out, He suffered Job's friends to provoke him with their comfort. Thereupon, what speeches of Job!

We contrast the Lord Jesus and our hearts swell with joy and gratitude. The temptation of the Evil One fails; the One tempted in His silence abides before God, Whose all-seeing eye beholds only perfection. As the whole burnt-offering, flayed and cut into its prescribed pieces, lay upon the altar, so upon the cross He offered Himself without spot to God, in every respect tried and holy, a sacrifice gloriously acceptable on our behalf to the God of salvation. Even on our behalf He pleaded no extenuation then. His silence acknowledged our guilt which He bore and the holiness of God Who had laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. Words cannot utter the adoration of loving hearts that owe all to Him. The silence of wonder and worship is ours as we gaze upon the Lamb of God suffering for our sins to redeem us from all iniquity.

THEO DAVIS

(Reprinted)

JOHN'S DESIRE FOR GAIUS

“Beloved, I desire that in all things thou shouldest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospers” (3 John 2)

Gaius is assured of the personal interest that the apostle took in him. How simple, large, and cordial is his wish! John desires that in all things Gaius may prosper. “Above all things,” as it is given in the A.V., goes too far; “in all things” was John’s desire.

Prosperity in All Things

“All things” include temporal as well as spiritual things. Perhaps some have adopted the extravagant idea that no matter how ill our affairs go, or how bad our health may be, the only concern is that the soul should prosper. The inspired apostle does not favour such fanaticism; “all things” include what affects the body as well as the soul.

A brother may, of course, prosper or not in what he undertakes. John’s was the true brotherly feeling for his prosperity in **all things**, but at the same time he carefully gives the first place to the soul’s welfare. If this be safeguarded and real, we can as a general rule count on the Lord’s interest both in our undertakings or business, and in our bodily health.

We are under grace. And our gracious God, if the soul prosper, has pleasure both in ourselves and in all our matters. The very hairs of our head are all numbered. If a sparrow does not fall to the ground without Him, if He thinks of the ravens and the lilies of the field, which have no soul, what a Father have we, His children, to do with for every day and **in all things**.

The Case of the Inward Man comes First

We know that if our earthly house be destroyed, we have a more glorious building from God, and if our outer man is consumed, yet the inward is renewed day by day (2 Corinthians iv.16). This is the highest and should be the first and nearest

(Continued on inside front cover)

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Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

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A Monthly Magazine for Believers

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Some assert that thanksgiving at the breaking of bread should always be addressed to the Lord Jesus, and never to the Father. The ground taken is that the table is that of the Lord Jesus, not in any sense that of the Father. How far have these thoughts any foundation in scripture?

None whatever. There is no doubt that the table is the Lord's (I Cor. x.21), but it is as far as can be from the truth, and a mere human inference, to draw thence that there is not the fullest liberty to praise God and worship the Father, while fully owning and giving thanks to the Lord.

Such thoughts are but the workings of a reasoning mind; they are not of Christ, nor of the Holy Ghost. Who never limits the truth as revealed, nor turns one truth against another. In His leading at the table, the Spirit on one occasion may make God in His nature the theme of blessing, on another occasion the relationship of Father. And, even when exalting our Lord Jesus, there is all the variety of His personal glory, as there are also most distinct aspects of His grace towards us, of which His Lordship is rather the least, however true and important. But He is Son, Priest, Advocate, and Head of the church, which differ quite from His Lordship; and they are every one of them fraught with blessing, and call out the praises of the saints to Him.

From every point of view, then, to address our thanksgiving to the Saviour only is narrow and wrong, and especially so were He to be worshipped at His table as only the Lord, regardless of His other titles.

W.K.

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"

(John v.17)

Luke xii.45. We are presented with one of the vivid contrasts calculated to arrest our thoughts as we read the inspired record. The Lord Jesus had spoken of servitude and stewardship — blessed and honoured by Himself. He followed immediately with His exposure of the pretence of it. We see how abhorrent to God is the deceptive posture of approach to Him in this form. Enacted in His presence it was bound to be revealed. It was bound to be condemned—even in the face of those who held their position by employing it.

"But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers" (verses 45,46). Here is no mincing of words, no consideration of unpopularity; only a simple presentation of circumstances with which they were familiar. On the one hand, the servant who loved and served and waited; on the other, the servant without the true spirit of servitude, acting as a master over the other servants and losing mastery over his own self-indulgence, while pretending to act as servant waiting for his lord. There were, undoubtedly, servants in the crowd. The Divine Worker never spoke above the heads of his hearers! They knew of servants who had not been true to their vocation—whose masters had cut them off from the position of being a servant and relegated them to the position of those who could not be called servants at all! The true master-servant relationship remains one of trust and confidence.

Since that day there have continued to be servants—but in name, only. There have also been servants (bondmen), in reality, and not a few of these have forfeited their lives in

devotion to their Lord. Throughout the whole of the waiting period of nearly two thousand years there have been the false and the true: those who, knowing His will, obey it, and those who, taking the place of knowing His will, disregard it. There are also those who never knew His will—yet were not unaware of that distinction between good and evil which is known to all men. The Divine Worker speaks of them *all*, and His warning goes out over the centuries of time, and will go out, until that day when the false servant “looketh not for him and at an hour when he is not aware.”

The care that the Lord Jesus takes in conveying these truths to the crowd about Him is characteristic of *all* His work. How simply He spoke in those symbols which they understood! He refers to “stripes” also. These indicated to them the varying degrees of their lord’s displeasure re-acting upon those who assumed the servant posture—who knew His will but disobeyed it—who “shall be beaten with many stripes”. He tells them of one “who knew it not and did things worthy of stripes,” who “shall be beaten with few.” There is *divine* justice present. “And to every one to whom much is given, much shall be required of him:” men have admitted this principle, as He reminds them, “to whom *men* have committed much they will ask from him the more” (verse 48). There will be those who, never having heard the clear message of the death of Christ for them, will not be judged for refusing it. Their awareness of the divine displeasure—grievous as it is—will not be in measure comparable to that of Christendom which has concern only with an outward pretence of approach as servant to Christ, and looks not for, nor desires, His return. The earth scene is sad, indeed, to contemplate. It is the judgment of the *living* — not yet the judgment of the *dead*.

In that approaching day, still unlooked for by unbelief and unexpected by the false servant, the faithful bondmen will have heard the invitation of their Lord, so long awaited. The joy of his coming *to* them, and the inexpressible reality of His service *for* them, will be meat, indeed, at that table

of welcome where "He shall gird Himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them" (verse 37).

"I have come to cast a fire on the earth; and what will I, if already it hath been kindled?" Once more the Divine Worker approaches His work in that perfect way which allows of no misunderstanding. The language of symbols had been in use long before His hearers understood it as children. It had never varied. The thought of fire had always told of discerning judgment. His coming among them showed the difference between their moral character and His own. When John, looking back over the many years, wrote "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," he was not writing a polite biography. The outstanding difference, in every respect, between the One who came and the people to whom He came was, indeed, a glory—an *outshining* upon the dark lives of men, a light of purity in a scene of evil. How could the Son of Man be criticized—even hated—for His distinctive character of holiness! "And what will I, if already it hath been kindled?" It could not be otherwise, for there walked among them the One of whom their prophets had written, "Behold MY servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." The effect of His presence was the fire of discernment between holiness and sin. His rejection was the kindling of it.

But his love remained. His purpose was founded upon it. What but His perfect love could take Him onward to that utter self-giving for the very people whose opposition was in every way so pronounced. "But, I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it shall have been accomplished" (verse 50)! Let us look back—even from our distance—to see the divine demonstration of a sinless Man in presence of a sinful world, and discern again the triumphant answer of God to the powers of evil. For, save for this sinless purity, which of itself condemned the world of wickedness around it, there could be no acceptable offering for sin. The fire was kindled,

“But I have a baptism to be baptized with”—none so aware as Himself that sin must be finally judged and condemned. Was it not the very antithesis of the holy character of God! The sin-sickness of the world was known to Him, and, as Man, He had walked among its stricken members. Sin and death went hand in hand before Him—it was impossible that God could be complacent with the distorted world. Only Himself, the sinless Man, could, effectively, go down into that baptism, and it is *He* who says, “How am I straitened until it be accomplished.” Straitened — hindered, in the greatest outflow of grace ever made available for men!

He would go on “Till it be accomplished.” Setting His pure soul to this great work, He pressed on to its divine *accomplishment*; for without the shedding of His precious blood no remission of sin was possible—without His baptism unto death, the kindled fire of judgment must consume us all.

EDWARD T. WOOD

OUTSIDE THE CAMP

To understand rightly the appeal to “go forth unto Him without the camp” in Hebrews xiii.10-14, we must first examine it in relation to the epistle as a whole, asking what was its message for those Hebrew believers of Paul’s day, and then seek to find what application it has for us now.

The superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ to all that was found in the legal dispensation is argued in every chapter of the epistle. Thus the law was given through angels, but the Son is far above angels. Moses received testimony to his faithfulness as a servant, but as Son Christ is far greater than a servant. As priest after the order of Melchisedec Christ is immensely superior, in every respect, to priests of the Aaronic order. Likewise the tabernacle and all its ordinances, all the perpetual sacrifices, were but shadows of the true, so that the once-for-all offered sacrifice of Calvary not only eclipsed but superseded completely the whole levitical system.

So the writer concludes, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

There are two companies of people here: "we", whose altar and sacrifice is Christ crucified, and those Jews who, not believing Him to be the promised Messiah, continued in all the Mosaic ritual as divinely appointed and therefore enduring. However, many of the believers in the Lord Jesus, being slow to learn the full implications of the salvation they had received, continued as a matter of habit in the old ritual. God had had long patience with them, but it was time that they realized that the old system, symbolized by the "tabernacle", was but a shadow of the good things to come. As the writer argues in this epistle, the whole legal system became superfluous from the moment the Lord Jesus died — the rending of the veil was God's token that He had set aside the entire system as something He had no more use for.

Its repeated sacrifices could never take away sins, and now that the one sacrifice of Christ had been offered, those animal sacrifices were pointless. To cling to them now was really to slight the sacrifice of Christ, to join with those who proclaimed Him a deceiver.

Then the writer fastens on one piece of the old ritual to bring out a further point. Where sin-offerings were offered for the high priest, or for the whole people, the blood was taken by the high priest into the sanctuary and sprinkled before the veil. But in these cases the animal itself was burned outside the camp, "in a clean place". The meaning is plain — the camp was a defiled place, and only by virtue of the sanctifying blood of the sin-offering could God's

typical dwelling place, the tabernacle, remain there. So when Israel cast out her Messiah and crucified Him outside the city, she confessed Jerusalem a defiled place. Nevertheless His blood shed there availed to sanctify the people — or such of them as put their faith in Him. And by *that* blood the very Holy of Holies was opened for the worshipper to enter. In the Atonement Day ritual the blood of the sin-offering was carried not only up to but past the veil, and the blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat. This *hinted* at the full truth, but did no more, for the priest could not stay in the Holiest, and the veil again covered the mercy seat. But *our* High Priest has taken His seat on the heavenly throne, and the *rent* veil is no bar to the believer's entry to worship there.

These two things the writer shows are joined together — the believer's title to worship in the very presence of God, and the acknowledgment that the camp is defiled. To enjoy the privilege of the one entails the responsibility of confessing the other. Moreover, it was now made plain that the "camp" was defiled, not merely by the sinful condition of the people, but far more definitely and completely by the murder of the Son of God Who had come to save His people from their sins.

Again and again, for nearly 40 years, the twelve apostles and many others had sought to bring Israel to repentance, but as regards the mass of the nation, their efforts had been in vain, and the blood of confessors of Jesus had been shed as their Master's had been. And now the day had drawn near when the prophetic words of the Lord's parable were to be fulfilled: "The king sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." (Matt. xxii.7).

Before, however, the armies of Titus came to destroy Jerusalem and burn down the temple, so putting an end to what had already ceased to have any value before God, God called the believing remnant of His people to leave the defiled "camp". This call we have in the words already quoted, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the

camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

Now this surely was not a call to depart from Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus had indeed given warning to His disciples to flee when the destruction of the city was imminent (Luke xxi.20-24); but the call here is to leave the "camp", not the city. It is a spiritual departure, not a physical one, that is required: a separation from that old system and from those who supported it, and a more positive identification with a rejected Christ.

In thus separating themselves from their unbelieving Jewish brethren they would of course bring reproach upon themselves. But it would be Christ's reproach. Was it not rather an honour to be associated with Him who once hung on a cross for them, the One Who now sat at the right hand of the Majesty on high?

THE CALL TODAY

The levitical economy, tabernacle and temple, sacrifices and all, have long passed away; has this scripture any voice for us today? To answer this, let us ask what are the characteristic features of "the camp". What was it that God's people were called upon to disown?

The camp, we may say, represents the religious world — that system of human religion which has many forms, but always the same prominent features. In it unregenerate men can join in an outward worship, but need have no knowledge of that cleansing from guilt through faith in a crucified Saviour which gives access into the very presence of God. Indeed, the very idea of sin is apt to be treated lightly, and thus the cross as meeting the sinner's need is slighted, even if it is not treated as an outdated superstition.

Are these things unknown today? Indeed, they are known only too well, even in what calls itself the Christian Church. And another feature shows itself, namely the teaching that the improvement of social conditions is the chief if not the sole object of Christian endeavour, while the hope of bless-

ing in heaven is more or less derided. Others go further still, and refuse the claim of Christ to be the Son of God, and the *only* hope of men.

If we consider these things attentively, we must conclude that they are, in essence, the same things which Jewish believers of old were called to forsake. To the true believer then the same call comes to-day, to "go forth" from those religious bodies, or those "places of worship" where such teachings are put forth. Wherever the name of the crucified Saviour is not upheld, wherever the value of His precious blood is slighted, there is the camp. To make a stand and forsake such bodies will still involve reproach — the reproach, perhaps, of being narrow minded, or old-fashioned, or illiberal, or of being occupied with our own salvation. But does not faithfulness to the Lord Jesus require this?

One word of warning is perhaps called for here. The existence of unscriptural practices among a company of believers, however undesirable in itself, does not constitute it part of the "camp". Whether a christian is justified in remaining there is another question, but where the cross is clearly proclaimed as man's sole hope of salvation, there is no likeness to the "camp".

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

OUR THREEFOLD BLESSING

I would like to link together three scriptures which clearly show that the three Persons of the Trinity are actively engaged in our blessing:

1. The Father Himself loveth you (John xvi.27);
2. Jesus Himself drew near and went with them (Luke xxiv.15);
3. The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us (Romans viii.26).

The Father Himself loveth you

All through His pathway the Lord Jesus had been making known the Father both by His teaching and by His works. And now, with the cross before Him, He would commit into the all-powerful and all-loving care of His Father those whom the Father had given Him out of the world (John

xvii.6-18). Here, in chapter xvi., He explained to His disciples that in the coming day of the indwelling Spirit they would be able to make direct request to the Father with the Lord's own full authority, for the Father Himself loved them dearly, since they had loved Him dearly.

It is not surprising that the Lord uses the strong word for "love" when referring to the deep affection of the Father for His children, but what marvellous grace it is that He uses the same strong word for the love of the weak, failing disciples towards Himself, especially as He goes on to warn them that very soon they would be scattered and leave Him alone — alone except for the Father's never-failing presence (verse 32).

The Lord's words in verse 26, "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you," do not set aside the fact that the Lord Jesus is Himself our Intercessor on high according to Romans viii.34 and Hebrews vii.25. Indeed, how much we owe to this gracious and ever-abiding service of our risen Lord! But, because we belong to Him, we are already in the enjoyment of the Father's deep affection — the golden sceptre of His abiding favour is held out to us in perpetuity, so to speak — and we do not need an intermediary to bring us there. There is, therefore, no need for the Lord to make request on their behalf, seeing that the Father Himself loved them so dearly.

How patiently the Lord deals with His disciples here! He said to them, "I came forth from *the Father*, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to *the Father*." But they quickly and rather self-confidently replied, "Now we are sure that Thou knowest all things . . . by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God." How slow they were to grasp the simple but stupendous fact that He was making known *the Father* to them! They had little perception as yet of His divine and eternal glory as the Son of the Father. Later on, as the risen Lord, He confirmed this great truth in the resurrection message entrusted to Mary Magdalene, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I

ascend unto *My Father* and *your Father*; and to *My God* and *your God*" (John xx.17).

The *Father Himself* loved them, because they loved His Son and believed in Him. We too, like the poor weak disciples in their day, can rest upon this, that the *Father Himself* loves us because of our attachment to the Son of His love.

Jesus Himself

Two disciples, sad and discouraged, were wending their way homeward from Jerusalem, and were talking together of the things which had happened just three days before. Their Lord and Master had been taken from them and crucified, and with His death all their hopes had been crushed. Yet in their sorrow and despondency *Jesus Himself drew near* and went with them (Luke xxiv.15). As their Companion on the road He became their Instructor as He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. And their hearts burned within them while He talked with them by the way, and as He opened unto them the scriptures.

What a privilege was theirs! And what a privilege is ours as we have *Jesus Himself* with us on the road through life! We have the scriptures too for our comfort, encouragement and instruction.

The Companion of the road becomes their Guest in the home. *Jesus Himself* sat down with them to share their homely meal, and as He took His rightful place as Host and Lord, their eyes were opened and they knew Him. Apparently forgetting their hunger and tiredness they commenced the long journey back to Jerusalem, winged by the knowledge that *Jesus Himself* had appeared to them, and eager to share this knowledge with their fellow-disciples. And as they took their place among those assembled — no doubt brought together by the resurrection message through *Mary Magdalene* — *Jesus Himself* stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you."

The Risen Lord had hastened to take His place in the

midst of His gathered disciples. And as He showed them His wounded hands and feet to prove beyond dispute that it was indeed Himself, what deep significance must have been attributed to that Eastern greeting, "Peace be unto you"! He said, in effect, "See the extent of My love for you! I have suffered and died that you might enjoy the peace which I have made for you by the blood of the cross."

