

# WORDS OF HELP

FROM THE  
SCRIPTURE OF TRUTH

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*Edited by*  
W. G. TURNER

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To Our Readers,

As the close of another year of grace draws near, we render thanks to GOD for the goodness and mercy which have followed us throughout its course.

Then for encouraging assurances of WORDS OF HELP still living up to its title, from readers at home and abroad, we tender our very grateful acknowledgments. Many thanks are due to the valued help given by contributors to our pages through the year just closing, in this connection.

Finally, in these years of peace our debt to our Printer and Publisher is as great as in the years of war, owing to the extreme difficulties they have still to face.

The prayers of our Christian readers are both needed and valued by, their servant for CHRIST'S sake

THE EDITOR.

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# WORDS OF HELP

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## A New Year Greeting

BY THE EDITOR

“**T**HOU crownest the year with Thy goodness,” is the grateful acknowledgment of the Psalmist who in an earlier psalm affirmed from experience “the goodness of God endureth continually.” We stand again on the hill top of a New Year, and each one, remembering the way we have been led, can also say with confidence born of reflection, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.” To every true disciple the *Hitherto* is, as often remarked, the promise of the *Henceforth*. This rests so firmly upon the assurance that:

“No change of mind our SAVIOUR knows,  
A true and constant Friend;  
Where once the LORD His love bestows,  
He loves until the end.”

So we step forward on the road which ever winds upward cheered by the promise that “as thy days so shall thy strength be,” often finding them “as the days of heaven upon the earth” (Deut. xi, 21). Miss Frances Ridley Havergal’s sweet hymn tells how this may be fully realised by one and all:—

“Another year is dawning:  
Dear MASTER, let it be,  
In working or in waiting,  
Another year for Thee:

Another year of mercies,  
Of faithfulness and grace;  
Another year of gladness  
In the shining of Thy face.

Another year of progress,  
Another year of praise,  
Another year of proving  
Thy presence all the days:

Another year of service,  
Of witness for Thy love;  
Another year of training  
For holier work above.

Another year is dawning:  
Dear MASTER, let it be,  
On earth, or else in heaven,  
Another year for Thee."

The best *is yet to be* for all who are watching, working and waiting for the Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of our great GOD and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST (Titus ii. 13). In this confidence we again wish all our readers *A Happy New Year* indeed.

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## On Eating the Sin Offering

*(Wherefore have ye not eaten the Sin Offering in the holy place? Lev. x, 17)*

**T**O eat the Sin Offering in the holy place was part of the privilege, duty and responsibility of Aaron and his sons (Lev. vi. 24-28). The actual offerer of the Sin Offering had perforce to eat it, typifying the One great Offerer, Who, having offered Himself without spot to GOD, "was made sin" although personally the One Who knew no sin. "The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it" thus by eating making identification of himself with the sacrifice.

Of the great anti-typical sacrifice made by the SAVIOUR when "He offered one sacrifice for sins," a sacrifice of such value that "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. xi. 26), we rightly sing to Him in grateful acknowledgment of this:—

"Our sins, our guilt, in love divine  
Confessed and borne by Thee;  
The gall, the curse, the wrath were Thine,  
To set Thy ransomed free."

Yet the HOLY SPIRIT is being constantly grieved, and CHRIST dishonoured, by the failures and sins of these ransomed, redeemed people. So while the Sin Offering made upon the Cross is "one offering single and complete, and what He never can repeat," its abiding value is still ministered by our Great High Priest, as our Advocate in heaven. As another has well said, "Now the one offering having been made once

for all, if sin is in question, it is in advocacy on high that He now takes it up, and in connection with communion, not with imputation. There is nothing more to do with sacrifice or blood sprinkling. His service is founded on it."