It is interesting to notice that the Hebrew salutation "Peace" is translated "Rejoice" in Greek. Can we wonder then that the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord (John xx.20)? And is it not so with ourselves when we are gathered to His name, Himself in our midst, and we are privileged to see Him by faith, and to rejoice in the realization that He has brought us as children to the Father?

The Spirit Himself

Now that the Lord Jesus is ascended and glorified in heaven, what resource have we in all our weakness and need down here? First of all, we are the objects of the Father's special affection: "the *Father Himself* loveth you," the Lord had assured His own. Secondly, *Jesus Himself*, our Lord and Redeemer, has drawn near to us, and walks with us along life's way. Moreover, He is our great High Priest on high, ever living to make intercession for us (Hebrews vii.25), and sympathizing with us in our weakness (Hebrews iv.15). Thirdly, the mighty power of the Holy Spirit is alongside us in our weakness, and the *Spirit Himself* makes intercession for us (Romans viii.26,27).

The apostle had said earlier, "The *Spirit Himself* beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (verses 16,17). What a glorious destiny we have, and it is the Spirit Himself Who brings us into the assurance and joy of it even now. Yet the fact remains that in ourselves we are so weak and lacking in understanding that we do not know what to pray for as we ought; we do not know what is the mind of God in certain circumstances, but the indwelling Spirit pleads for us with groanings

which cannot be uttered, giving our own groanings a character entirely above the human feelings of pain and suffering. The Searcher of hearts, knowing what is the mind of the Spirit, accepts the interpretation of our inmost feelings by the Spirit dwelling in us and pleading for us according to God.

It is encouraging to connect verses 26 and 28 of this chapter. "*We do not know* what we should pray for as is fitting . . . but *we do know* that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to purpose" (See J.N.D.'s New Tr.).

All things thus co-operating for our good during this present time, we can surely rejoice in this threefold blessing of the Trinity, and look forward with great expectancy to the personal appearance of the One who has redeemed us. For the *Lord Himself* shall descend from heaven with a rallying shout, and we, together with those who have fallen asleep through Jesus, shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, so to be for ever with the Lord (I Thessalonians iv.16-17).

R. A. CREETH

VOICES FROM THE PAST

"This do in remembrance of Me"

(Luke xxii; I Cor. xi.)

It is a sorrow to some that even at the table of the Lord their minds wander, thoughts intrude, unwelcome as the men who sought to break in Lot's door when he was entertaining angels unawares. And even when things are not so bad, there is the tendency to recall the vast extent of the wealth of the saved, rather than the depths of poverty to which grace brought the Saviour: as if He had said, "This do in remembrance of your blessings." Perfect and everlasting blessings are indeed made ours — redemption, righteousness, life, sanctification, reconciliation, glory to come. These, and ten thousand blessings more, are ours in Him; **BUT NONE OF THESE IS MEANT BY "This do in remembrance of Me."** Indeed we may say that, boundless as are, to the chief of sinners, the results of the work of Christ, and infinite in worth

as His work is HIMSELF, the Divine-and-Human Worker, must be greater than His work and its results. They cannot be separated; but it is possible TO DWELL ON MANY PRECIOUS TRUTHS AND NOT ON HIM. What is the cross, and all that it has done and won for me, if I entertain unworthy thoughts of Him Who hung upon it? Have we not there presented to us the perfection of moral loveliness in a way that can never be repeated!

Our attention then, when at the Lord's table, is called, is centred, is fixed on Jesus crucified, His body given for us, His blood shed for us — our sins borne, and we cleansed from them thus — but this adorably precious Saviour for us, both as to His body and His blood. He is, and ever will be, for us in glory, but never so displayed for us, as in death; and we therefore adoringly celebrate His death.

We not only believe in, but also rejoice to confess in the world, our CRUCIFIED Lord. If the multitude refuse His authority, and will not have this Man to reign over them, we, while waiting for all things to be put under Him, rejoice that WE are put under Him. We bow the knee in grace, we serve the Lord whom the world crucified and still refuses. Precious FRUIT of remembering Him! . . . His sufferings for sins, though for ever over, are remembered; and each can say as he discerns His body, in sacred remembrance, He bore *my* sins in His own body on the tree, that I, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. Has it been so with me?

Is, then, the supper a scene for tears? Not as needing consolation, such as was the natural purpose of the bread and cup among the Jews (Jeremiah xvi.7). It is a time of blessing, of praise and thanksgiving — “the cup of blessing which we bless;” and the Lord “gave thanks.” Neither is it an ordinance to be observed to add to the soul's assurance, but a touching memorial of One well known, confided in and loved. “This do in remembrance of Me.” W.B.
(The foregoing is extracted from an article which appeared in *The Bible Treasury* of October 1894 — edited by William Kelly).

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from the Scripture of Truth

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to the law, but His obedience as far as death, which was for His enemies, and this the law did not enjoy.

GRACE ABOUNDING OVER SIN (verses 20,21)

In conclusion the apostle sums up the leading features of the two states upon which he has been dwelling, showing first, however, that the intention of the law was to bring to light the exceeding sinfulness of sin. "*But law came in by the way, in order that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace over-abounded, that, as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto life eternal by Jesus Christ our Lord*" (verses 20,21).

The classification of men under the headship of either Adam or Christ might lead the Jews to declare that the apostle had overlooked a third state, viz: that of being under the law. But he now shows that the law came in during the interval between Adam and Christ, but not as a means of deliverance from the Adam state of condemnation. It was introduced by the bye that the offence or trespass might abound, sin being then deliberate disobedience to the known will of God. Indeed, it was within Judaism, the sphere of the law, that Christ Himself was rejected and crucified.

Then in a few pregnant words "the whole source and way and end of our salvation are completely and clearly stated." Now is the reign of grace. The reign of sin brings death. The reign of law would bring doom. The reign of righteousness alone would bring doom also. But since grace reigns through righteousness, its effects far exceed those of sin, being "*unto life eternal by Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

(Reprinted from *The Bible Monthly*)

HUMANISM

“Humanism” is the name of a modern form of atheism, and “Humanist” the adjective chosen for themselves by a group of atheists or agnostics, who profess, doubtless in good faith, a special concern for human happiness and welfare. References in this paper to their literature are noted thus:

HS — “Humanists and Society” — a general statement of policy.

BS — “Humanism” by Barbara Smoker.

HN — Humanist News, January, 1971.

HP — “The Humanist Point of View” — an official publication of the British Humanist Association.

We shall use a capital ‘H’ whenever the modern propagandist cult or its members are intended.

WHY CALL THEM ATHEISTS?

The dictionary definition of an atheist is “one who believes that God does not exist, and who proclaims this negative dogma.” Well, HP says “We do not believe in God”, so that seems to settle the matter. However, some Humanists are not so certain that there are no supernatural beings, and may prefer the term “agnostic”. But this is held to be of no *practical* importance, so we will not consider it further. Humanists also claim to be more than atheists, by which presumably they mean that their professed concern for humanity entitles them to a special status in our estimation.

They have no belief in “ultimate reality, beyond human purposes and values” (BS), and tell us over and over again that their sole concern is with this life.

WHAT DO THEY STAND FOR?

Apart from their atheism, the fundamental principle of Humanist philosophy is the claim that morality, having no divine sanction, is solely a matter of experience, of trial

and error. They define "good" actions as those which lead to human happiness, and vice versa. They then advocate a social and political programme based on this thesis.

Now in the first place, underlying such claims is a great confusion of thought. H.P. says, "In all human beings there are both good impulses and bad ones, and we have to live with this state of affairs as best we can. The good ones, such as bravery, unselfishness and love, are evident and indestructible and can be encouraged. The bad ones, such as exploitation, cruelty and greed, must be minimized by education and checked by the laws and institutions devised by society to prevent chaos."

It will be seen that HP entirely fails to distinguish between the moral principle and the impulse to obey or disobey it. If the principle is right, obeying it will produce a right action and disobeying it a wrong one. But the *result* in terms of human happiness will depend on a whole complex of actions. Now all these things are muddled by the writer. Again, bravery is not an impulse, nor an action, but a moral quality, as are the others. When he says that their "goodness" is *evident*, he really gives the whole case away. Indeed they are, and have always been recognized as good, in spite of another Humanist claim that morality is not fixed, but varies from country to country and from age to age.

Where, for instance, have deceit, or treachery, or cowardice, been regarded as virtues? Men may argue that deceit is right in war, but never that it is right in itself. In societies where property is regarded as of little importance, theft is not a major crime; but even there a man has *some* property which he thinks it wrong to be stolen from *him*. Where polygamy reigns, adultery is still reprehensible.

In other words, there is a *real* right and wrong of which every man is more or less conscious, however little he may conform to it. Men, and nations, may distort these fundamental principles, but cannot get away from them. They are part of the moral nature which God implanted when He made man in His own likeness.

Another writer (BS), says, "The overriding aim of the Humanist's actions is human happiness and fulfilment: his own and that of others". Now it is a truism to say that to seek for happiness is the surest way to miss it. It is unselfish people that tend to be happy ones, but unselfishness pursued as a means to happiness is a contradiction in terms. So much for "his own" happiness! When we think of the happiness of others, BS gives us no guidance as to how to act when we find the happiness or "fulfilment" of others in conflict with our own.

It is precisely when a man's own interest conflicts with that of others that he needs the guidance of an unyielding moral principle. Shall I keep a contract which has become inconvenient to me? Shall I face danger in order to rescue someone? Shall I tell the truth when only a lie will get me out of trouble? Shall I go after another woman to whom I find myself attracted? How shall I reconcile *my* (presumed) happiness in so doing with that of my wife and children?

No, resulting happiness will not do as a criterion of right and wrong. The empirical approach is utterly useless, indeed quite immoral. It is an abdication of moral judgment, worse than "the end justifies the means." And the last example we quoted is very apposite in view of the Humanist call for what he is pleased to term "more humane" attitudes on divorce, abortion, and homosexuality (BS). This of course means easier divorce, and the result in the misery of broken homes is too well known to need elaboration.

They plead for easier abortion on the ground, of course, of the mother's "happiness". But what of the unborn child? Its "fulfilment" is not considered. And whether the mother will, later on, find happiness in what she has done is far from certain.

The quotation already given from HP shows how dreadfully low a standard Humanism is content to aim at. Well do we know that men invariably fall short of their standard. The evils mentioned are to be "minimized" by education.

and are to be “checked” by laws and institutions. The ultimate aim, believe it or not, is to prevent CHAOS! So that is what Humanism’s morality is expected to produce! Let us ask a simple question — has the increase in education had the effect of minimizing the evils of man’s nature? Are cruelty and greed less in evidence than they were?

Humanists are, indeed, completely out of date. The dream of upward progress through education and good laws belongs to the last century. The awful barbarities perpetrated under Nazism and Communism (both, significantly, atheistical regimes), would have been beyond belief if one had foretold them then.

HUMANISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

“Humanists maintain that every adult human being of sound mind, provided his conduct harms nobody else, should have perfect freedom, legal and social, ‘to do the action and stand the consequences’” (BS).

In a society such as our own, such a claim of course means one thing — that a man should be free to do as he likes with his body — in matters of drink, drugs and sex. But the claim to *freedom* at once brings to mind the words of scripture “While they promise liberty, they themselves are the slaves of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” II Peter ii 19.

The proviso as to harming others is an empty one, for every man by his example, if in no other way, has an inescapable effect on his fellows. However, there can be no doubt that the primary object of this claim is in regard to homosexuality. While the fact of homosexual feelings is a sad evidence of humanity’s fall, that Humanism should countenance the *practice* of such vileness is an evidence of its moral ruin. For sexual perversion brings man *below* the animal creation, within which such things are unknown.

In pursuance of the claim to liberty they oppose any form of censorship. But some Humanists themselves rebel at the consequences of this. Quoting from a letter, “The December

Humanist News has anticipated their abolition (i.e. the abolition of laws against indecent and profane publications) and glories in indecency as a good thing in itself. We are anti-censorship, but that doesn't make us pro-pornography, etc." from a letter to HN signed by a group of Humanists.

A ONE SIDED MORALITY

A vital virtue which they leave out is that of self-control. Indeed, in view of their claims for individual freedom, do they consider it a virtue? Also, the spirit of self-sacrifice finds no place in their moral ideas. They are content to advocate political and social reforms. "We do not duplicate work which others can do — we act as a pressure group to make sure they do it" (HP). Humanist teaching ignores the fact that it is *Christian* endeavour and sacrifice that have blazed the trail of philanthropy, of care for the weak and suffering, a trail which others are now following. It is still mainly Christian missionaries that are even now ministering to the needs, both physical and spiritual, of backward peoples in many parts of the globe.

INCONSISTENT AND DEFECTIVE

Humanists' professed sense of responsibility for the good of mankind, while denying the existence of any "ultimate reality", is quite inconsistent. To whom are they responsible? To mankind as a whole? But this makes no sense, for mankind as a whole can never demand an account. And when they die, that is an end of the matter. So we are driven to the conclusion that this woolly notion of responsibility is something that they have borrowed, unconsciously, from the religion which they profess to despise.

Again, they claim that "intellectual integrity" is a "specific Humanist virtue" (BS). But if actions are to be judged by their results, truthfulness can have no value in itself, but only because it pays in the end, i.e. if I am not truthful, others may not deal truthfully with me, and so on. But

intellectual integrity implies the exact opposite of this, if words have any meaning.

Humanists claim to have a scientific attitude, leading them to a "full-blooded and whole hearted acceptance of the world". But alas! the one fact they do not acknowledge, a fact which overthrows all their hopes and plans, a fact which they cannot see though it stands out a mile, is the fact of HUMAN WICKEDNESS. At the most they see imperfection. Still less can they discover what only divine revelation tells us, of the Power of Darkness that keeps mankind in bondage.

For mankind in the grip of sin and Satan, moral codes and political programmes are not enough. It is spiritual power that is needed, the power of God that brings salvation. It is found only in the Gospel of Christ.

CONCLUSION

There is no point in discussing Humanism's programme, seeing its moral basis is so defective. So we will conclude by a contrast with Christianity. The one produces love, joy, peace, and in its best exponents, devoted self-sacrifice and endurance of privation for the blessing of others. The other aims at a comfortable, easy-going effort to get the most out of this life, while behaving "in an honourable and considerate way towards his fellow men" (BS).

What of Humanism's "self-fulfilment" at the end? How can a life be fulfilled which ends in the grave? HP says that the idea of life after death is a monumental piece of wishful thinking. But the Resurrection of Christ, so far from being wishful thinking, was an event which His most fervent disciples neither expected nor, at first, believed. It is a well proven fact of history, and it gives the christian something even better than life after death — the glorious certainty of sharing that victorious life, and of enjoying that wonderful love — with the Saviour and like Him for ever.

THE TWO HEADS OF MANKIND

(Read: Romans v.12-21*)

These verses introduce a new branch of the main subject of the Epistle. Hitherto the question of sins actually committed has been considered and also the complete clearance of the believer from guilt according to the righteousness of God, with His justification of those who believe the gospel. The apostle now turns to the question of **sin**, rather than **sins**, of what a person **is**, rather than what he **has done**, of the **root** rather than the **fruit**.

The truth revealed is of the utmost practical importance, for it lies at the very base of all faithful, devoted, victorious Christian life. Why is it that a justified believer, if unwatchful, becomes an easy prey to sin? It is here explained that there is an inward evil root from which the evil fruit springs. This corrupt source in each person is called **sin**. Though now indwelling every one, there was a time when it was not in the world at all, for the apostle says, "*By one man sin entered into the world*".

Adam, then, the original head of the human race, by his disobedience, became possessed of an evil nature, here called **sin**, which was transmitted to the succeeding generations of his descendants, all of whom were "born in sin." But, in contrast with Adam, there is another head, Jesus Christ, Who by His obedience brought eternal life to the whole class of believers who stand under His headship. In these verses (verses 12-21), the apostle sets out in parallel the comparative results that flow from the two heads of mankind.

In addition to the fact that mankind is divided into two great families or classes by reason of the **two heads**, we find that these contrasted conditions arose through **two acts**.

*It may be said here that J.N.D., who was competent in scholarship to speak with authority on such a subject, said that this passage (verses 12-21) was the worst translated part of any in the New Testament. For this reason careful attention should be paid to the translation given in italics in this article (due to W.K.).

Sin and all its attendant evils entered the world by one disobedient act of the one man, Adam. On the other hand, grace and all its attendant blessings sprang from the one obedient act of Jesus Christ. In these verses, then, the Spirit of God compares or contrasts what came through Adam and his one deed with what believers receive through Jesus Christ and His one work.

THE ADVENT OF SIN (verse 12)

In this verse the apostle goes back before the division into Jews and Gentiles to the beginning of human history for the introduction of sin. "*On this account as by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and thus death passed unto all men, for that all sinned*" (verse 12).

In the verses preceding, the apostle had treated of the grace of God, the work of Christ, and God's love poured into the heart by the Holy Ghost, believers being justified. Hence the way is cleared for his new theme, and his opening words, "*on this account,*" indicate the connection of the fresh paragraph with what had gone before.

At the beginning, sin through one man made its entrance into the world where it was not before. There was a moment when Adam was without sin; another moment and sin had taken up its residence in him and its control over him. Consequently when Adam begat children they were in his own sinful likeness, and after his own fallen image.

Death followed sin as the penalty of disobedience — "*and by sin death.*" The fact of death is therefore the world-wide evidence to men of the fulfilment of God's original warning, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Some may dispute the existence of sin, but none can dispute the existence of death. Man was created to live, not to die. Death, being the wages of sin, is the inevitable portion of sinners.

Moreover, this rule applies to all, for all have themselves sinned: "*and thus death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.*" While death came into the world direct through Adam's sin, his descendants are not permitted to escape

from their own personal responsibility to obey God. The last clause "*for all have sinned*", shows that two distinct truths are conveyed: (a) the general bearing of Adam's sin, "unto all men"; and (b) death follows men's own sins, "*all sinned.*" The first (a) includes in its scope the death of infants and imbeciles, while (b) covers all who have reached the age of responsibility.

THE PARENTHESIS (verses 13-17)

Having stated the universality of death, the apostle does not at once speak of the "justification of life" which God bestows in contrast (verse 18), but turns aside to explain first of all the position as to death of those who lived before the law was given, and to dwell upon the exceeding benefits grace gives as compared with the consequences of sin (verses 13-17).

1. **The Period before the Mosaic law** (verses 13,14)

In the first place, he shows the relation of sin to the law which was the boast of the Jew. Sin was first in coming into the world, as the reign of death from Adam until the law was given by Moses proved. "*For until law sin was in (the) world, but no sin is put to account when there is no law: but death reigned from Adam till Moses even over those that had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of the coming (One)*" (verses 13, 14).

Adam stands at the beginning and Moses at the close of a long period of about 2500 years. Adam received a commandment from God respecting a certain tree, which he disobeyed. This particular command applied to him only, and not to his descendants. Then at Sinai Moses received the series of commandments which were applied particularly to the nation of Israel. What of those who lived during the long interval between these two men?

Paul's answer is that they too sinned, though they did not sin just as Adam did by breaking a positive injunction of God. That they all sinned is shown by the fact that they died, paying sin's penalty. The records of the long-

lived antediluvians in Genesis close with the solemn refrain, "and he died." The comparison of Israel to Adam in violating a known command is made by the prophet Hosea (vi.7, marg.), but those between Adam and Moses sinned without law.

What difference then as to sin did the law make? It aggravated the guilt of those under it. Under the law sin is put to account, because they are servants who knew the will of God, but disobeyed, and therefore they will be beaten with many stripes (Luke xii.47). The times of ignorance God winked at (Acts xvii. 23,30), nevertheless those outside the domain of law will not escape His judgment, for those that "have sinned without law shall also perish without law" (Rom.ii.12).

Adam then as a representative of his posterity involved them all in the dread consequences of his act of disobedience; and in this representative character he is a figure of the Coming One, Who is the Seed of the woman, not of Adam. Jesus Christ, like Adam, would be the Head of His class, the company who would receive blessing through Him, and inherit what He would bestow through His obedience.

2. **The Offence and the Free Gift** (verse 15)

The apostle now commences the analogy between Adam and Christ, declaring that the good preponderates. "*But (shall) not, as the offence, so also (be) the free gift? for if by the offence of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ abound unto the many*" (verse 15).

The emphasis here is upon the "abundance" shown in the grace of God and its attendant gift; it abounds unto the many, in fuller measure than the result of the offence.

In the A.V. the first sentence expresses a contrast between the offence and the free gift: "but not as the offence, so also is the free gift." The latter exceeds the former. In the new translation, the sentence in the interrogative form expresses a comparison between the tide of woe that came through

Adam and the tide of blessing that flows through Christ; if Adam's offence brought death unto many, shall not the work of Christ bring blessings of grace unto many also? Though the general sense is not affected by either rendering, the interrogation is more in keeping with the form of the apostle's argument.

3. **Condemnation and Justification** (verse 16)

A further comparison of results follows; after death and grace in the previous verse, now come condemnation and justification. *"And (shall) not, as by one having sinned, (be) the gift? For the judgment (was) of one unto condemnation, but the free gift (was) of many offences unto justification"* (verse 16).

In verse 15, we see that "many" were affected by the act of one: in this verse, the character of the effect is shown, namely, condemnation in the one case, and justification in the other. The "judgment" was God's declaration of man's guilt, for Adam learned his sin from God in Eden. This divine sentence established him in a state of "condemnation," which is the moral condition now in the court-house of God's justice of all who are in Adam. The ultimate destination of the wicked will be announced at the great white throne, but "condemnation," as the result of "one having sinned," is true even at present of them.

On the other hand, God's free gift rose above the many offences of man unto justification or a state of accomplished righteousness (*dikaioma*). Thus, while Adam by a single offence involved all his posterity in a state of condemnation and death, Christ brings the blessing of grace to all of His family in spite of their innumerable offences.

4. **Death by Adam but Life by Christ** (verse 17)

The apostle concludes the parenthesis by stating the comparative results due to the two heads of men. *For if by the offence of the one death reigned by the one, much more they that receive the abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ"* (verse 17).

In verses 15 and 16, Paul dwelt upon the **two acts** which were fraught with such extensive consequences to men; he now brings forward the **two persons**, Adam on the one hand and Jesus Christ on the other. In his comparison, there is a lack of parallelism which in itself is instructive. Through Adam death reigned, but by Jesus Christ (he does not say life shall reign, but) we shall reign in life. Hence the triumphs of grace are magnified by the exalted place given to those that sinned: *we shall reign.*

He sums up the adverse result of Adam's sin in one word—death, but he has many words to say of the benefits of grace. We receive abundance of grace, covering our sins, and the gift of free bestowal of righteousness, for we are justified freely by His grace. Then too we shall reign in life.

Life, the antithesis of death, is the state of happy existence before God as those justified by faith and joying in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Life often signifies the sum of our spiritual activities, and in this sense life begins now, though we do not reign in life as yet; this we shall do.

THE BEARING TOWARD ALL MEN (verse 18)

In verse 18, the apostle resumes the statement he began in verse 12 with an amplified significance for which the parenthetical teaching in verses 13-17 is a preparation. As in verse 16, the results, condemnation and justification, are set in contrast. *So then as by one offence (it was) toward all men for condemnation so also by one accomplished righteousness toward all men for justification of life*".

The important changes from the A.V. made in the above translation should be noted, indicating as they do, that the comparison applies the bearing towards all men of the two acts, not of the two persons. This will be seen more clearly when the two series are set side by side thus:

	Adam	Christ
Act:	by one offence	by one accomplished righteousness
Bearing:	toward all men	toward all men
Result:	for condemnation	for justification of life

The phrase "toward" or "unto all" may be compared with iii.22, where the aspect of the righteousness of God is said to be "unto all", while it is only "upon them that believe." Through the one completed act of righteousness (see margin of the A.V.) justification of life comes into view as its scope.

The apostle does not say "by the righteousness of Christ," but by His "one accomplished righteousness." The whole life of our Lord is considered in its unity as a single act. His blessed life and death were uniform in the character of obedience. In His ways everything was perfect. His life was made of one piece throughout. Its bearing is toward all men unto justification of life.

THE EFFECT UPON THE MANY (verse 19)

Verse 19 is the complement of the preceding; there the bearing or aspect of the two acts is set forth; here are their effects on persons, making them either sinners or righteous. *"For as by the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one the many shall be constituted righteous"* (verse 19).

The personal characters of the two classes of men according to the gospel, are ranged under the two heads, and described as "sinners" and "righteous" respectively. The verse may be arranged as follows for comparison with the preceding one.

	Adam	Christ
Act:	disobedience	obedience
Effect:	the many	the many
Result:	constituted sinners	constituted righteous

In verse 18 the aspect or bearing of the one act is "*toward all men.*" the whole world being within its scope, but in verse 19 the effect of the act of the one person is upon "*the many,*" that is, the whole company of those that believe are constituted righteous, on the one hand, and all are made sinners on the other.

The "obedience of the one" is not the obedience of Christ

(Continued inside front cover)

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from the Scripture of Truth

Vol. LIX

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No. 8

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Continued from inside back cover)

can it be accomplished. We grow in His likeness in the measure that our souls are occupied with Him. As we gaze upon Him by faith, our hearts engrossed with His excellencies and perfections, so shall we grow up unto Him in all things, and become transformed, changed, transfigured into His likeness, from one degree of glory to another, by the power of the Spirit. This was the desire in the heart of Charles Wesley when he wrote —

“Firstfruits of Thy new creation,
Faithful, holy, may we be,
Joyful in Thy full salvation,
More and more conformed to Thee,
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in Heaven we take our place,
Then to worship and adore Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise”.

A. E. JORDAN

BENJAMIN

God is love. He never was, and never will be, but one ocean of eternal love. The truth, then, is most clear. Each real believer ever was, and ever will be a Benjamin. His is the title, “Beloved of the Lord.”

Believer, ponder the value of this fact. Its preciousness exceeds worlds upon worlds of treasure. Our present scene is full of change, of coldness, and of hate. Friends die, or kindly feeling withers. A frown may freeze, where smiles were wont to cheer. But here is our solace. We look above. Heaven’s love knows no eclipse. In that un failing brightness we forget surrounding gloom. (Extracted)

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"

(John v.17)

Luke xiii. There is no thought of rest — of change of scene or subject—as Luke presents the continuing emphasis of the Lord Jesus upon the need for repentance of the Jewish people. As the watching shepherd senses the coming storm and is anxious for the safety of the flock, so does the true Shepherd warn those whom He can reach. For the great crisis was approaching — far-reaching and beyond those remaining in their land under alien control. There was time yet — but they were on their way to the "Judge", and the contending "adversary" was available for but a short period now. Here is One, with clear foreknowledge of events to come, working against time so that His warning of the way to safety might sound clear until His voice would be heard by them for the last time — from a felon's cross.

It is beyond the extent of human comprehension to enter into the sorrow that must have been His as He discerned the national mind and knew there was no reaction whatever toward repentance. The evidence of their being upon a course which was opposed to the mind of God was clear in the fragmentation of their nation. The scattered tribes—retaining, as no other people on earth, the impress of their birth — were sad declarants of the truth of the forewarning of their prophets, "The Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen" (Deuteronomy iv.27).

Luke xiii.1: "There were present at that season some that told Him of the Galilaeans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." It is their attempt at brushing aside His presentation of their own condition by telling Him of what had befallen the Galilaeans. Their subterfuge was in vain. Jesus continues to show them *their* moral condition. But how repugnant to them was the thought of repentance! It was clear they had not that inner awareness of alienation from God which could have brought them

to this humble condition, as those seeking shelter from a coming storm. Indeed, they had substituted a fierce nationalism for the true worship of God. It is in this condition of mind that they point to the brutal behaviour of Pilate in his vicious slaughter of the Galilaeans in the midst of their own religious ceremony of sacrifice. Yet Jesus stays with them, in infinite patience, aware that their Sabbaths and their sacrifices alike were gestures of rebellion against the control of the Roman authority which was, itself, the consequence of their forsaking of God. Their answer to His warning was that it was not applicable to *them* — judgment had fallen upon Galilaeans — for whom those of Jerusalem had little regard.

But the time of judgment had not yet come — and it would not be the judgment of Pilate. There moved among them an humble Man, rejected by their nation, Who would, Himself, bear a judgment too dreadful for human minds to know. *His* blood would mingle with no ceremonial sacrifice, but He Who would shed it would, Himself, be the Sacrifice, untainted, and supremely perfect, taking upon Himself the full impact of Divine condemnation of sin.

Did they really think the Galilaeans slaughtered by Pilate were sinners greater than other Galilaeans? Thus He appeals to them to judge themselves. The outcome would be repentance — without which they would perish. He reminds them of the calamity in Siloam when men of Jerusalem were the victims. Were they, too, more culpable than their neighbours? “No, I say to you: but if ye repent not, ye shall all perish in like manner” (verse 5).

One cannot but discern the underlying compassion interwoven with His warning. Was He not seeing what their course of life would bring in a comparatively short span of years — of the million whose blood would flow in the streets of Jerusalem where His own feet had passed and His own life had been given?

The condition of mind in these people of the past is not without its warning to any who today will heed the significance of it. In our day, liberation from autocratic domina-

tion would be approved and applauded by free nations, so called, but all would be wholly without consideration of what is due to the true Giver of Life in its purity and perfection. The lowly path of self-judgment is not welcomed by man — yet God opens His eternal home to the humble and meek, and the path of repentance leads to a whole realm of blessing. God is not looking for good in man, but for man's recognition of his badness. As for His own people — the family of faith — for what does He look in them? Are we satisfied that we always display the character of Christ? Is our *living* in keeping with our *calling in Him*? To admit failure is not difficult. It may be mistaken for humility! But repentance — God can do miracles with a truly repentant soul! Repentance is self-judgment!

At verse 6, Luke tells of the parable which the Lord uses in order further to emphasize the need for repentance. "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard." The symbol was known to His hearers as representing the nation (Hosea ix.10). It was the vineyard of God, and He it was Who had planted the fig tree there. "He came seeking fruit upon it and found none." Yet one more opportunity was given. One thinks of the Son of Man through the years of His service and suffering seeking the fruit of repentance from the fig tree of Israel. But, in Israel, one sees the natural man as opposed to the spiritual. Matthew tells of the fig tree unproductive — spreading leaves of profession among which should have appeared the fruit, since this was produced before the leaves notwithstanding the usual season had not arrived. In His parable the Lord passed sentence upon pretence and the fruitless condition of it. Yet a further extension of time was granted — "for this year also." It is now cut down, and its testimony withered, as He forewarned.

There *are* fruits of repentance. It is the *only* way of reaching accord with God. The divine Mind has made clear the vast difference between the natural man and one who bears this fruit. God does not expect fruit from the natural man since he *never* judges himself. Discerning criticism of one-

self as a believer bears fruit indeed! None is more swift to react to this condition in us than the Lord Himself. Has not the Holy Spirit, in grace, brought it about — and by His own means! Nathaniel might have seemed like any other Israelite in the shade of a fig tree, but his thoughts of Israel's position before God, and of his *own association with it*, were inward admissions of failure and the need for repentance. The “guile” of religious pretence was all about him, but he remained clear of the taint of it. “An Israelite indeed” — one who had strength as *receiving* it from God. How different is this from the pretentious attempt to *deserve* it! So to him — of repentant spirit — was the awareness of being approved under the eye of Jesus “The Son of God—the King of Israel,” and, further, of being assured of seeing those “greater things” of His everlasting kingdom which were beyond the glory of His Messianic reign.

The principle of repentance remains as vital today as when Jesus emphasized it by symbol and parable at the commencement of the era of grace. It has always been a principle with God. His blessing overflows — but only to those who seek it unselfishly and in self-judgment of their condition. Jeremiah was shown two baskets of figs — one very good “like the figs that are first ripe” — and the other “which could not be eaten they were so bad.” The word continues, “Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: like these good figs so will I acknowledge them that have been carried away captive of Judah I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be My people and I will be their God: for they shall *return unto Me with their whole heart*” (Jeremiah xxiv.). These captives of Judah submitted to the judgment of God as the outcome of their departure from Jehovah. They did not seek to remain in Jerusalem with others in a compromised position of subjection to Babylon. They judged themselves and, as the result of their repentance, were told, “They shall be My people and I will be their God.” Those remaining with Zedekiah were shown as figs that were bad despite their outward semblance of religious behaviour: “I will

deliver them to be removed into all the corners of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them."

It is still foreign to the natural man to submit to self-judgment, but for those who will do so, there is a precious reality in the word "I will be their God."

EDWARD T. WOOD

REDEMPTION

The writer remembers a missionary speaker exclaim, while pointing to a map of China, "Redeemed! and they do not know it." Now this illustrates the Christian's need to be clear about the meaning of those metaphors which scripture uses in telling out the glorious truths of salvation.

For "redemption" is a metaphor, and to understand it fully, we must know its basis in everyday life. Though we still use the word, its occurrence to describe everyday happenings is much less frequent with us than in the Bible. There we find:

- (a) the redemption of a slave or captive,
- (b) the redemption of land,
- (c) the redemption of a vow and a tithe,
- (d) the redemption of the firstborn.

Not all these, however, illustrate the figurative use of the word, which is abundant in the Old Testament as well as the New. It will help if we discern three recurring ideas — deliverance from bondage or peril, possession regained, and the price paid, though all three do not apply in every case.

Let us first consider (b) and (c), leaving the more important cases till last.

REGAINING POSSESSION

To retain in the family and pass down from father to son the portion of the promised land which God had given him was every Israelite's endeavour, but poverty might make a man sell his patrimony. In the year of the jubilee it would return to him, or before that he might redeem it.

“The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then he shall redeem that which his brother sold.” Lev. xxv.23-25.

The 4th chapter of Ruth provides an instructive example of this, where Boaz appears as the kinsman-redeemer, buying back the possession of the dead Elimelech, that it should not be sold out of the family. Boaz, of course, is here a type of the Lord Jesus, Who as Israel’s Redeemer will give them back their land as well as redeeming themselves to be His people.

The redemption of vows and tithes is included for the sake of completeness, though it does not seem to be used as a basis of metaphor. When a man made any possession of his the subject of a vow, dedicating it to God, he could regain possession, or redeem it, if he wished, by substituting its value in money, as estimated by the priest, with the addition of one fifth. Similarly, he might redeem his tithes (Lev. xxvii).

REDEMPTION OF A SLAVE OR CAPTIVE

Slaves were often prisoners taken in war (not necessarily combatants) such as the maid of Naaman’s wife. But in Israel a man in debt might sell his children (usually daughters) as slaves, or might sell himself (Ex. xxi.8: Lev.xxv.47, etc.). Redemption of such slaves was by payment of money by a relative or friend, and then they were set free. Similarly a prisoner taken in war might be set free on payment of a ransom.

Though not using the word “redemption”, Isaiah writes concerning the exile of the people of Judah in Babylon, speaking of Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, “He shall let go My captives, not for price or reward, saith the Lord of hosts” (Is. xlv.13). But if they were in bondage, it was not He Who

had sold them! "Which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves" (Is. 1.i). And, "Ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed without money" (chap. lii.3).

Similarly, it was Jehovah's power, and not any ransom price to Pharaoh, that was the means of deliverance from Egypt, yet this also is figuratively called redemption. So Nehemiah i.10, "These are Thy servants and Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy great power and Thy strong hand." And God Himself says to Moses, "Say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments; and I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God." (Ex.vi.6,7). They had gone down to Egypt as God's people, but now they were to be His by a new title, as those whom He had redeemed.

In Isaiah's prophecies we have the thought developed, that what really held Israel in bondage was not any earthly conqueror, but their sins. So God says, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee" (Is. xlv.22). And the psalmist, "Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

This, of course, brings us nearer to the teaching of the New Testament. But before coming to this, let us consider

REDEMPTION FROM THE POWER OF DEATH

In Ex. xxi 30 we find the case of a man condemned to die because of his failure to control his ox, which had gored a man to death. However, in such a case his life might be redeemed by a money payment, in contrast to a case of murder, where any satisfaction for the murderer's life was strictly forbidden (Num.xxxv.31).