Upon the mitre of the Hebrew high priest was a golden plate with the inscription "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." This was to be always upon his forehead that he might bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts . . . that they may be accepted before the LORD (Exod. xxviii, 38). The *forehead* speaks of intelligence as to the Holiness of the LORD which remained unchanged whatever the unholy changes of the people through forgetfulness, ignorance, neglect or waywardness of spirit.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is our *Great* High Priest, a title never given or assumed by Moses or Aaron. He is *great* in dignity personally and positionally. The eternal glory of the SON, His divine power in creation, His central position in the future inheritance, His supremacy over the angels, His session at the right hand of GOD—all these *great* truths are brought before us to show how perfect is the royal priesthood of Him Who is on the throne. This we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews where priesthood is the subject. He now ministers in the holy place upon the throne of grace, and by virtue of the sacrifice He made for sins, still eats the Sin Offering in the holy place, that is, the immediate presence of GOD. By this must be understood that He is deeply concerned over the waywardness, neglect and alas! often wilfulness which is manifested by us. "He is the propitiation for our sins," and now *as* our Advocate maintains our communion by virtue of that full complete atonement. In other words, He is no more indifferent now to our condition than when He gave up all He had to have us for Himself. What sins of omission and commission daily result from ignorance, forgetfulness, coldness of heart and worldliness, bespeaking His unfailing intercession and advocacy on our behalf. In this way may we not reverently say He still eats the Sin Offering in the holy place?

But while in the Levitical type the offerer who actually made the offering was to eat it, thus as we have seen identifying himself with it, others were also given a part in this eating of the Sin Offering in the holy place, "all the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy" (Lev. vi, 29). This.

extension of priestly privilege, duty and responsibility is, however, limited to the *sons* of Aaron. In some other of the offerings of the LORD, the whole priestly family are eligible for feasting upon the sacrifices (as in Numbers xvii, 8-11). "I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it." Why the difference in the case of eating the Sin Offering in the holy place?

As the woman is physically "the weaker vessel," the typical teaching is that a greater measure of spiritual energy, self judgment, exercise of conscience, and true brokenness of spirit are required to enable one to eat the Sin Offering than is possessed by many who yet are as truly members of the priestly family. It is no longer a mere question of sex, indeed could not be, for in CHRIST JESUS "there is neither male nor female," and all believers without exception form part of that royal priesthood, of which CHRIST Himself is the Great Head. But here it is a deep question of sharing, in our measure, the shame and dishonour done to CHRIST'S NAME and cause by the failures and sins of His people, *and of those who are nominally such.*

How much do the sins of Christendom; the divided and scattered state of our fellow believers and ourselves weigh upon us? How hard to feel and confess another's palpable shortcomings and sins as though one's own? To witness wasted gifts, unused talents, worldly styles and practices eagerly adopted while even still singing of "*Thy cross, which has closed our hearts forever to the world and all its dross.*" To see *personal* habits adopted which tend to blot out the sharp lines of demarcation between church and world, saint and sinner! How humbling to feel one's almost indifference and apathy in the face of all this! Yet the Great High Priest is still making intercession for *all* His own; the Advocate is still deeply concerned about these, whom we may *sharply criticise and sternly censure* for their so obvious shortcomings; these whom, perchance, we look upon with such despondent grief and bitter resentment, *when we consider them at all.*

Daniel (in chapters ix, x) presents a picture of an Old Testament saint eating the Sin Offering in the holy place. He is one against whom nothing is recorded to his detriment; one who on the contrary is saluted as "greatly beloved" by God three times over. "We have sinned . . . neither have we



hearkened . . . . to us belongeth confusion of face . . . . because we have sinned . . . . we have rebelled . . . . we have done wickedly . . . . our sins and the iniquities of our fathers . . . . confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel . . . .” Such is the language of this man so “greatly beloved” that Gabriel the angel of the Annunciation; One, a Son of Man Whose presence so overwhelmed the penitent saint that he said, “I retained no strength”; and another angel also sent to strengthen him, all serve to show the Divine interest in this blameless man who yet confessed the dishonour done to the God of Israel, sharing His sorrow. It is not by tale-bearing, whispering, averted glances, shocked silences in public, that the Sin Offering is eaten in the holy place, in the presence of God.

In grave, well-weighed words the late J. N. Darby summed up the whole matter. He says: “Prayer for a brother is ministry of love in priesthood. If it be a matter of intercession, we ought to bear all the iniquity of it on our own hearts before the LORD. Thus the very sin itself becomes the occasion of the outflowing of love and not of judgment. But is it not true that we *have* failed? Whilst the outward professing church has offered strange fire ‘before the LORD,’ have we not known how to ‘eat the Sin-Offering’ for our brethren? Have we not been charging them with the offence in righteousness, laying it down to them as under law, instead of eating the Sin-Offering in the holy place?”

“Grief should not hinder our acting thus in priestly service before the LORD; but let us take care also that the joy of nature does not; the ‘wine’ and ‘strong drink.’ Again, I say, have we not shrunk from bearing the iniquity of our brethren in intercession before the LORD, from eating the Sin-Offering in the holy place? How little do the faults of a dear brother pain us as our own! Have we really pleaded, as feeling the evil, in the intercession of grace? How seldom do we thus deal with it, standing as it were in the gap! There is a vast deal of failure in all of us as to this—abundant failure! There is not that sense among us of the identity of CHRIST with His saints, which would put us in the place of intercession.” (Collected Writings Practical vol. i, p.100).

The Sin-Offering was “most holy” (Lev. vi, 25). It was the *Sinless* One who knew no sin, Who Himself confessed and bore our sins. It was the *blameless* Daniel who penitently and

contritely confessed the sins of his people. GOD grant we may so grow in grace and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST that we may possess the spiritual energy enabling us to truly eat the Sin-Offering in the holy place.

We do not plead for a revival of legal rules or Puritan restrictions, but for acknowledgment, confession, sorrow and humiliation on account of the grief to the HOLY SPIRIT and concern of CHRIST caused by the widespread failure. This too, specially for one's own part in it all, whether springing from ignorance of what is due to CHRIST, indifference or carelessness. For example, I have never loved Him as I should have loved Him; I have never sought His favour as I should have sought it, although I know His love for me, and also that in His favour is life, and therein is my sin. Then what lifelessness and formality in worship and prayer; what unprofitable and unseasonable ministry; what divided Christian households, diminishing assemblies, barren gospel work and general worldly mindedness is characteristic of professing Christian people to-day on all hands! If we had realised our need of humiliation we should not have so much cause to grieve over our present state. However, if we find in ourselves and around us what exercises our souls we still possess in CHRIST a source of joy, comfort and rest. We do not excuse ourselves, but like Daniel would confess "my sins and the sins of my people," and thus eat the Sin-Offering in that holy place, the presence of God.

W.G.T.

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## God's Guidance in Difficulties

*(From an Exposition of Isaiah xxx, 6, 7, by W. Kelly)*

THE prophet's irony thus expresses itself. "The burden of the beasts of the South. Through the land of trouble and anguish, from whence [come] the lioness and the lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent, they carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people [that] shall not profit. For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab (or, Arrogance) that sitteth still" (vv. 6, 7). Not man's pride, but God's guidance avails for His people.

If we examine the New Testament for our guidance in these difficulties, we shall find just the same truth. If the apostle is speaking merely about the ordinary trials of each day, we have the same lesson in other words. Thus he tells us we are to let our moderation be known unto all men, the LORD being at hand; that instead of being careful or anxious about anything (not that we are to be careless, but not to be careful in the sense of anxiety), our requests should be made known unto God with thanksgiving.