The figurative use of this redemption we find for example in Job xxxiii.24, where repentance brings deliverance to a

man at the point of death, and God says, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." But what the ransom was, had yet to be clearly revealed. Again in Psalm xlix we get the impossibility of a money ransom being of any use — all a man's wealth will not avail him. "Truly no man can ransom himself or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of his life is costly." (SRV). Yet the psalmist adds, "But God *will* redeem my soul from the power of Sheol (or, the grave)".

We must not omit here the testimony of Job. The Deliverer that he, in common with all those taught of God, waited for, was to stand upon this very earth. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth . . . Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another." Job xix.25, 27. Though much was dark, he knew that death was not the end.

THE REDEMPTION METAPHOR IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Fallen man is in bondage to sin — a wretched slave! For "Whosoever sinneth is the bondsman of sin", as the Lord Jesus said. Or in the words of St. Paul, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Moreover, he is quite incapable of freeing himself from the power of sin, or of escaping its penalty. He is in peril of death, with judgment to follow.

Seeing that sin against a holy God is what keeps him in bondage, what ransom shall be sufficient to redeem him? And who is able to pay such a ransom? The Redeemer is God's own Son, Who because of His holiness was able to offer His own lifeblood as the ransom. No creature could do this, for even the holy angels were unable to leave the place Which God had given them. *They* could not take flesh and blood that they might die. But He Who was in the form of God could do so, and so He came as Son of man to give His life a ransom for many (Mark x.45). In this connection a subtle accuracy is shown in the words used. In Mark it is "instead of many", because the *many* are

actually set free. In I Tim. ii.6, "Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all," it is "on behalf of all" because not all will actually be saved. Still, the ransom is available for all.

We may note here that the devil is the one who has the power of death (claiming it as man's due, he himself being the Accuser, as his name means), and we were under his dominion, but it is sin which gave him power over us. Christ has delivered us from that dominion, paying the price with His own life. In the metaphor it is sin which keeps man in captivity, and Christ is the Redeemer. Or, as scripture often expresses it, redemption is *in* Christ, that is, our deliverance from sin, its bondage and its penalty, is by His blood. So in Eph. i.7 "In Whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Again in Romans iii. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Seeing that man is God's creature, but has been captured by sin and held in bondage by it, the act of redemption restores him to God. We have seen this expressed in the case of Israel; as applied to the Christian we read in Titus ii.14, "The great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." When we think of the price of our redemption, how gladly shall we accept that henceforth we belong to the One Who has purchased us for His own, and, like Paul, describe ourselves as "bondmen" of Jesus Christ. Unlike the bondage of sin, His service is perfect freedom.

We have redemption *in Christ*, but are we as yet redeemed? As to our souls, yes, we are redeemed, we are set free from sin's bondage. But from another point of view redemption is still future. The price is paid, but our Redeemer has not yet taken possession, not as He will do. Yet we are *sealed* as His property by the Spirit of God, "sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv.30). The Spirit is "the *earnest* of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. i.14). Our sins are forgiven and eternal

life is ours, but of all the glory and blessing that belongs to us as those whom Christ has purchased for Himself, we have only received, so far, the Holy Spirit. But having Him, all is assured. As Rom. viii.11 tells us, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." This will be accomplished at the Lord's coming. It is what verse 23 calls the "redemption of our body" — the completion of the act of redemption.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

(To be continued)

"BE YE TRANSFORMED"

The grace of God in our salvation is enhanced in our eyes when we consider that not only are our sins forgiven and we ourselves set free from the guilt and power of sin, but that in addition to these priceless blessings, it is God's purpose to bring us into conformity to the likeness of His own beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In the words of Romans viii.29 we are predestined "to be conformed to the image of His Son". This is God's ultimate purpose for every one of His children. He is "bringing many sons unto glory" (Hebrews ii.10), to be with and to be like His own Son, to be perfectly conformed to His image, "that He might be the firstborn" (the pre-eminent One) "among many brethren".

Our very bodies which in this world have been the vehicle of sin are to be changed and glorified, fashioned anew after the likeness of the glorified body of our Lord. This stupendous grace of God is part of "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus", of which the Apostle writes in Ephesians ii.7.

This blessed, holy prospect will be accomplished by the power of God at the coming of His Son from Heaven, when "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii.2). To see Him as He now is, to gaze upon His resplen-

dent glory with our natural eyes would be impossible for us; but then, at the moment of His coming to receive us to Himself, we shall be like Him with changed and glorified bodies and so we shall be able to look upon His glory.

This glorious prospect, this blessed hope in Him, is set before us in the Scriptures that it might exercise its practical purifying power in our lives (see 1 John iii.3). It also draws out afresh the praises and gratitude of our hearts in response to God's grace to us. But that is not all. The Spirit of God would lead us further still. In addition to the accomplishment of the eternal purpose of God to conform our spirit, soul and body to the likeness of our glorified Lord, it is God's purpose that now, in this short earthly life while we await our Saviour's coming to consummate His redeeming work in the redemption of our bodies, we should be conformed *morally* to the likeness of our Lord.

In Romans xii.2 the responsibility to do this is put squarely on our own shoulders — "be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God". The basic spring or source of this world's activities is self-will — man's will in opposition to God's will. This is brought out in 1 John ii.16 — "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father; but is of the world". These lusts and this pride spring from self-love and self-will.

For the believer conformity to self-will, the essence of sin, the essence of this world, is to cease; the mind is to be *renewed* so that it is no longer set upon the world, but upon the good and acceptable and perfect *will of God*. This involves a complete transformation — "be ye transformed".

The word translated "transformed" in Romans xii.2 occurs four times in the New Testament: in Matthew xvii.2 and Mark ix.2 where it is translated "transfigured"; in Romans xii.2, and in 2 Corinthians iii.18 where it is translated "changed". It is helpful to consider these verses together. The verses in the Gospels both refer to the Lord on the

Mount of Transfiguration when "as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening" (Luke ix.29). Matthew's account gives a more detailed description of His altered countenance — "His face did shine as the sun". This leads our thoughts to Revelation i.16 "and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength". It was this same brilliant shining that Saul saw on the Damascus Road — "I saw in the way a light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me" (Acts xxvi.13). These four verses and the use by the Holy Spirit of the same word "transfigured" as applied both to the Lord Himself in Matthew and Mark and to ourselves in Romans and 2 Corinthians help us to lay hold of this wonderful truth — we are to be transfigured after the pattern of our Lord's transfiguration. This is the purpose of God for us *now*, while we are still in this world, that we should be transformed, transfigured into the moral likeness of our Lord and Saviour.

What a high and blessed example God has been pleased to set before us! Nothing less than the supreme example, the perfection of the life of His own Son as a Man in this world. His life here among men was the perfect expression of "that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God". Listen to His words of perfect submission and obedience — "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews x.9). "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John iv.34). "For I came down from Heaven, not to do My own Will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John vi.38). And from beneath the olive trees in Gethsemane's garden, when anticipatively the awful burden of the cross weighed heavily upon Him, still the same expression of full submission and obedience — "nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done". What joy and delight filled the heart of God as He saw in His beloved Son a Man whose will was in perfect conformity to His own! And it is God's will for us, His children, that we who were so unlike our gracious, holy Lord, we whose hearts and ways were self-centred and self-willed, should be brought into conformity with the obedience of

Christ. This is a progressive work. It is to be a continuous process as long as we are in this world. There should be by us a daily practical proving of God's perfect will; a daily growth in conformity to our Lord, as the hymn writer has expressed it —

“That we as like Thee might become
As we unlike had been.

Like Thee in faith, in meekness, love,
In every beauteous grace;
From glory into glory changed,
Till we behold Thy face”.

This moral conformity to our Lord Jesus Christ is what every believer desires; but how is it to be accomplished? The last occurrence of the word “transfigured” supplies the answer. It is in 2 Corinthians iii.18 where it is translated “changed”. The clarity and beauty of this important verse is enhanced in the New Translation (J.N.D.) which reads — “But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by [the] Lord [the] Spirit”. It is our privilege to look with an unveiled face upon the glory of our risen Lord. There is no veil upon our faces now, as there was in our unconverted days when we saw no beauty in Him. There is nothing between us and His transcendent glory! All that once came between us has been done away by the death of Christ. Is it our constant occupation to behold His glory? — the glory of His grace, the glory of His holiness, the glory of His eternal Sonship, His glory as the Accomplisher of all the Father's will, His acquired glory as the risen Son of Man, His glory as our great High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, all the manifold glories that shine in their fulness and perfection in Him.

We have seen that it is God's will for us to grow into conformity with our Lord Jesus Christ, but only in this way

(Continued inside front cover)

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disciple during His absence; not only would such a one be loved by the Father, but he should have the presence of both the Father and the Son. He said, "If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him" (John xiv.23). The word of Christ being kept, hidden in the heart, the Father and the Son vouchsafe Their presence to the soul, which becomes Their abiding — or dwelling — place! Can heavenly bliss be known in this world more fully than thus?

But such is the abiding portion of those who are not disobedient to the word of the Lord, but who make it their constant food and drink. This was the way of our blessed Lord's walk on earth: He said, "I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John xv.10). The sense of the Father's love was His invariable experience, for He ever wrought and always suffered the Father's will: "The cup which the Father has given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?" was His word in the presence of His enemies (John xviii.11).

W. J. HOCKING

(Reprinted from *The Bible Monthly*, June 1947)

THE NEW BIRTH

It is a clear fact, that natural birth has brought you into the old world of sin. How important the question, Has spiritual birth translated you into the new world of grace? It is so, if you are Christ's: and you are Christ's, if Christ is yours: and Christ is yours, if He dwell in the heart by faith unfeigned: and faith is unfeigned, which ventures on Him, and ventures wholly — which loves Him fully — which hears His voice and follows Him.

(Extracted)

LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Revelation i.10)

So remarked the beloved disciple and apostle John in the Book of The Revelation which was written by him, as also the Gospel and the three Epistles bearing his name.

His persecutor, the Emperor Domitian, being unsuccessful in putting him to death, banished him to Patmos, reputedly for work in the mines. Here St. John states the reason why he was exiled: "I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." He was nearly one hundred years of age when he died, and his writings were compiled long after the other Books which comprise the New Testament. The escalation of evil and serious departure from "the faith once and for all delivered to the saints" in his lifetime had proceeded to an alarming extent. Yet what wonderful spiritual disclosures, which he could not have experienced otherwise, he received in these untoward circumstances! There was not the slightest resentment on his part, but contrariwise a real personal triumph in the consciousness of the Lord's presence with him.

Has this any parallel in our own day? Assuredly it has! There are thousands of Christians in Communist countries who are languishing in prisons and labour camps, where the loathsome conditions and the persecution which is meted out to them, often result in premature death. Even those who have not suffered this fate are in many instances forbidden to meet together for public worship, and this must be very grievous for them particularly on the Lord's day. Whilst the underground Church exists in some places, Christians who do succeed occasionally in meeting together for religious services do so at enormous risk as they fear apprehension at any time by Authorities who are bitterly hostile to them.

Is God unmindful, and does He cease to care for His dear people in such trying circumstances? Indeed, no! There is an eagerness for the Truth in these countries which puts to

shame many of us who are Christians in English speaking lands which have enjoyed privileges far exceeding those of other countries. Alas! we justly mourn as we view our priceless heritage being frittered away by the masses! We hear that in countries where Bibles are very scarce, and in many instances are confiscated, many Christians have committed to memory large portions of God's word and this must stand them in good stead where such testing conditions prevail.

In this land we are for the most part in conditions of comparative ease and prosperity, and we are not at present experiencing the uncongenial circumstances that are the lot of many of our fellow-believers where persecution is rife. Yet the enemy is always active, and is doing all in his power to encourage those who are striving for further secularization of the Lord's Day which so many of our forebears sought to honour at all costs. We are, indeed, thankful that through the earnest prayers and strenuous efforts of those who are supporters of The Lord's Day Observance Society, as well as those of many other Christians, God has honoured and answered their prayers as they have sought that the sanctity of the Lord's Day may still be preserved to us. We do render thanks to God that the private member's Bill in support of the desecration of the Lord's Day, which some sought to promote, has been defeated for the fourth time. It is very sorrowful to witness the apathy exhibited in regard to this vital matter by many persons who take Christian ground, some of whom, alas! even say that we should not try to force our views on people of the world against their will. But God's word is clear and plain in regard to this all-important matter, and is equally binding on Christians and non-Christians. May there be greater concern and fervency in prayer on the part of each one of us that God may still exercise His restraining hand against these forces of evil, and may we be careful not to engage in anything on the Lord's Day that may be a stumbling-block to others.

To come nearer home, there are many Christians who, through illness or advancing years, are no longer able to assemble with God's people, and especially as Lord's Days

come and go, they must reflect upon the time when they were able to meet happily with their fellow-believers. Though such occasions are sorely missed by them, and rightly so, yet the Lord fully understands the peculiar circumstances which in His infinite wisdom He has permitted to befall them. What can they do? There are many time-honoured hymns they do well to recall, and, above all, the Holy Scriptures which in many cases are read by them with increasing interest, and often in quite a new light. A lady confined to hospital said, "When I was well I had read the passage where the prophet Jeremiah says, 'Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart' (chapter xv.16), but since I have been shut away from the outside world I have read the Bible with greater delight than formerly, and have appropriated such sweet portions for myself."

So for all of us who are Christians, whatever the circumstances in which we may be found, God's word is full of passages of cheer and consolation, e.g., "I, even I, am He that comforteth you" (Isaiah li.12); "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Corinthians i.4).

A. E. BIRD

REDEMPTION, continued

The Redemption of the Firstborn

The firstborn of Israel, both of man and beast, were saved from death by the death of the passover lamb, and the sprinkling of its blood. Scripture does not actually call this redemption, though Peter has an unmistakable reference to it when he says "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter i.18, 19).

The firstborn were saved from death, but freedom from bondage was not achieved till the power of Egypt was broken by Jehovah at the Red Sea. As we have seen, it is *this* which is frequently referred to as redemption. Thus scripture underlines for us that being set free is an essential feature of redemption according to God. That is why it was a mistake to speak of China's millions as redeemed.

We get further teaching about the firstborn, but here we must be careful in regard to the spiritual application.

God claimed the firstborn of both man and beast as His, saying, "All the firstborn are Mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto Me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: Mine shall they be: I am the Lord." (Numbers iii.13). But now follows a distinction between the clean and the unclean — of course, a ritual distinction only.

The firstborn of clean beasts, as holy, were to be offered in sacrifice, their blood sprinkled on the altar, and the fat burned there. Then they became food for the priests. (Num. xviii.17, 18). The firstborn of an ass, as unclean, could not be thus offered, and the alternatives were either to break its neck (Ex. xiii.13), or else redeem it by the substitution of a lamb — a clean animal. Thus though redeemed out of Egypt, and claimed by God, the unclean could not be accepted by Him. And this applied equally to Israel's sons. Like the ass, they had to be *further* redeemed. Now in this is brought out the **limited character of Israel's redemption.**

Though brought to God, they were still unfit to serve Him. He called them to be a holy people, but they never achieved this. "If ye will obey My voice indeed" He said, "ye shall be a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Ex. xix.6). But alas, soon there followed the worship of the golden calf.

How much better is our redemption in Christ! For in Him we are redeemed and cleansed and fitted for His service. We are called to present our bodies a *living* sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our intelligent service (Rom. xii.1).

Now Israel's firstborn sons, that is, the generation that actually came out of Egypt, were redeemed by substituting the

Levites for them. The numbers were nearly equal, but the firstborn outnumbered the Levites by 273, and these last had to be redeemed by a money payment of five shekels apiece (Num. iii.40-51; xviii.15, 16). And the firstborn of later generations were also to be redeemed by this money payment.

Just as God chose Aaron's family for the priesthood, so He chose the Levites for the service of the tabernacle, hallowing them and bringing them into a special place in His sovereignty, though not near as the priests were. Once again it must be emphasised, all this is in contrast to what we have in Christ. Every believer in Him is both priest (for worship and prayer), and Levite (for service). See Heb. xiii.15; I Pet. ii.5).

It is then evident, if we consider it carefully, that this redemption of Israel's firstborn sons was not a redemption to God—rather was it a redemption *from* God, for they were liberated from His claim upon them, much as they might redeem back their own vows (Lev. xxvii.). Is not this the reason why a money payment sufficed? Again, there is nothing corresponding to this in the New Testament, but it is part of the weakness and unprofitableness of the law (Heb. vii.18). Some Christians, alas, do think of themselves in this way. They are the "laity", and look to a special class, the "priesthood", or the "ministry", to occupy themselves in the service of God. Some even consider themselves set free to enjoy more of the world's things (I John ii.15) than they would think proper for a "minister". Now this is completely alien to true Christianity. Our redemption in Christ is perfect and complete, and **every** Christian is brought to God, sanctified, and made fit for God's highest service. This is not to deny that there are special gifts, and that some are called to more prominent positions of service. But we are speaking of spiritual fitness, of holiness. All believers are "holy brethren" as we see in I Thess. v.27: Heb. iii.1; all are "saints" or sanctified ones. Herein is the objection to the wearing of a surplice — it is a symbol of a distinction which has no validity before God, and which in fact denies the perfection of our redemption.

BOUGHT OUT

In all the New Testament examples hitherto discussed, the same original word for redemption is used. However, in a few cases, the word is literally "bought out".

For example, in Galatians iii.13 "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" and in chapter iv.5 "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The death of Christ as paying the redemption price is here too plain to be mistaken. And finally in Rev. v.9 "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation," the word is just "bought". Why is this? Perhaps because, unlike Israel, who had been God's people before they went into bondage, Gentiles had never known Him. Thus they could not be said to be redeemed, but bought. This is merely a suggestion to explain the different word used. Whether bought or redeemed, that tremendous price alone availed—the blood of the Lamb.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

(Concluded)

PAUL AT TROAS

One of the many evidences that Scripture is inspired is the inimitable way in which it links divine, eternal principles with happenings in time and space. Human religions are mostly occupied with ritual; human philosophical systems with moral precepts; but while God's word gives us a ritual in connection with Israel, and every part of scripture contains moral teaching, it also tells us things that God has done (or allowed Satan and man to do) at certain given moments in the world's course. So that a large part of the Bible is devoted to the recording of *events*. As has often been remarked, history is in a very real sense "His story".

But not only does the Holy Spirit insist on the "when"; He insists equally on the "where". Scripture is not intended, of course, to be a handbook of geography: nevertheless the num-

ber of places referred to in both Old and New Testaments, ranging from the location of a particular tree to the scope of a world empire, is amazing.

From this point of view, it is of practical value to notice the mention of the city of Troas in the account of the apostle's labours. To this place he made four different visits, all brief as far as we can judge, but in such different circumstances and with such varied associations as to give us fresh glimpses of the manifold wisdom of God. The first and third visits are recorded by Luke (Acts xvi.8-11 and xx.5-13); the second and fourth are passing references by Paul himself in two of his most intimate letters (2 Corinthians ii.12-17 and 2 Timothy iv.13).

If the passages in Acts give us particularly Paul as the *chosen vessel*, those in the two epistles portray him rather as the *earthen vessel*. How thankful we should be to have both!

(1) THE PIONEER MISSIONARY

Acts xvi. describes the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey: a tour far more extended than the first, and fraught with the most far-reaching consequences for the Western world, and through it for the world at large. With Silas now in the company, it began with pastoral visits to the fruits of Paul's earlier labours in Syria, Cilicia, Pisidia and Lycaonia — a young fellow-labourer, Timothy, becoming their companion from Lystra onwards. Paul's thoughts may then have turned to Ephesus, but the Holy Spirit in some way deterred them from entering proconsular Asia at that time. In the interior of Asia Minor an enforced stay (Galatians iv.13-15 seems to indicate that it was due to a violent attack of Paul's "thorn in the flesh") resulted in the conversion of many of the volatile, impulsive Celts inhabiting those parts. Then the trio made their way towards Bithynia, but again the Spirit (literally the Spirit of Jesus) showed them, we are not told how, that this was not to be their field of labour.

With nothing to detain them in the bleak, thinly-populated uplands of Mysia, they descended to the coast and found themselves in the Troad. The city of Alexandria Troas stood near the site of ancient Troy. The pagan Greek might thrill at the region's associations with Homer's Iliad, the Roman at memories of the legendary founder of his imperial race; but although one of the three which composed the apostolic band was half a Greek, and the other two possessed the prized Roman citizenship, their minds and hearts were occupied with other things: they had a far greater and happier story to tell than that of the siege of Troy.

Paul appears here particularly as the pattern evangelist: his unchanging message a crucified and glorified Christ (although his mode of presentation might, and did, vary according to the condition of his hearers). His heart, for the time being, free from specific anxieties as to earlier converts, his concern at Troas was, "Lord, where wilt Thou have me to preach now?" He waited for divine guidance, but, as a man, he seems generally to have regarded a seaport — unless indeed it were a strategic centre in its own right — mainly as a means of transit to key places inland, or overseas.

The answer came in a night vision. Paul saw (in an impression apparently more vivid than an ordinary dream) a Macedonian man standing, beseeching him and saying: "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." On telling the vision to his three companions (Luke, the "beloved physician", had now joined them), they concluded with assurance that the Lord was calling them to evangelize Macedonia. They found therefore a ship sailing in that direction, and favourable winds brought them to their desired haven in two days. Unexpected results at Philippi, with the familiar and well-loved figures of Lydia and the jailor exhibiting the effects of the Spirit's work in heart and conscience, were followed by labours in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and finally Corinth, before sailing again for Syria by way of Ephesus (now an open door).

Outward results at Athens were disappointing, but elsewhere in Achaia, as in Macedonia, men and women of all

classes received the word. The Lord owned Paul's preaching; assemblies were formed; and the guidance given at Troas in an unusual, but certainly forceful manner, was amply confirmed. The Gentile world, represented here mainly by the descendants of Japheth, were responding to God's good news.

We may notice in passing that at Corinth and elsewhere the apostle, while he had the moral right (with the Lord's own sanction — see Matthew x.10; Luke x.7) to be maintained by his converts; worked with his hands, making tents, in order to forestall slanderous accusations of covetousness.

A. C. MCCANN

(To be continued)

THE UNSPEAKABLE LOVE OF THE FATHER

"The Father Himself loveth (has affection for) you because ye have loved (had affection for) Me, and have believed that I came out from God"

(John xvi.27)

Our Lord Jesus Christ received these, among other like precious words, from the Father Who commanded Him to speak them for our everlasting comfort (John xii.49, 50). They are a sweet assurance to us of the Father's love. We read elsewhere of the love of God — God in His essential nature; "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believes on Him may not perish but have life eternal" (John iii.16). We read too of the love of Christ: "Christ also loved the assembly, and has delivered Himself up for it" (Ephesians v.25). The Son Himself in the first passage speaks of the love of the Father in exercise towards those whom His grace has brought into the relationship of children before Him — "the Father Himself loveth you."

What the Father's Love Has Done for Us

The love of the Father has wrought for us through His Son Jesus Christ. He "has taken us into favour in the Beloved; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the for-

givenness of offences, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians i.6, 7). And God sent forth His Son "that we might receive sonship"; and being His sons, "God has sent out the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father" (Galatians iv.4-6). We are fashioned into this intimate and dignified relationship of sonship so that we might be vessels of the Father's love.

Moreover, the love of the Father has wrought **in** us so that we might receive His revelation to us of His Son. When our Lord said to His disciples, "Who do ye say that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God". Immediately Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in the heavens" (Matthew xvi.15-17). Thus we see that the true apprehension of the Person of the Son is through the revelation by the Father; for "no one knows the Son but the Father" (Matthew xi.27). And the Father Who sent the Son makes Him known, as the Lord said, "The Father Who has sent Me Himself has borne witness concerning Me" (John v.37). It was the Father speaking from heaven Who said of Jesus coming up out of the water of Jordan, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I have found My delight" (Matthew iii.16, 17).

It was also the Father in His love Who wrought **in** us, by drawing us to His Christ as sinners to a Saviour. As natural men, we were indifferent to His Son, unwilling to hear Him, incapable of coming to Him. The Lord Jesus said, "No one can come to Me except the Father Who has sent Me draw him"; and He said again, "No man can come to Me unless it be given to Him of (from) My Father" (John vi.44, 65).

How comforting and sustaining to reflect upon the activities of the love of the Father on our behalf! In His love He gave His Son for us, Who is the propitiation for our sins, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in Whom we are brought into the nearness of reconciliation, through Whom we receive the Holy Spirit with the relationship of children and sons of God. Surveying all these and many more of the gifts of grace, the disciple

whom Jesus loved might well exclaim, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us!" (I John iii.1).

The Sureness of the Father's Love

If the love of the Father provided so richly for us before we knew Him, how continuously and amply will He provide for us now that we can address Him as Abba, Father, by the Holy Spirit He has given us! We may have poverty-stricken thoughts of Him and be feeble in our love for Him; but will He, because of these infirmities, turn away from us His watchful Fatherly eye, or withdraw from us His Fatherly helping hand? Never; the love of the Father is a faithful and unchanging love. His patient love observes the very smallest of our needs, and will not suffer us to lack a single good thing. The Father's love provides us with the best, and shields us from the worst. He Who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also give us all things? (Romans viii.32).

It may be that one of the children of God, having in mind His infinite greatness and his own insignificance and unworthiness, may be full of incredulity, and may put the question: How much does the Father love **me**? What is the measure of the love of the Father towards **me**? What is the manner of His love for **me**?

The true answer to this question is not to be found in our own hearts, nor gathered from our own experience. The counsels and opinions of wise and well-taught brethren will not satisfy us. But God Himself, Who is love, has unfolded in the scriptures as much of the character and measure of the Father's love as we are able to apprehend. And the simple yet profound truth revealed there is that the Father loves us **as He loves the Son** — with an unspeakable love.

Loved as the Son is Loved

We are but tiny specks of humanity, but our Lord has assured us, "The Father Himself loveth you". This He said so that by believing His word, we may know **now** that the Father's love is set upon us in this marvellous manner. At

present this is kept secret from the world, but by and by the secret will be manifested to all men. The Lord prayed to His Father (John xvii.20-23) that this might take place when those believing on Him are made perfect in unity and glory in order that "the **world may know** that Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me."

That occasion will be the day of universal display of the love of the Father for those who believed on His Son in the time of His rejection by the world. But we know the truth now for our comfort and joy while crossing the wilderness. The Lord Jesus has declared to us, "The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me and have believed that I came out from God."

Does a child of God still seek to know the dimensions and the duration of the love of the Father? These are but the petulant and idle enquiries of the natural man. Such queries arise only when the eye no longer looks at Christ. The Father loves us because we love Christ. We cannot provide a reason for the Father's love. Only the Son could do this. He said, "On this account (Therefore) the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again" (John x.17). The Son's obedience was consummated in His death — the death of the cross — and His perfect subjection provided a "therefore" for the Father's love towards His incarnate Son.

We can neither in life nor by death present such matchless obedience to the Father. Our sole and sufficient plea is that we have received the Son Whom the Father sent and have believed on His name. On this ground alone, our trembling hearts are assured by the Son that "the Father Himself loveth you, **because** ye have loved Me and have believed that I came from God." This is His sovereign grace and His unspeakable love.

Our Flickering Flame of Love

But the Father's love for us and our consciousness of that love are not always co-existent. The Father's love is not only immeasurable but unchangeable, for God is love. But we,

alas! are unreliable. We are apt to change, and to lose the sense in our hearts of the warmth and freshness of the Father's love. The fault is our own, while the remedy lies with ourselves. With the Father of lights there is "no variation nor shadow of turning."

Wherein then do we fail? Undoubtedly, in many ways; but in this connection, chiefly through lack of obedience as children of God. The Lord Jesus Who is on high has given us His words to obey during His absence. His words are His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous nor numerous. Moreover, we have received the Spirit of truth that we may understand His word. All that is requisite by us in obeying the commandments of the Lord is provided for us and given to us. Alas! that we should so often fail to keep ourselves in the love of God, and to obey God as Christ Himself obeyed.

Obedience the Offspring of Love

Obedience to the words of our Lord proves our love to Him and kindles the love of the Father within us. The Lord said, "He that has My commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me; but he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father" (John xiv.21).

Here there is something more than the possession of the Father's love because we are His children, which is true at all times of the whole family of God. Here is one who seeks till he finds the words of the Lord, who eats them, who embodies them in his life, being diligent to be obedient out of love to his Lord. To such a one is the special promise given that the love of the Father shall be realized in the presence of the Father. He shall not only be in possession of the Father's gift of His love, but be in communion with the Father Who has bestowed His love upon him, and Whose love is now reciprocated by him.

The Dwelling-Place of Love

But our Lord enlarges this promise to the loving obedient

(Continued inside front cover)

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Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

Vol. LIX

OCTOBER 1971

No. 10

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Concluded from inside back cover)

to be in a partial manner, their spirits being on high while their bodies slept in the dust of the earth. Their bodies, souls, and spirits would be united and glorified according to the pattern of Christ Himself (Philippians iii.21; 1 John iii.2), each bearing the image of the Heavenly (1 Corinthians xv.49). Thus, all the saints look onward to the fulfilment of the Lord's desire of His Father, "that they may be perfected into one" (John xvii.23).

* * * *

The personal coming of the Lord and its happy consequences constitute the true hope of believers in Christ. We do not look for Him to come to put us into the grave, but to take us out of it if we are there, or to prevent us from going there at all. We expect, not the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle, but the assumption of our house which is from heaven, which we shall receive at His coming to take up to Himself, whether we are then waking or sleeping.

W. J. HOCKING

(Reprinted from *The Bible Monthly*, 1941)

“CARE” IN THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

Our Authorized Version is noted for its practice of using several different English words to translate the same word in the original language, even when varying shades of meaning are not intended. However, the word “care”, along with “careful”, “carefulness”, is an example of the opposite practice, for this one English word is used to translate five Greek words (counting words from the same root as one), with meanings which really do need to be distinguished, if we are to understand the scriptures fully.

1st. The good Samaritan brought the wounded man to an inn, and **“took care of him.”** Then, when he went on his way, he gave the innkeeper two pence, with instructions to **“take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”** (Luke x.34, 35).

The sense in both instances is clear: it implies a thoughtful meeting of every need of the sick man. It also underlines the important truth that love (of which this whole parable is an illustration) does not rest content with meeting the most pressing need — it goes on so long as its help is useful. And if we think of the supreme Exemplar, how sweet to know that He has made provision for us whom He has rescued, right up to His coming, when our need will be finally and for ever satisfied in His presence!

The other instance is in I Tim. iii.5 “If a man (i.e. a bishop) know not how to rule his own house, how shall he **take care** of the church of God?”

2nd. **Care in the sense of Concern.**

The original word here is closely connected with the first, but is deserving of special mention. It describes an attitude of mind rather than a course of action, and in the New Testament is mainly used in the negative.

It describes for example the *indifference* of Gallio, the Roman proconsul at Corinth, to the beliefs of both Jews and Christians, in the words “Gallio **cared** for none of these things,” or, in modern parlance, “he couldn’t care less.” The word is similarly applied to the hireling’s attitude to the

sheep, because they were not his own: "The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling, and **careth** not for the sheep." Also to Judas' real feelings about the poor when he complained about the waste of the ointment, "Not that he **cared** for the poor."

This is the word used by the Herodians when they tempted the Lord Jesus about paying taxes to Caesar, attributing to Him a proud indifference to all men which was far from the truth, though He was indeed uninfluenced by men's thoughts. "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither **carest** Thou for any man: for Thou regardest not the person of men." (Matt. xxii.16).

Then it is the word used by the frightened disciples in the boat, during the storm on the lake. They come and awaken the Master from His peaceful slumber, saying, "**Carest** Thou not that we perish?" (Mark iv.38). What a standing lesson this is to all His people, not to listen to the promptings of unbelief within our hearts, however dark the sky above us. Let us hold this fast, that our faithful Saviour's **concern** for us never slumbers.

It is of interest to note, also, that in spite of their lack of faith, they unconsciously *expected* Him to be aware of their danger, though He was fast asleep. Else, why the reproach?

3rd. **Care in the sense of Diligence.**

This we find three times, all in II Corinthians.

In chapter vii.11 and 12, the Corinthians' sorrow over their failure to judge the evil in their midst produced, says Paul, such **carefulness**, or diligence to clear the matter up, that they proved their real purity of heart. Likewise he explains the purpose of his first letter was to make his **care** on their behalf manifest.

Later (chapter viii.16), Paul thanks God that Titus, his messenger to them, showed the same **earnest care** for their welfare that he himself had done.

Elsewhere the word and its corresponding verb is in general, actually translated "diligence", as in II Cor. viii.7, Rom. xii.8.

4th. **Care in the sense of Thoughtful Interest.**

This word occurs many times in the New Testament, but only in Phil. iv.10 is it translated care and careful. "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last your **care** of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also **careful**, but ye lacked opportunity."

Paul does not suggest that his beloved Philippians had ever ceased to think of him, but they were far away, and means of communication were not easy. But now they had rejoiced his heart, and given fresh cause for thanksgiving to God, by sending Epaphroditus with a welcome gift to supply his needs in the prison. Their thoughtful interest showed itself in this most practical way.

5th. **Care in the sense of Anxiety.**

It is this word which is also rendered "take thought" in Matthew vi and Luke xii. But in almost all cases of its use, the sense of worry or anxiety seems to be intended. Thus the Lord Jesus says, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." This is better rendered "Be not anxious". The apostle Paul echoes this when he writes to the Philippians "Be **careful** for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. iv.6).

Anxiety, then, about the affairs of this life, is always to be replaced by prayer and trust in God, so that we may be able to claim the promise which follows: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

This is such a wonderful promise that a Christian has been known to say, "That must refer to heaven." But no; it is for the believer to enjoy now.

So many people have no time for the things of God because they allow worldly anxieties and the desire to "get on" to absorb all their energies. With them the gospel message bears no fruit, for any growth is "choked by the **cares** and riches and pleasures of this life." (Luke viii.14).

In a few cases this word seems to bear a milder sense,

approaching that translated "concern", as for instance I Cor. vii.32-34. Here Paul contrasts the worries that inevitably accompany the married state with the unmarried believer's freedom to concentrate his "care" on the Lord's matters. Again, Paul laments that only Timothy could be counted on to **care** for the Philippians' spiritual condition (Phil. ii.20).

Finally, to illustrate the value of a study such as this, we may look at those cases where the word "care" occurs twice, but in different senses, translating different words.

First, when Martha received the Lord Jesus into her home, her annoyance at seeing Mary sit at His feet and hear His teaching provoked her to reproach the Master: "Dost Thou not **care** (i.e. art Thou not **concerned**) that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" Rather was He **unconcerned** about His own bodily needs, having meat to eat that she knew not of (John iv.32-34).

Martha indeed might have been sharing with Mary His **concern** to nourish them with the words of life; but she was too busy. In His reply accordingly, Jesus uses the word meaning anxiety. "Martha, Martha, thou art **careful** and troubled about **many things**, but Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke x.38-42).

Later Martha learned the peace and blessing of allowing Him "to choose and to command". May it be our concern too, to let Him have the ordering of our lives, in small things as well as great!

The other example is in I Peter v.7, "Casting all your **care** (i.e. anxiety) upon Him, for He **careth** (i.e. is concerned) for you."

So if we are to refrain from being burdened with anxieties, this scripture tells us how to dispose of them! But to be able to do this, how necessary that we should cherish the thought of His unfailing **care** (concern) for us all the way. Perhaps in writing this, Peter remembered how, long ago, in the boat on the stormy lake, they had doubted this concern. Now, at any rate, he doubted it no longer. Had he not slept peacefully, in the prison at Jerusalem, on the night before

he was to be executed? The peace of God had guarded his heart and mind through Christ Jesus. And even when, later on, he would know that deliverance from death was not to be his portion, his heart would still be at peace. As the Lord had promised, "There shall not an hair of your head perish." (Luke xxi.18).