Our strength, it is said, is in quiet confidence. Christians have a right to expect God to appear for us. He has entitled us to count on it. We may be perfectly sure, it matters not what the circumstances are; even supposing there has been something to judge in ourselves, if one tell it out to God will not He listen? He cannot deny himself. He must deny him that slights the name of CHRIST. Where He now puts to shame, it is in our self-will; so far from His putting shame on such being a proof that He does not love them, it is precisely the proof that He does. But at the same time let men venture to go beyond what God sees good for the discipline of His child, He soon takes up the rod; and there can be nothing more terrible than when the adversary exceeds the chastening that is just, gratifying his hatred toward them. For God will rise up in His indignation, and deal with them according to His own majesty; even the grace of the gospel does not set aside that. For instance see the second Epistle to Timothy 4: 14. If persons bearing the LORD'S NAME are carried away by their fleshly zeal, and fight against the truth of God or those charged with the proclamation of that truth, God may use them for dealing with faults in His people. God knows how to bring down His people where their looks are high because of anything in themselves, or that grace has conferred upon them. But when the limit of right rebuke is exceeded, woe be to those that fight against them, covering their own vindictiveness or envy under GOD'S NAME! It is evident that the very grace of the gospel makes it to be so much the more conspicuous; for it sounds so much the more tremendous that God should thus deal in the midst of all that speaks so loudly of His love.

The Gospels also bring out, in the words of our LORD Himself, the wickedness of fighting against what God is doing even by poor weak disciples. This is the great lesson for us; we are

not to consult our own heart or have recourse to the strength of man. When we flee to the various resources of the flesh, we slip out of our proper Christian path. Whereas the strength of GOD has indeed shone in that foundation pattern in which all the blessing of grace to sinners is contained; and it always takes this form for a Christian, and that is, death and resurrection. There may very likely be a great pressure of trial; there may soon appear a sinking down under it; but as surely as there is the semblance of death, there will be the reality of resurrection by-and-by. Let no one be disheartened. The cross is the right mould for the blessing of the children of GOD. When we were brought to Him, was it not after the same sort? We knew what it was to have the horrors of the conviction of sin; but GOD was going to bring us for the first time into a place of special blessing.

It has always been so with His own. We find it in the case of Abraham, and in proportion to the greatness of blessing is the force of sorrow that precedes it. Isaac was given when Abraham was a hundred years old, and Sarah as good as dead. There was death, as it were, and he had to wait for a son. Even after the birth and growth of the child of promise, he had to surrender him, to offer up his only son to GOD. Directly that the singleness and truth of his heart was proved, and that the sacrifice was in principle offered up, the angel of JEHOVAH arrests his hand. How much sweeter now, when Isaac was, as it were, the child of resurrection! And so it is with all our blessings, it matters not what they may be. There must be the breaking down of our feelings, the mortification of self in a practical way, if we are to know what GOD is in blessing: our blessings are cast in the mould of death and resurrection.

The way by which come all our blessings, is in Him Who is dead and risen. To be blessed practically we must morally go through the same process. There comes the frustration of all natural hopes, the blasting of all the objects we desire. When GOD visits us in His faithfulness with trial, the first thing man seeks is to escape. Israel goes down into Egypt, instead of looking up in the confidence that GOD is the giver of wisdom and power. They go down to the land of human wisdom and ability. Were there no GOD, were they not His people, it would have been intelligible; but as it is, what folly! Yet is it the folly of our own hearts. Are we not conscious of

it? Beware lest it be, because we are so accustomed to forget it, that we do not realise the humbling truth. We need to consider it more deeply to profit by this lesson. Their strength is quiet confidence instead of hurrying down into Egypt.

(“Isaiah,” by W. Kelly, is now being re-issued by our Publisher.)

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## A Unique Dispensation

**A** DISPENSATION has been defined as a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to a specially revealed will of God. The present dispensation which has lasted nearly two thousand years already has been called the dispensation of *the grace of God* (John i. 17). There has never been a dispensation equal to it in blessed possibilities; and even the “dispensation of the fulness of times” (Eph. i. 10) will not reach the height of “the praise of the glory of His grace” found in those who “first trusted in CHRIST” (Eph. i. 12, 14). Do we realise in anything like full measure what it means to be “accepted in the BELOVED” and “sealed with the HOLY SPIRIT of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance”?

When GOD raised CHRIST from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come; when He put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all, He wrought a work of power unequalled in *hope, glory and greatness* (Eph. i. 18-23).

Now we look to JESUS, the author and finisher of faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of GOD (Heb. xii. 2). Gathered to His NAME (in a scene marked by His rejection, and filling fast with the chaos and confusion that are the result of His rejection), we anticipate the time when, at the NAME of JESUS every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth and every tongue shall confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER (Phil. ii. 9-11).

In this dispensation GOD has been manifested in the flesh, justified in the SPIRIT, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (1 Tim. iii. 16). GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor. v. 19), and the human instrument used to express this could add: "He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Then we have the comprehensive appeal "Be ye reconciled to GOD." The sinless One has taken the place of the guilty, and sinners against GOD are made the righteousness of GOD in Him, by putting their trust in Him.

The first witnesses of GOD's mighty work wrought in CHRIST could say: "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard" (Acts iv. 20), and the Apostle John who was the LORD's most intimate and devoted companion has written: "The life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the FATHER, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 2). "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" (v. 3).

The religious leaders of what was left of the specially favoured nation into the midst of which He came, were so hardened in the worst form of unbelief that they refused to recognise the most marvellous testimony to the One Who came to them in the lowliness of grace, and deliberately engineered His crucifixion as a malefactor.

On the day of Pentecost Peter said: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: JESUS of Nazareth, a man approved of GOD among you by miracles and wonders and signs which GOD did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of GOD, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom GOD hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." (Acts ii. 22-24.)

The HOLY SPIRIT, Who came down then, is still here, and will remain until He is taken out of the way (2 Thes. ii. 7), when His special mission is completely accomplished. As Abraham's steward was sent on a mission to find a bride for Isaac, so, GOD's HOLY SPIRIT has been sent by the FATHER at the request of His SON to conduct the bride to Him after His resurrection, and the question raised with Rebekah: "Wilt thou go with this man?" is significant of the question raised

with you and me. Were we ready to say as heartily as the fair damsel: "I will go"? Under the leading and guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT we are being led to the ONE "Whom not having seen we love" (1 Peter i. 8). The Bridegroom said: "He shall testify of Me," and surely our hearts burn within us as in the power of the SPIRIT He talks with us by the way, and shows us the folly of all our own thoughts about things that we cannot understand except by revelation.

The world in general, which receives only what it can see and know in a natural way, cannot understand what only the SPIRIT can reveal, nor can *it* receive the unseen SPIRIT. We who believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and love Him because He first loved us, will certainly not be here when evil reaches its climax in the "man of sin," because this evil cannot be revealed as long as the HOLY SPIRIT Who hinders is here, and one may well tremble to think of the awful things that will happen after the church is gone. The late war, dreadful as it was, is as nothing compared with it. What is more solemn in the whole Bible than the halt called by God in Rev. xxii. 11: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still (for ever); and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still"? This is the close of this unique and wonderful dispensation. There comes a time when everyone remains in the condition in which he is found, for ever. G. S. PURNELL.

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## On Bearing Trouble

**“WHAT** is the best way to bear trouble?” What would not people give for an answer that always acted like a talisman? Life is very hard for multitudes of God’s people. Like the people of the world, they suffer from disappointed hopes, domestic troubles, business anxieties, unemployment and sickness. And often diminishing strength has to bear increasing burdens. There is the real danger of becoming cynical and of losing faith.

Some trouble is caused by our own sins or mistakes; some of it is caused by the sins or mistakes of others. In answer to the eternal “Why?” we can usually give a surface reason or reasons. But when we go deeper and ask, “Why has a God

of perfect love and almighty power allowed this evil to enter my life?" we have often to say, "I do not know," and we are wise to stop there. To say that trouble is appropriate to a sin-dislocated world does not satisfy the heart, although it may help to calm the mind. No complete philosophy of the problem is possible. But if we face the problem as it affects others, it may help to keep us from being stumbled when trouble comes to *us*.