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

PAUL AT TROAS

(Continued)

(2) THE HEART OF THE SERVANT

In 2 Corinthians ii.12 the apostle is writing to those whom he calls "the seal of his apostleship," and his letter breathes the unutterable relief in his spirit by the arrival of Titus with the good news of their restoration, incomplete though this was.

About six eventful years had passed since Paul had sailed for Europe from Troas. He had laboured for at least eighteen months at Corinth, where a large assembly had been formed, meeting in the house of Gaius, and enriched with every kind of divine gift. But his subsequent absence, especially towards the end of his long, unparalleled ministry at Ephesus, had been a severe test of their steadfastness, and many of them broke down under the strain. He had hoped to sail from Ephesus straight across the Aegean to Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, and visit them on his way to Macedonia, and then give them the favour of a second visit before sailing for Judea. But the report of their deplorable condition which he had received from Chloe's slaves (probably the Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus of I Corinthians xvi.17) necessitated a complete change of plans. Instead of coming to Corinth at that time he wrote them a long letter, dealing point by point both with the questions concerning which they had written to him and with the disorders they had not mentioned. Furthermore he decided to visit Macedonia via Troas, so as to give his wayward but beloved Corinthians time and opportunity to judge themselves, and also to prepare their contribution to the collection for the

poor saints at Jerusalem.

The riot of the silversmiths at Ephesus and the ferment that followed put an end to Paul's labours in Asia. At one point his life had been saved only by the devotion of Prisca and Aquila — so Romans xvi.3,4 seems to show. He left Ephesus, perhaps hurriedly and secretly, for Troas, having arranged to meet Titus there in order to learn from him how the Corinthians had reacted to his letter. This time he found the city not just a gateway to the West, but within it a fair field "white unto harvest." He knew it was the Lord who had led him there, but Titus had not arrived, and great as the opportunities for evangelisation may have been, the honoured servant of Christ had no heart to avail himself of them, but instead sailed for Macedonia.

How intensely human — even though his jealousy over the Corinthian saints was the fruit of the Spirit — was this distress caused by uncertainty! And how often, even in this day of more rapid communications, the omniscient Lord (Who, in the days of His flesh, had tarried beyond Jordan and did not come to Bethany until Lazarus had been in the grave four days) allows His own, in their measure, to go through times of suspense, for instance while awaiting the answer to some important letter, in order that needed soul-exercise might not be abortive but brought to fruition.

In Paul's case it furnished a fresh proof of his love for the Corinthians. He is perfectly plain about it, though brief. He says in effect: "I found there, in Troas, special openings for gospel work; yet I abandoned them: outwardly, I acted as John Mark had done at Perga; I laid myself open to charges of idleness; and all because I was so desperately concerned about you, my dear Corinthians." It was one way in which he experienced what he describes further on in such a characteristically Pauline phrase: "death works in us, but life in you."

He had wondered whether his first letter had been too severe. They needed such delicate handling! His long stay at Corinth had made him sadly familiar with their background — a permissive society with a vengeance: Sodom and

Gomorrah over again on a larger scale; vice as attractive as Greek culture could present it; self-denial made to seem drab, sad, narrow; the daily, hourly temptations — above all to dishonesty and sensuality. And he knew how factious and superficial most of them were: how easily impressed by eloquence, showy gifts and high pretensions.

His fears had persisted, and perhaps increased, after his arrival in Macedonia; they were apparently shared by Timothy — note the change from “I” to “we” in chapter vii.5 and elsewhere. (Their distress may have been added to just then by the evil tidings from Galatia, where the assemblies were fallen from grace through taking up law.) But God, Who encourages those that are depressed, encouraged these two by the coming of Titus. So Paul’s reference to Troas is followed by a triumphant outburst of praise to God — with a double metaphor* — prompted, no doubt, primarily by the good news from Corinth. But as he looks back at his labours in the Troad, cut short by his deep anxiety, he seems also to encourage himself with the thought that there is a kind of “atmosphere” about the servant of Christ that may linger on and prove effectual even after his departure. He pictures himself as Christ’s willing captive, even unto death; but he goes on to compare himself — and his message — to that incense which produced such diametrically opposite reactions “in those that are saved, and in those that perish.”

To see the great apostle of the Gentiles in such a dilemma between evangelisation and the building up of saints is most

*2 Corinthians ii.14 is better rendered “*leads us in triumph in the Christ.*” Paul is evidently thinking of a Roman triumph: “the chief captives were paraded before the victor’s path, and sweet odours were burnt in the streets while his car climbed the Capitol. But when he reached the foot of the Capitoline hill there was a fatal halt, which . . . might be a moment of fresh exultation to the conqueror, but was death to the captive: for at that spot the captives ceased to form any part of the procession, but were led aside into the rocky vaults of the Tullianum, and strangled by the executioner in those black and fetid depths.” (Farrar, “Life & work of St. Paul”.)

touching and instructive. How relevant, too, to the present day, when tension as to the gospel and the mystery is so strong, these being treated as though they were not complementary and interdependent! Where there is genuine love for souls, how often the truth of the one body is ignored or played down, while on the other hand the few who have grasped something of the preciousness of the assembly to Christ can easily neglect the perishing millions in this world.

The present day is characterized by unparalleled opportunities for spreading the gospel. The attraction of oecumenism, the generation gap, the insistence on the social aspect of Christianity, sanguine hopes of world betterment — all these pose serious problems for hearts that seek to answer to the character of Philadelphia, and that wait for the Lord as the Morning Star. But though the apostle's twofold gift and stewardship (Colossians i:23, 25) may not be found today in any individual, should not the assemblies of the Lord's people generally endeavour to cherish equally the two ministries that mean so much to our God and Father — His good news concerning His Son, and His assembly which He has purchased with the blood of His Own? We may be severely limited as regards outward activity, but our hearts can be expanded in both directions, above all in the privilege of intercession.

A. C. McCANN

(To be continued)

THE LORD'S COMING NOT THE SAINT'S DEPARTURE

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again, and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am ye also may be" (John xiv.3, W.K.)

It is deplorable to think that the sweet and comforting promise of the Lord to His depressed disciples before His departure is so slightly valued and enjoyed. His promise was, "I am coming again, and shall receive you to Myself." This promise has never yet been rescinded nor fulfilled. It is the perennial hope of those who trust the Lord's word

absolutely, and are confident that it may be fulfilled at any moment by His coming to receive them unto Himself.

Such a hope is warranted if the Lord's words are received in the simple sense which lies upon their surface. But many godly persons hesitate to accept the promise according to its plain and positive terms. They do not believe that the coming of the Lord means His personal advent, and therefore they seek for some other explanation of His undertaking to come again as surely as He was going away.

Accordingly, these pious men rob themselves of the direct force of the Lord's assurance by persuading themselves that His words are being fulfilled at the decease of His followers when He Himself will be present to convey them to the mansions above and to the particular place He went to prepare for them.

This interpretation is only true in the general sense of other scriptural teaching that there is no interval of time between the moment of being "absent from the body" and that of being "present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians v.8). But to introduce this idea into the words of our Lord in John xiv.3 is only to blind the eyes to the positive truth of the passage and to wrest the scripture out of its context*.

The Lord's Coming as a Personal Coming

The Lord's promise to come is evidently one which He will perform personally, for He said, "I will come again," or "I am coming again." There is no ground for spiritualizing the words, as if they were fulfilled, for example, when the

*Writing upon the passage in John, the pious Dr. Doddridge (1702-61) made this comment, "This coming ultimately refers to Christ's solemn appearance at the last day to receive all his servants to glory; yet . . . it is a beautiful circumstance that the death of every particular believer, considering the universal power and providence of Christ (Rev.i.18) may be regarded as Christ's coming to fetch him home."

How incongruous with the context of John xiv.3 is Dr. D's. idea of Christ's "solemn appearance" in judgment! Would the thought of the solemnities of the judgment-day bring comfort to the troubled hearts of the disciples, and drive away their fears?

Lord stood with Paul in his trial before Caesar (2 Timothy iv.17), and the apostle apprehended His presence by the Spirit.

In John the Lord linked His coming again with His going away. If the one was spiritual, so was the other. If His coming was spiritual, His going was spiritual; but if His departure was bodily, His coming again will be bodily too. The Lord Himself Who went away will inevitably return expressly to receive His own to Himself.

In the inspired account of the Lord's ascension, it was shown that His future coming would be by bodily presence. The angelic testimony to the apostles was emphatic and explicit on this point. The heavenly messengers said to the bereaved band, "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i.11). The going into heaven was literal, visible, personal, bodily, and the coming out of heaven will be literal, visible, personal, bodily. The One Who ascended to heaven from Mount Olivet will descend from heaven for the reception of His own (1 Thessalonians iv.16).

Christ's Coming Again

The Lord said, "If I go . . . I will come **again**." At His incarnation, "He came unto His own" (John i.11); His personal presence was among His own nation. Before departing out of the world to the Father He promised to come "again," and, therefore, **again** His personal bodily presence will be made known to "His own." In this analogy there is an undeniable correspondence between the two comings. And it is an effort of pure imagination to suppose that the "coming **again**" is fulfilled at the bedside of the dying believer.

In the upper room, the Lord was speaking not of death-beds, but of a different subject, one which affected the whole company of "His own which were in the world." He had been for a time in the world with them. Now He was about to leave them and go away to the Father. They were disconsolate. The gracious Lord cheered their desponding

hearts, not with the thought that He would be with them when they died, but that He would come again to them to remove them to the place He was going to prepare for them on high.

The Lord's words contain a plain contrast between His absence and His presence. "If I go" implies His absence from them: "I am coming again" implies His renewed presence with them; while "Where I am ye also may be" implies both His presence with them and their presence with Him when He comes. And this future reunion will be the acme of blissful delight for all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, a joy that can only be ours when He sees us and we see Him at His coming again.

Departure to be with Christ

Moreover, the Lord's coming again, of which we are now speaking, will at a given moment affect all believers, whether dead or alive at the time. But the death or falling asleep of a believer is regarded as his personal **departure** to be with Christ. Paul uses this term in his own personal experience. When facing the alternative of death by martyrdom or of further self-denying service, he wrote: "I am pressed by both, having the desire for **departure** and being with Christ . . ." (Philippians i.23). But Paul wisely left the choice with the Lord, whose bond-slave he was.

Again, when nearer the goal, Paul wrote to Timothy, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my **departure** is at hand" (2 Timothy iv.6). Paul, like Peter (2 Peter i.14), knew from the Lord Himself that he would magnify the Lord by his death, following his Master even in this respect (Philippians iii.10, 11). These exceptions only prove the rule that the proper hope of all Christians is the immediate return of the Lord Jesus, and not their individual departure to be with Christ.

With Christ the Lord

The happy condition of the departed believer is being "**with Christ**". The Lord gave this assurance to the converted

robber crucified at His side: "Today shalt thou be **with Me** in paradise" (Luke xxiii.43). Martyred Stephen, praying amid the falling stones, said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii.59). As he fell asleep outside the city his spirit awoke in the presence of Christ Who had received him.

The departed saints of God, therefore, who have put off this earthly tabernacle (2 Corinthians v.1; 2 Peter i.14), are said to be "absent from the body and present **with the Lord**" (2 Corinthians v.8). And this state of being "with Christ" is "very much better" than any state in this life, however privileged it is to live Christ here (Philippians i.20-24). In the separate state the presence of Christ is known and enjoyed, apart from the faith which is essential to our apprehension of Him during our absence from Him.

But to be "**with Christ**", as we shall be at our departure, and blessed as this will be, is not the fulfilment of the Lord's promise of His coming again (John xiv.3). When the Lord spoke of receiving His own unto Himself, it was not the receiving of the spirit only, as in the case of Stephen (Acts vii.59). He was preparing a place in the Father's house where He would receive the whole man — spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians v.23), **not one at a time, but all together.**

The Transformation at His Coming

When the Lord comes again, He will prepare His own to occupy the place He has prepared for them on high by completing in them His work of their redemption. He, the Resurrection and the Life, will raise the bodies of the sleeping saints and **transform** the bodies of the living ones (John xi.25, 26; 1 Corinthians xv.51-55; 2 Corinthians v.1-9; Philippians iii.21). Their bodies will be fashioned in conformity with His own body of glory, and then they will take their place in their august abode in glory and share to the full the Father's love and the Father's joy.

At the departure of the individual believer to be "with Christ" there is no such **transformation of the body**. The vast company of the redeemed, when the Lord comes, will all be affected simultaneously, "in an instant, in the twinkling

of an eye." Then the Lord Himself will descend from heaven "with an assembling shout." The raised and changed saints will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. Then they will all be "always with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians iv.15-17), and His own word will be fulfilled, "where I am, there ye may be also."

Christ our Forerunner

At our Lord's ascension an unprecedented event took place. The Perfect Man entered the glory of God in the highest. Abraham and all the saints of old had long been in unalloyed bliss so far as their spirits were concerned, but they were not glorified, for scripture does not speak of glory apart from the body.

But our risen Lord ascended into heaven not only in His personal right, but as the forerunner of His saints. The One Who had glorified God on the earth must necessarily have precedence of entry into the heavens to stand in the glory of God at His right hand, where Stephen saw Him as the glorified Son of man (Acts vii.56).

Being there Himself, He secures a place there for His own. "Whither I go," the Lord said to impatient Peter, "thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards" (John xiii.36). As the incarnate Son, He was going into the Father's house. And because He would be there as the glorified Man, they in due course would be there also, in the Father's house.

The Lord Himself was the Way to that abode of light and love. Not one could come to the Father unless by Him (John xiv.6). But His going to the Father was the very pledge of their going also, in order that, as He said, "where I am, there also ye may be." This was altogether a new privilege which would follow His own entrance into the Father's house.

Their presence in that house of "many mansions" was not

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A Monthly Magazine for Believers

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hearts as we concentrate our attention on Him may well be expressed thus: "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy word", and this request He will most certainly answer.

Alas! that there should be so many persons even in this highly favoured land who rarely, if ever, open its sacred pages. Yet the best of human writings, and indeed all the millions of volumes of human literature in all ages, cannot equal the divine volume which God has given to us — His own imperishable word!

"From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation", said the beloved apostle Paul to Timothy, his son in the faith. So the younger we begin to meditate upon their sacred contents, the better fitted we shall be to be built up in our souls and preserved in these difficult times.

Let us, however, always bear in mind the importance of studying God's holy word, not only in an intellectual way, but in order to find Jesus there. When here upon earth He Himself said: "Search the Scriptures . . . they testify of Me".

"Afresh I praise Thee for Thine ever new
And blessed word;
Daily it comes to me, fresh as the dew,
This blessed word.

Oh! be it mine, yet more and more, I pray,
To meditate therein both night and day!"

A. E. BIRD

LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

XLIV. THE FOURTH WATCH OF THE NIGHT

(Read: Exodus xiv.23-25 and Matthew xiv.22-27)

The expression which links these two incidents is the "morning watch", or "the fourth watch of the night".

The night of Israel's crossing of the Red Sea must have been a long and trying one, for it was not until morning dawned that the people could be convinced of their safety by seeing their persecutors dead upon the sea shore. The previous day the pursuit of the Egyptians had filled them with alarm and foreboding, and their fears erupted into a complaint to Moses that it would have been better for them to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. But God had in mind for them something far better than either of those alternatives, and Moses calmed them with the assurance that God would show them His salvation and that they would see their enemies again "no more for ever".

Nor had they more than a few hours to wait for God's fulfilment of His promise. Moses was commanded to stretch out his rod over the sea to divide it in order that the children of Israel might cross to the other side by dry ground. And to make this possible the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and the waters were divided. Moreover the angel of God which normally went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them, the pillar of cloud coming between them and the Egyptian host, giving God's people light for their journey.

What a night that was indeed! Though God had prepared the way for them, His salvation was something they had to work out for themselves by walking across to the further shore. This they surely did. But it must have taken a large part of the night to accomplish the journey. We do not know precisely the distance they had to cover — against a strong and continuous wind, it would seem. Israel's host comprised a vast multitude of men, women and children. Inevitably some would drive on more quickly than others, but there

would be stragglers, each one of whom must arrive safely over before God's judgment fell upon the Egyptians.

Then, **in the morning watch**, the Lord looked unto the pursuing army through the pillar of fire, and troubled them, so that the wheels of their chariots came off and the Egyptians were compelled to abandon the chase. God however would not permit any to escape, and when Moses again stretched out his hand over the sea, the waters returned to their strength and engulfed the Egyptians — all being drowned.

It is comforting to note the gracious vigilance of the God of Israel: truly He neither slumbers nor sleeps. Unfailing in the fulfilment of His promise, **all** Israel passed over — not a hoof was left behind. By contrast, the record of the destruction of the Egyptians states “**there remained not so much as one of them**” — **not a single survivor** of the expedition which had set out to defy the living God! So it will always be. Christ Himself “**must reign, until He hath put all enemies under His feet**” (I Corinthians xv.25).

In the incident of Matthew xiv. (recorded also by Mark and John), we have the same Almighty Saviour exercising His unceasing vigilance over His own.

The circumstances however are entirely different — not a vast multitude crossing the Red Sea with the waters under full control, but a handful of disciples in a boat on the lake of Galilee, struggling against wind and waves at whose mercy they were so far as human resources were concerned. It is night once more, and those in peril are to see the salvation of the Lord in a manner they did not expect.

Having fed the multitude from five loaves and two fishes, the Lord Jesus had gone up into a mountain to get away from those who would have made Him king there and then. Before His ascent He had constrained His disciples to take ship for the other side. Not yet had the time come for them to enjoy the bliss and tranquillity of the kingdom of their Master, Who is destined, one day, to bring “**abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth**” (Psalm lxxii.7). Already rejected by the nation of Israel, the Lord was shortly to be crucified and slain, thereafter rising from the dead to return

to the heaven from which He came. Therefore the disciples must learn to battle against opposition in His absence, but counting upon their Master's watchfulness over them from the eminence to which He had retired. Such, undoubtedly, was the wholesome purpose which the Lord had in His mind for them that night.

Would any of His disciples, and Simon Peter in particular, ever forget that dark night when, so unexpectedly, their Lord drew near to them when nearly at the end of their tether saying "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid"? How important it was for them to learn their lesson well! All through a night which must have seemed unending, they had to battle on until "**the fourth watch**" for Jesus to come to them. Even then, as Mark is careful to add, "He would have passed them by". Why this hesitation to join them? Was it not because He sought a welcome from them, much in the same way as "He made as though He would have gone further" when He arrived with the two disciples at their home in Emmaus after His resurrection (Luke xxiv.)? Nevertheless He comes into their small boat, calming their fears: calming, too, the winds and the waves so that, as John records, "immediately the ship was at the land whither they went".

Looking out upon the people of God worldwide today, the storms of hostility still beat upon them, and the going is hard. Spiritually, the night grows ever darker. But He Who loves His church, and gave Himself to save her, will surely come.

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

(Sir E. Denny)

We ourselves cry, Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

E. A. PETTMAN

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v.17)

Luke xiii.6. It was a faithful but most solemn warning that the Lord Jesus had given in continued emphasis upon the urgent need for the repentance of the Jewish people. In his presentation of events Luke records the parable which, in persistent love, the divine Worker used to stress still further His message of impending judgment.

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none" (verse 6). It was His vineyard! He had planted a garden eastward in Eden (Genesis ii.8) long ago. It was the garden of failure — the failure of man. The "thorns and thistles" of an unrepentant world resulted. God is now shown as surveying the fig tree of Israel which He had planted in His "garden of purpose" for the nation. The three years of His waiting were passed in "seeking fruit on this fig tree", and finding none. One hears the appeal to divine long-suffering patience, "Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it". But the waiting period is fixed — the ministry and testimony of His followers, witnessing in the power of the Holy Spirit, would do everything possible to bring about eventual repentance. "And if not, after that thou shalt cut it down". So did He speak His message to the people in the language of symbols which they understood.

Luke xiii.10: "And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath". The event which followed is not only historically true, it has a spiritual significance. The mere recording of scenes in the word of God is not the purpose of the Holy Spirit. Such a record would carry interest but have no spiritual impact on the reader. It would be like the writings of men. Thus we do not find any of the descriptive embellishments of human authorship or attempts at realism. The Word is, in its living power, adequate in a simplicity of its own. There is a subjective reception available to a believing reader. This welcomes the inflow of divine thought.

By means of it we may be "taught of God" — instead of being victims of human instability (2 Peter iii.16).

The synagogue and the Jewish Sabbath proclaimed an assurance of acceptability with God which had no righteous foundation. It is not without spiritual significance that Luke records the occasion in close association with the repeated warnings of the Lord Jesus to repent. It is a spiritual attribute to repent. The synagogue did not present it. The divine Worker was teaching there, notwithstanding! "And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself" (verse 11) — a silent exposition of the condition of the nation bowed under demands of a religious system which deformed those who sought to conform to it while conscious of the need to repent. There are many such in our day. They have that inward awareness of conditions contrary to the character of God. They endeavour to dissociate themselves from these. They reverence the law of God, and strive to keep it, but the Law, though perfect in itself, has no power to make a man perfect though he be conscious of his failure and repent from it. The operation of the Law is to expose imperfection, but "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes" (Romans x.4). A new kind of power is His response to faith in His fulfilment of the Law and His atonement for the failure of the lawbreaker.

The divine response to this condition of bondage is very real and immediate. Jesus SAW her — CALLED her — gave His OWN ASSURANCE of FREEDOM to her, and, more, He IDENTIFIED HIMSELF with her, so bringing her into identification with HIMSELF. "He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight". It was not a question of sin, but of repentance arising from being conscious of it. In this act of the Lord Jesus, God is seen making known, in the very centre of synagogue legality, His grace in PRESENT abundant salvation. It is the answer to faith in Himself — the Saviour God. Not only does He make known His *purpose* of perfect liberation but *He gives effect to it*. It is, indeed, a wonderful effect — far-reaching — eternal.

The body did but portray the increasingly cramped immobility of the soul. Like the one shown to us in Romans vii., she beheld only herself in all her frustrating inability to walk in uprightness before God. She now looked up into the face of One Whose hands had been laid upon her in the power of identification with Himself, and in newness of life she glorified God.

Eighteen years this "daughter of Abraham" had waited in faith—since the time, it would seem, when Jesus, at the age of twelve years, first made known His obedient will to be about His Father's business (Luke ii.42). From then until the time of His anointing "about thirty years of age" (Luke iii.23) divine grace had purposed "deliverance to the captives . . . the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv.). Thus, in the midst of that which held in bondage of the Law those who would walk in humble piety and repentance, we may hear the voice of the Remnant in worship — glorifying God!

The voice of religious man — cold and antagonistic to divine grace and love — is heard also. The Sabbath, broken and forfeited long before by sinful departure from God, must be retained to demonstrate their "place and nation". "The ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day". Passion and prejudice operate in the religious mind. Man has the temerity to set his opinion against principles of divine origin. The way of religious man is foreign to the character of God in Whose kindness and mercy "the Sabbath was made for man". A day of rest, refreshment and recovery from labour's demands, it showed, with regular reminding, the thought and care of almightiness for weakened humanity. The Lord Jesus impressed this Sabbath with its true character when He set at liberty this "daughter of Abraham". She had never before experienced such a Sabbath! The affectation of piety is shown to be "hypocrisy". The ruler of the synagogue is over-ruled; and he with those who had succumbed to his ruling, are openly revealed in their inconsistency. Satan had bound for eighteen years a daughter of Abraham. Was she

to be treated as inferior to one of their animal possessions whose creature needs they cared for on the Sabbath? They were shown to be satellites of Satan.

“And as He said these things, all who were opposed to Him were ashamed, and all the crowd rejoiced at all the glorious things which were being done by Him”. The Jews kept their Sabbaths in a spirit of fierce national pride, but God ministered to the misery and need of man. What rest could the divine Worker know while on every hand were to be seen the sin-distorted evidence of submission to Satanic influence! The crowd rejoices. Apart from the blessings of His visitation they had but fragile cause for joy. It is as though the gates of the coming Kingdom were opened, however briefly, that the future overthrow of evil and its outcome might be seen to result in a permanent glory of Peace.

EDWARD T. WOOD

PAUL AT TROAS

(3) THE WAY OF THE PASTOR

In Acts xx. Luke gives us a glimpse of Troas ten or eleven months after Paul's second visit. This time the apostle is no longer torn between two equally good ministries: he has to a great extent set things right at Corinth. While there he has written a long letter to the saints in Rome, and now he travels eastward, “bound in his spirit”, with three successive destinations in view:

FIRSTLY, Jerusalem: because he is hoping against hope that the generous collection of money from the assemblies of the Gentiles may be the means of softening the hatred of the unbelieving Jews and breaking down the prejudices of the Hebrew Christians:

SECONDLY, Rome: because it is the heart of the civilised world. He wishes to give further help to the believers to whom he has written — he knows that when he comes among them it will be in the fulness of the blessing of Christ:

THIRDLY, Spain: because it is a part of the "regions beyond", and a strategic land which may in turn become the centre for radiating the gospel southward into Mauretania, northward into Gaul, north-west into those isles of the British which Rome is beginning to occupy.

Paul is anxious to reach Jerusalem in time for the day of Pentecost, but in view of a Jewish plot — no doubt to have him murdered at sea — he is travelling overland via Macedonia. The Passover is spent at Philippi: the voyage from Neapolis to Troas takes five days, whereas two had been sufficient when sailing from east to west in chapter xvi.

The immediate cause of the seven days' stay in the city may have been the difficulty of finding a ship sailing south; but if so, it was overruled of God in order that Paul and his eight companions might break bread with the saints of this young assembly. It is good to have this lovely picture of a Lord's day meeting in apostolic times, a refreshing contrast to the sad condition found in I Corinthians xi., of disorders requiring the Lord's discipline, even to physical death in some cases.

What feeling must have welled up in Paul's heart as he greeted one believer after another! He had left the work in Troas at an early stage, yet the Holy Spirit had so wrought that there was now an assembly of God there (Had Timothy or others done some useful "follow-up" work in his absence?) It was a young assembly, certainly, but these babes in Christ had "an unction from the Holy One"; they had received the Spirit of adoption; they knew the Father, and were able in their measure to worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

The Authorised Version may be a little misleading at this point. The breaking of bread was the primary purpose of the local saints' and the visitors' coming together, and no doubt the act of celebration took place early on in the meeting. Afterwards the apostle ministered out of a full heart. Should there be present those who needed an "A-B-C gospel" he would certainly include it, but his main object was surely the building up of the saints in view of whatever they would have to face in days to come.

The room in which they were gathered probably became very stuffy: we read of one hearer who went to sleep — a boy sitting on the window sill, where the refreshing sea breezes could be enjoyed! If he was a slave he may have been worn out after a strenuous day's work, but even if not, everything combined to induce somnolence: the late hour, the rise and fall of the apostle's voice, perhaps speaking of things young Eutychus found beyond him; the fumes from the many oil lamps drifting past him out of the window — and so, overcome by sleep, he leaned back too far and fell to the ground from the third floor, apparently to his death. Paul went downstairs and embraced the boy: with a reassuring word to the bystanders, he left them and returned to the upper room. Partaking of the remainder of the memorial loaf as a morning meal, he spent the hours until daybreak in happy converse with the brethren. By the time he was ready to leave them, Eutychus had recovered, much to the joy of the saints.

It is interesting to notice that the apostle did not sail to Assos with the others. He may have had particular reasons for travelling those twenty miles overland; we do not know. But if it was because he felt the need to be alone with his thoughts for a while, this becomes very intelligible when we consider, not only the grim prospect that lay before him, but all that he had gone through during the previous fortnight — the slow, tedious sailing from Macedonia, very likely under cramped conditions; then a week in the crowded city; the emotional stresses so often found even in connection with the fellowship of saints and the breaking of bread; in addition, an alarming accident while he was ministering. Thank God, all had ended happily: but opportunity for undistracted meditation and communion with his Lord would surely be doubly welcome.

A. C. McCANN

(To be concluded)

HELPS

"God has set certain in the assembly: first, apostles;

secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers . . . helps . . .

(I Corinthians xii.28)

We might easily skip the little word, "helps", in the list of gifts in the assembly. To us, apostles, prophets, miraculous powers, and tongues bulk large, and overshadow such a vague, undefined term as "helps". We are equally liable to pass over as insignificant the persons whom God is using as "helps" in the gathering.

The truth is we are not always quite clear what is a "help". We know the teacher because he teaches, the pastor because he feeds the flock, the overseer because he cares for assembly affairs. But the work of the "help" is not so easily defined. He is ready and willing to do anything needful and anything useful. Like a "help" on a farm, or in a house, he lends a hand to any job of work that comes along. He may be a feeble member of the body of Christ, but he is "necessary" (I Corinthians xii.22).

The "help" is a kind and gracious person, quite incompetent to take part in public ministry, but by his active sympathy and loving concern for others he often exercises a more powerful influence upon the spiritual well-being of the assembly than those who occupy a more prominent part.

Mostly, the "help" is no preacher or lecturer. He is not able to explain or expound the scripture at the Bible-reading. He blushes and trembles at the very thought of standing on the platform or at the desk to preach the gospel. But it does your heart good to see the way in which he opens the door for you, leads you to a seat, and hands you a Bible and a hymnbook.

What a man the true "help" is! His heart is in his work. He is ready to do anything or everything to further the good cause. He carries about a genial brightness that makes him a most delightful element in all the activities of the assembly. He is never at a loss for a good word, and he is always ready for a good work. No matter what you want done, he is your man, and as often as not does it before you ask him.

The "help" is always busy, but never "cumbered about

much serving", which makes a person fretful, peevish, and unpleasant. Difficulties are nothing to him; he will walk miles to read a chapter to a sick saint. He is not hindered in this happy service by other people's crotchets and odd ideas about scripture. He has no use for peculiar views. He pities the poor soul with "a bee in his bonnet", but lends him a helping hand in the name of his Master, if possible.

The life of Christ is flowing through the heart of the true helper in the assembly. He is so full of the joy of being Christ's himself, that he cannot help loving all others who belong to Christ. His heart is free from selfishness and worldliness. His spirit is fresh and bright in the presence of the Lord. He is a cheer and comfort to his brethren without knowing it. Many a time it might be said of him, as it was of Moses, that he "wist not that his face shone".

The love of Christ and of all his fellow-members is the simple secret of this effective "help". The Spirit of God makes him, by his unobtrusive activity, a vital and a health-giving link in promoting the unity of that same Spirit in the bond of peace.

We have little idea how much the blessing of God's saints and the progress of the gospel depend upon those persons — brothers and sisters — who are included in that comprehensive term — "helps". God has set them in His assembly specially to undertake simple, lowly, and often unrecognised duties in service to those He loves.

But if the labours of the helpers are so often unnoticed now, they will be fully displayed and amply rewarded on the day of Christ's glory. He will remember the cup of cold water given in His name. A few "helps" are mentioned in scripture. Paul refers to brother Urbane, and brother Clement with some women (Romans xvi.9; Philippians iv.3), and others too, but not by name. This record is given to encourage other "helps" to go on their quiet way.

Another word for this class of workers is "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed towards His name in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Hebrews vi.10).

Let us, therefore, pray that though we come behind in the foremost gifts, God may maintain the supply of "helps" in our midst. Let each helper be diligent in his task of living not for self but for others. And let those who believe they are called to labour "in word and doctrine" remember that they are also called to support the weak and to comfort the feeble-minded, not with an unctuous word so much as with a Christ-like deed.

W. J. HOCKING

(Reprinted from *The Bible Monthly*, 1940)

DIFFICULT SCRIPTURES

"Freely ye have received, freely give". Matthew x.8.

This scripture is not so much difficult, as easily misunderstood. For the word "freely" has two common senses — sometimes it means *liberally*, and sometimes *gratuitously*, or without return or payment. The first sense is the one which naturally comes to mind in reading the above scripture; but it is not the sense intended. J.N.D. translates "gratuitously".

The Lord Jesus, in sending out His disciples, not only to preach but to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers and even raise the dead, did not wish them to be occupied with themselves as the bestowers of good things, or to seek, like Gehazi, a reward. Rather, He would have them so conscious of the *free* gifts of life and forgiveness which they had received that they would desire to be channels of equally *free* blessings to others.

"Being justified freely by His grace" (Romans iii. 24).

Here again it is easy to suppose that a *wide ranging* justification is the intended meaning, i.e., from all manner of sins. But no, as before, the thought is that God justifies us entirely without any merit or desert on our part. So also in Revelation xxii.17, "Let him take the water of life freely". The thought of a freely flowing or plentiful supply of the water of life is what springs to mind, but the scripture does not mean this, though it is of course true. God does give to

all men liberally (James i.5), and richly (I Tim.vi.17); it is equally true that He approves of liberality in *our* giving (see II Cor.viii.2, 7; ix.6), but this is not the thought in Revelation xxii. As in Isaiah lv., it is rather "without money and without price".

"We have preached to you the gospel of God freely"
(II Cor.xi.7).

Here, perhaps, the thought of *unrewarded* service is unmistakable, at any rate if the context is read. But it may be as well to point out, both in this case and in Matt. x., that the responsibility of those who receive the ministry of God's servants to respond by giving of their substance is in no way weakened. "The workman is worthy of his meat" (Matthew x.10. Also Gal.vi.6).
E.H.C.

FINDING JESUS THERE

Commenting upon an old and very choice volume of Robert Hawker of Plymouth, who departed to be with Christ in the year 1827 after a devoted life in the service of his Master, an interested reader remarked: "His *Morning and Evening Portions* are very sweet to me for whenever he takes a text he always finds Jesus there".

The importance of the study of the Holy Scriptures, which are the veritable word of God, cannot be overestimated in these days. Indeed all down through the ages of time they have been the help, comfort and support of myriads of souls in all stations of life, and under all circumstances. Never have they failed anyone who has turned to them with a true desire to ponder over the precious truths they contain, which all centre around the glorious Person of Jesus.

We need, however, always to bear in mind that our own approach to the Scriptures can only prove of help and blessing to our souls as we recognise the need of dependence upon the One Who is their Divine Author. The language of our

(Continued inside front cover)

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(continued from inside back cover)

a memory. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him: for He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." "Your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of all these things" (Psalm ciii.13,14; Matthew vi.32). Paul knew the comfort of these gracious words.

To sum up what we may glean from his visits to Troas: the first, then, would seem to highlight spiritual and mental exercise as to one's sphere of labour, and answering Divine guidance, confirmed by fellow-helpers; the second, the equal importance of evangelisation and the building up of the assembly; the third, the relative place of the breaking of bread and ministry; the fourth, the needs of the body, just as real as those of the spirit and the soul.

Granted that Troas itself is, we may say, incidental, inasmuch as the character of the city is not in question; yet has not its association with Paul, in such varied circumstances, invested it with a peculiar and permanent interest? What is recorded were the experiences of an apostle; but does this limit their application? They concern every servant of Christ; and profitable indeed will they prove, both to the servant and to his sphere of labour, if every one of them is given its due weight.

A. C. McCANN

(Concluded)

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"

(John v.17)

Luke xiii.18: "And He said, To what is the kingdom of God like?" . . . verse 19, "It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it."

In his presentation Luke moves from the scene in the synagogue. The afflicted woman was healed—"the crowd rejoiced at all the glorious things which were being done by Him" — but the lasting glory of the Kingdom of God was not yet. It would be in the minds of many that the Kingdom must surely be brought in by this One whose works were mighty beyond any human comparison. It would be natural to come to this conclusion. Man has achieved earth's kingdoms and empires by forces insignificant compared with one word of power spoken by the Son of Man. But, knowing the thoughts of men, and aware of their errors of judgment, Jesus makes clear the truth concerning the Kingdom of God. We are made aware of His meditation, "Whereunto shall I liken it?" "It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it." The infinitesimal seed — the tiny germ — the very opposite of that which man would use in display — this was His symbol of lowliness — His expression of humility — even unto death, the death of the cross. It was also the expression of the great power of God.