As a rule we are right in saying that God *permits* suffering, but does not ordain it. And faith is the medicine that takes the sting out of our perplexities. We know that God is more long-sighted than we, and that He has our highest ultimate good in view. "All things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28). Faith learns to submit as well as to claim. The heart that bends will not break.

"Every joy or trial falleth from above,  
Traced upon our dial by the Sun of love.  
We may trust Him fully all for us to do;  
They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true."

Let us then seek to maintain an "obstinate" faith in God's love and power and wisdom. Our murmuring is music to the devil. We must not judge God by what happens, but learn to judge providences by what we know of God. Though providences may seem to cross each other, they can never cross the promises.

But it is important to remember that God permits things that He does not *approve*. This will save us from a feeble fatalism or a mistaken submission. If a thing is bad, it should be resisted.

Trouble is a free schoolmaster. It is "machinery meant to give the soul its bent." Pain educates, and is often the prelude to a higher life. There is no improving the future without disturbing the present. Better be preserved in brine than rot in honey. Pain is the salt that prevents corruption. Were pain absent we should become hopelessly slack; sympathy would die; service would cease; selfishness would reign.

Several years ago a British Government official returned to England on leave after spending a long time in Algeria. When he reached London he found himself in a typical November fog. He took a ride in a cab, and as he was driven about in the murky air and through the slush, he said he felt



so happy that he wanted to throw himself out and have a good roll in the mud—he was “so sick of the beastly sunshine and eternal blue sky of North Africa!” Too much sunshine is not good for our souls. In this life, at all events, we need grey skies and rain as well.

The yoke will continue to chafe, the cross will continue to hurt, and the thorn will continue to sting, until we reach the end of chapter *one* of our salvation. Then the yoke, the cross and the thorn will have served their purpose, and chapter *two*—full salvation—has no end.

“What cannot be altered must be borne, not blamed.” And not only borne but used as a means of spiritual advancement. Life has a *spiritual* purpose. We are at school now, not at home. On the analogy of our LORD’s work on the Cross we should try to regard our troubles as a work intended to help us to work out our salvation. May it not be that God does not heal because He hopes we can be trusted to use the pain or infirmity? The best way to bear trouble is to *use* it while enduring it.

A British commander in France during the First World War learnt to appreciate the characteristic French saying—useful, if not always true—“*No news is either so good or so bad as we at first think.*” A helpful practical tip is to wait before worrying; the things we worry about seldom happen—at all events, as we expected. And fogs and frosts won’t last for ever. It is well to learn to enlarge the outlook. Sometimes God allows us to pass through the evil, as through a dark tunnel; at other times He preserves us from it altogether.

E. ADAMS.

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## A Glimpse of Galilee

COMING up from the south we passed many places of holy memory and intimate interest before the district of Galilee itself was actually reached. The road along the coast from Jaffa, and then inland, leaves Mount Carmel on the left and turns into the higher country north of Jerusalem. The road climbs and winds past little hamlets (cities of the East) mostly clustered on tops of rounded hills. The roads in this part of the country are good, though not wide. Ample indeed for commercial traffic and the tourist. Alongside the modern

roads, often crossing and recrossing them, or wandering away over some hill or across some ford, are the old pathways of bygone days. The Arab still rides along these tracks on his donkey, drives his camel, or accompanies his flocks. They are narrow, winding, unhedged, just as one imagines they have been for two, or perhaps three thousand years. "A delightful land," says one prophet; "A pleasant goodly land," says another. Shakespeare says of it:—

"Those holy fields  
Over whose acres walk'd those Blessed Feet  
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd  
For our advantage on the bitter cross."

The mountains become nearer as we pass off the plain of Esdraelon and begin the ascent which marks the natural barrier between the lowlands of the south-west and the Sea of Galilee. Mount Tabor is here towering above the other peaks. "The holy mount," as St. Peter says, where:—

"We see the Godhead glory  
Shine through the human veil,  
And willing hear the story  
Of love come down to heal."