He proceeds to show the responsibility of man as the outcome of the tiny seed being cast in the garden of earth, for, as in His parable of the Sower, the seed tests the earth! It is a solemn thought. He shows that man would bring about his own distortion of what would have been a precious growth. In place of a self-effacing Energy, divine in person and in purpose to show man his littleness and his need, he would make of it "a great tree", to be seen and admired for its deep

rooted presentation of established greatness. It would spread its branches with the passing years, and so become a vast system rooted in earth's display of religious grandeur. Yet "fowls of the air" would "lodge in the branches of it". Birds unnamed as to species, too numerous to define — the symbol used by the Lord Jesus is the same as He uses in His parable of the Sower (Matthew xiii.4, 19 and 32), and the Greek word (*peteinon*) is used in each case. There is no power to exclude the unclean and the adversary — they find shelter in the great tree of Christendom.

Leaving no doubt as to His meaning, the divine Worker follows with a further symbol. "And again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (verses 20, 21). He speaks of man using the seed and of woman taking the leaven. It is an universal thought — not restricted by sex or place. The one is public sowing: the other a secret hiding in three measures of meal. Is there not the thought of divine fulness in the expression "three measures", and, in the thought of the flour, the pure humanity of Christ? That which God offers to man ever bears the impress of perfection; but man is shown as taking the precious things and using them for his own purposes. The thought of leaven expresses this as always throughout scripture. It represents, here, the evil of the spurious far-reaching cult of religious formalism which masquerades as the Kingdom of God. Is there not a note of sorrow in His voice as He says "Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?" But He is gone, now, "to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke xix.12). He has received the kingdom as the exalted Son of Man in heaven. When He returns to earth it will be "in power and great glory"; meanwhile, to every true believer, the characteristics of the kingdom are known, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans xiv.17).

Verse 22: "And He went through the cities and villages,

teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem". It is here that an enquiring voice is raised, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" The spirit of asserting their title to favour was dominant among the Jews. The questioner does not say "Lord, how may I be among the saved few" (the remnant)? The enquiry seems to be non-committal—almost a challenge to test the truth of the teaching. The Lord does not answer it, save to continue His teaching to any who will attend. "Strive (with deep desire) to enter in by the strait (narrow) gate" — strive, against the national tide of assumed acceptance with God on grounds of formal religious approach! It is a way which excludes all conceit of fleshly right of entry. "Many will seek to enter in, but shall not be able". He does not say they seek the narrow gate — they approach the wrong door! For the "strait gate" is that of repentance and faith. *None strive to enter this in vain.* The divine Worker proceeds with His illustration — it was urgent His warning should be clear. It is couched in the language form to which they were accustomed. There would be attempts to be included in the rich glories of the Kingdom, but the time would then have come for the way of entry to be closed — the door would be shut. "The master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door" (verse 25).

The character of those who "begin to stand without and to knock at the door" will be apparent by their demonstration. *There is no appeal for mercy*, but still the same claim to right of entry! Had they not "eaten and drunk in His presence", and He "had taught in their streets". But He shall say, "I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity". There could be nothing but pain for Him to present such a picture to them. How many of them would add their voices to those who "cried out, Away with Him, crucify Him", even when their callous Gentile governor sought a way to release Him!

It was, and, indeed, remains a solemn warning — He had never known them *in the character that He could recognize* — that of repentance from their sin. There is no repentant

soul who is unknown to God. A *repentant* sinner gives joy to heaven. It would be impossible for God to disclaim knowledge of such an one. Is not repentance brought about by conviction of sin — itself an evidence of the work of God? Every thought and every act of appreciation of Christ is known to Him — it may be inadequately expressed, but who may express the infinite! The formalities of Christendom are far removed from the reality of approach by those who distrust themselves utterly and turn in their helplessness to God. Here, indeed, is the “strait gate” — the narrow entrance which excludes the empty formalities of human pride but leads into the illimitable glories of eternal life.

Thus, in face of all that was opposed to Him, the faithful Witness showed the way into the kingdom to a people who would, for the greater part, refuse His message, His warning, and Himself. He does not shrink from showing the truth as to their position. They would know sorrow, bitter disillusion — “weeping and gnashing of teeth”. The forefathers of their race, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the prophets would be seen in the Kingdom of God, but the present generation would be cast out. More than this, “They shall come from the east and the west, the north and the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last”. The news of God’s salvation shall reach repentant people — Gentiles disillusioned with the world and with themselves, and they, though last in the line of mercy, shall be first in responding love and humble worship, while those who were first in the calling of God are last, in that they rejected their Messiah and repudiated all thought of grace. But the Kingdom of God is wide — far-reaching. The election of God’s grace secures a vast company. “They shall lie down at table in the Kingdom of God” (verse 29). There, indeed, is eternal peace.

In our day the thoughtful will look back to the prophetic words of the Lord Jesus and see, over the centuries, the growth of the “great tree” of Christendom to its present state of political out-reaching, and, seeing the *fulfilment* of the

words spoken nearly two thousand years ago, be increasingly aware of divine inspiration.

EDWARD T. WOOD

THE ATONEMENT

By the Atonement we mean the spiritual significance of the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross. Now the Bible has much more to say about the blessings which result from those sufferings than about the sufferings themselves. A great part of the New Testament is occupied with the first, and much of the Old Testament; while we have comparatively few positive statements about the second, together with a good deal in the Psalms and the Prophets in which His sorrows are foreshadowed.

If we confine ourselves to the positive teachings of the word, we find a uniform testimony that Christ died, a righteous man for unrighteous men (I Peter iii); that He died for us believers, but not only for us, but for all men (I Tim.ii.6).

More, He died specifically for our sins (I Cor.xv.3); He was offered to bear the sins of many (Heb.ix. 28). Isaiah says, in the well known 53rd chapter, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

Perhaps the most definite statements are those of 2 Cor.v.21 and Gal.iii.13. The first, "Him Who knew no sin God made to be sin for us, that we might be made God's righteousness in Him." Most interpreters agree that "sin" here means a sin-offering. The second, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us".

This tremendous doctrine, that Christ on the cross paid the penalty of men's sins by His death, and hence has made it possible for men to know deliverance from the penalty — this is the doctrine of the Atonement. It must be received by faith, as a truth revealed by God's word, for it does not conform to human reasoning.

It must not be watered down, as for instance, by saying

merely that Christ showed His love for man by partaking in the suffering which belongs to the human race. This is doubtless true, but by itself would not save a single soul. That He died for *sin*, for our sins, expiating sin by His sacrifice — this is of the very essence of the truth, as shown by the scriptures quoted.

But while we adhere to this scripture testimony, we need to beware of going beyond it. When people seek to distinguish between the sins of those who will finally be saved, and of those who will finally be lost, and ask whether the latter were also “laid upon Him”, they are introducing ideas foreign to scripture, and which can only hide the real nature of the Atonement. It is no question of which sins or of how much sin was atoned for, but of the surpassing value of the Sacrifice — value measured only by the moral worth of the Victim. By that sacrifice all sins of all men, however heinous, were rendered forgiveable.

Nor must we seek to intrude into the details of the Saviour’s sufferings, except to make clear that far more than physical pain was involved. Sufficient it is that by pondering upon His distress in Gethsemane at the contemplation of death, we may gain some insight into the awfulness of *such* a death — death under the judgment of God — for One Who Himself was holy, Who had always done the Father’s will. Such an insight can only produce heartfelt worship and thanksgiving. Then, coming to the three hours of darkness and silence at the crucifixion, followed by the cry of desolation, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”, a cry wrung from the heart of One to Whom communion with God was the breath of life, we have a hint of the depth of the waters that went over Him. Reverence and humility forbid us to elaborate further.

THE CROSS

It is necessary to emphasize, not merely that He died, but that He died on a cross: not a heroic death that the world might boast about, but death as of a felon. True, this

is the condemnation of those who so misjudged Him; but it also underlines its penal character, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree" (Gal.iii.13). So that if He could only redeem us from sin by such a death, how hopeless our condition apart from Him!

The atoning or expiatory character of the Lord's death then is plainly revealed in the Bible, but the word "atonement" in its present sense is not used, in our Authorised Version. For though we find the word atonement, once in the N.T. (Rom.v.11), and many times in the books of Moses, the sense there intended is not what the word now means. It is a fact, which is quite easy to verify, that when the A.V. was issued in 1611 "atonement" meant "at-one-ment", or reconciliation, not expiation. King James's translators themselves used "reconciliation" in a few cases, e.g., Lev.viii.15; Ezek.xlv.17; Dan.ix.24; and in Rom.v.11, but mostly "(make) atonement".

If anyone finds this change of meaning difficult to accept, he has only to refer to, let us say, Shakespeare's Richard III, Act 1, Scene 3 (this was published in 1594), where Buckingham says "Madam, he desires to make atonement between the Duke of Gloster and your brothers". Another writer of the period writes "At length an atonement was concluded betwixt himself and the king". Similarly the Geneva Bible translates 2 Cor.v.20 "We pray you . . . that ye be atone with God" — where "atone" can only be read as "at-one".

Then because *making reparation* for an injury is a means of promoting reconciliation with the injured party, atonement came to acquire *this* sense, which of course it still sometimes bears. From this to the present day meaning of expiating wrong by *suffering penalty*, was but a short step.

Our translators then meant at-one-ment, or setting at one; this does not, of course, mean of necessity that they correctly understood the Hebrew. J. N. Darby in his French version uniformly translates as "make propitiation".

Now to make propitiation *may be* a step towards re-

conciliation, and Jacob (Gen.xxxii.20) uses the same word when he seeks reconciliation with Esau. He says, "I will appease him with the present". These two meanings, then, are closely allied.

An Israelite who in ignorance broke one of the Law's enactments brought a sin offering, laid his hands upon it and then killed it. The priest then took the blood and the fat and in the prescribed ritual made an at-one-ment, or made propitiation for him as concerning his sin, gaining him the assurance of forgiveness. The matter is clear — his sin had broken the harmony of the covenant relationship to God in which every redeemed Israelite stood: this was now restored (Lev.iv.27-31).

On the Day of At-one-ment (Lev.xvi) in the seventh month, a sin offering was made for the whole people, and this was in two parts. Two goats were taken, presented to the Lord, and lots were cast upon them, one for the Lord, and one for Azazel — the scapegoat.

The Lord's lot, as a sin-offering, was killed, and its blood was brought by the high priest (but not wearing his high priestly garments) into the holy of holies and sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat. This is described as making at-one-ment or propitiation for the holy place "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins". Also the tabernacle itself, and the altar of burnt offering, were sprinkled with the blood, an at-one-ment or propitiation being made for each.

What was the meaning of this ritual? What can be the force of making propitiation for the tabernacle, or making at-one-ment for it?

Now propitiation can only refer to persons, but at-one-ment for the tabernacle we can understand as restoring it to its proper condition, reconciling its actual condition with its intended one, or really, purifying it from the defilement of the people's sins. This sense of purification is what is brought out in Heb.ix, "It was therefore necessary

that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these (sacrifices); but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these”.

But there is a deeper thought here. The tabernacle was, in a figure, God's dwelling place among His people, and His holiness was compromised by the people's sins. The goat of the sin-offering was slain to expiate their sins, and its sprinkled blood witnessed to the at-one-ment or setting right, i.e., making the tabernacle once more fit (in figure only of course) for God to dwell there.

The goat for Azazel was then brought, and the high priest as representative of the people laid his hands on it and confessed all the sins of the people, “putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hands of a fit man into the wilderness”. This also is described as “making at-one-ment” in verse 10. But it plainly was not expiation.

It is essential to take the two parts of the at-one-ment ritual together — one witnessing to the maintenance of the divine holiness, the other the witness to the people of the removal of their sins. Yet, as Hebrews x. shows, all this was only a shadow, and the ritual had to be repeated every year because the animals' blood was no real answer to sin, but only a reminder of the need.

THE TRUE SIN-OFFERING

When we look at the true sin-offering, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary, we may learn from this ancient God-given ritual something of what was there accomplished. However, it is essential to bear in mind that God teaches us here as much by *contrast* as by *likeness*.

First and foremost then, is the fact that, instead of being a repeated sacrifice, that of Christ was once for all: “Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world

hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb.ix.25,26).

Two *separate* acts were needful — first slaying the victim, then taking its blood into the holiest (the priest pulling aside the veil as he entered) to enable the priest to make the at-one-ment at the mercy-seat. This is the weakness of the type. But all this, and more, was accomplished in reality when the Lord Jesus cried "It is finished" and gave up His spirit. The veil of the earthly temple was immediately torn in two from top to bottom, as by a divine, not human hand.

What was the message of this? Surely that the whole system, in which God's throne (in symbol) was veiled from His people, and hence access to Him shut up, was now finished with. We tear up what we have no more use for. Instead, the heavenly throne itself (not merely its earthly symbol) had now become a mercy-seat, or place of propitiation, which the word really means. As Rom.iii.25,26, declares, "Christ Jesus; Whom God has set forth a propitiation (mercy-seat) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus".

Christ is no longer on the cross, but on the throne, and faith finds Him to be the meeting place of God and the sinner. His death was the expiation of sin (or, its atonement in its present-day sense), and in virtue of it God is shown to have been righteous in accepting believers in past ages — passing over their sins in His forbearance and consenting to go on with them as His people, all because of what was to be done at Calvary.

Then at this present time God is seen to be righteous in declaring righteous the poor sinner who believes in Jesus. Through Him "we have now received the at-one-ment" — which today must be translated "reconciliation" (Rom.v.11).

Note. It may be as well to point out here that the re-

conciliation which our last scripture speaks of is more fundamental than that referred to in the law. It is no case of restoring a disturbed relationship, but rather of removing a deadly enmity — for we were “enemies in our minds by wicked works” (Col.i.21). Consequently a different Greek word is used from that which (in the Septuagint) translates the Hebrew word we have been discussing. This we must deal with more fully later on (D.V.).

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

(To be continued)

PAUL AT TROAS

(4) THE AGED PILGRIM

The inspired word gives us little information regarding Paul's closing years.

In 2 Timothy iv.13 the reference to Troas is very brief indeed; yet its context and inferences differ so widely from what we have seen in the other passages that we are led to assume a fourth visit. The whole tenor of the epistle implies a much later date than the so-called “prison” epistles and the closing verses of the Acts.

We know that Paul's visit to Jerusalem resulted, as he had been warned, in arousing the fury of the Jews to a fever pitch of hostile activity. By God's providence his life was preserved, but his two years' confinement at Caesarea was followed by two years at least of house imprisonment in Rome. His letters to the Philippians and to Philemon show that he was expecting to be released in the fairly near future, and it would seem that his hopes were fulfilled in or around the year 64.

We are told of his subsequent movements, but everything tends to militate against the likelihood of a journey to Spain. The ageing apostle probably realized by now that his travelling days as a missionary were over: others would be raised up to pioneer the Lord's work in that land.

Macedonia and Asia Minor were more readily accessible.

Paul and his beloved Philippians very likely had the joy of meeting once again in this life; Colosse may have had the privilege of an apostolic visit for the first and last time.

Meanwhile events had taken place in the capital which were to affect the lives of believers far and near. After the great fire of Rome it was widely whispered among the homeless and angry populace that the emperor himself was responsible for the conflagration. Nero in turn placed the blame upon the Christians; and the first imperial persecution of the Lord's people broke out. Many of them perished in the devastated metropolis, and in the provinces the latent hostility of pagans and Jews was stimulated by the official attitude: it became no longer merely a question of Jewish jealousy or local vested interests. Places like Troas might well swarm with informers: meetings of such a public character as that described in Acts xx. might well be no longer possible. The fact that Paul left behind him such valued belongings as his cloak, books and parchments would suggest an enforced and sudden departure from the house of Carpus, consequent upon arrest by the emperor's emissaries.

This seems to be implied by 2 Timothy iv.13, and confirmed by the general character of the letter. This, the last of Paul's recorded writings, has a pathos and poignancy all its own. He is saddened by the defection of many who had seemed to run well; Timothy is depressed and needs encouraging; the last days are to be difficult times. But as regards himself, the apostle is not ashamed: he knows Whom he has believed; he has come to the end of the conflict and the race, and the prize is now almost within his grasp.

Every chapter is pregnant with instruction, but the fourth brings before us with startling abruptness the poor earthen vessel which contained the glorious treasure: verse 6 is literally "I am *already* being poured out". Does this mean that the apostle's physical frame was so worn out, from his unremitting toils and sufferings, that death was near, entirely apart from the emperor's sentence? Perhaps it does:

but even so the end might be delayed a little, and winter was looming ahead. Paul had spent at least two winters in Rome, in the relative comfort of his own rented lodging; what would that season be like in a dank dungeon?

That the teacher of the nations should ask for his books and parchments is what we might expect. But the same paragraph shows us his tender affection for his child in the faith: then that one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. He longs to see his faithful Timothy once more before his departure from the world, and at the same time his dread of the approaching winter makes him beg anxiously for the outer garment that will afford some little extra warmth. Maybe he had woven it himself of black Sicilian goat's hair, like the tents he made in order to maintain himself and his companions.

Whether Timothy arrived in time, bringing with him John Mark and the precious cloak and books and parchments, we do not know for certain; but the passage shows that eager anticipation of being with Christ — of conformity to His death — of receiving the victor's crown — is quite consistent with a natural shrinking from the rigours of winter*, a season which tends to become more and more unwelcome as the years speed by and the warm blood of youth is but

*The Reformation furnished a striking parallel to this request in the letter written by William Tyndale, from the damp cells of the Vilvorde, in the winter before his death, asking, "for Jesus' sake, for a warmer cap, and something to patch his leggings, and a woollen shirt, and, above all, his Hebrew Bible, Grammar, and Dictionary".

To come nearer to our own times, we may recall how the late J. N. Darby, when asked "But do you really think that no part of the New Testament may have been temporary in its object? For instance, what should we have lost if St. Paul had never written 'The cloak that I left at Troas bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments?'" answered with the greatest promptitude. "I should have lost something; for it was exactly that verse which alone saved me from selling my little library. No! every word, depend upon it, is from the Spirit and is for eternal service!"

(continued inside front cover)

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