Where they spake of the de cease He should accomplish at Jerusalem; where "such a Voice" was heard, "This is My beloved SON: hear ye Him." At the top the view which now comes into sight is most surprising. One moment you have never seen Galilee, and then you see it all. Yet it is not to be disposed of so quickly as all that. True, from this great height it is almost possible to take in the whole without so much as a turn of the head. Whatever may be one's preconceived idea of Galilee, it is immediately replaced by the feeling that here is perhaps the most sacred place of countryside in all the world. It was here that our LORD called his first disciples, and shewed Himself in so many different ways. From the very opening of His wondrous ministry until the final appearance to over five hundred brethren at once; where He commissioned His Apostles with universal mission, and uttered the four great "alls" of Christianity. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and upon earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them to the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY SPIRIT; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you. And behold I am with you all the days, until the completion

of the age." Yes, this is Galilee, with its silver waves rolling obliquely across the placid blue surface of the lake. Its hue is deep compared with the other colours in the countryside, though not nearly so vivid as the Mediterranean. The sandy colour of the rocks and soil appears like silver in the brilliant sunshine, and at one's feet are the white roofs and palm trees of Tiberias. To the North the green rock-strewn hill-sides tower above the site of Capernaum—His own city—most favoured of all, "Thou Capernaum which are exalted up unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained to this day." The scene of the countless miracles and boundless enthusiasm of the early ministry in Galilee. Across the lake is the country of Gaderenes. The "steep places" are so clear to-day they do not need to be pointed out. The sky is cloudless—the hills seem translucent in the glare of the noon sun. The water is most colourful and sparkles down in the depth of this great natural hollow—like looking down some giant well. It is another world. Civilisation and barbarity alike have no place here. One realises that this age-long lake, nestling at the foot of the everlasting hills, has not, cannot have changed since the days when GOD was "manifest in flesh and dwelt amongst us." Silence creeps over us as we gaze upon the wonderful scene and breathe its pure air, and feel that as the centuries dissipate into nothingness, you now have the privilege of walking along the shore of the lake, unaltered since those marvellous days of our LORD'S life and ministry. The eyes become dim as one seeks to revive to the active memory every scene told in the scriptures of Galilee. Scenes of sickly and hungry folk, of the demon-possessed; of weary fishers, and strong men reduced to fear; of His resurrection life here; and many another lesson taught, and many an Old Testament Scripture quoted and here fulfilled. If only the rocks could have recorded the things they heard, and tell them out over the soft winds like some heavenly whispering-gallery! The place is silent apart from a braying ass; one almost says aloud "Have I gone back into the years of infant fancy—am I just pretending these things?" The warm breeze on the face confirms the fact that here is no imagination, but the very amphitheatre of all those scenes and stories that have endeared the LORD of Glory to our souls. Before looking further who can

but turn his eyes to heaven and ask for grace to look with intelligent eyes and worthy thoughts on this place so favoured.

The descent is long, winding and steep. Half-way down there is a sign on the road-side marking normal sea level, but the hill-side still runs steeply down for many more hundreds of feet. Tiberias, which our LORD never mentioned and apparently never visited, comes into view—not as a toy-town now but as a semi-modern place, clean, neat and prosperous. It has not outgrown its due size, and consists of one or two streets, nicely built, not outrageous, and quite in keeping with the countryside. It bears little token of its great antiquity though it is undoubtedly on the site of the old fishing and market town. There is no attempt to ornament the lake. It is still in its first glory. We notice that three women, dressed in the conventional black gowns of the district, are washing clothes at the lake side and have lit a charcoal fire between us and the lake. A thin wisp of dark smoke curls slowly upwards through the trees, spending itself in the sky above. It reminds of the time our LORD lit such a fire, in such a place, and prepared a meal for His own. Half-way across the lake is a small white sail—a Galilean fishing craft indulging in that time-honoured business carried on with so much diligence by those who were later “fishers of men.” There is little left of Capernaum. It has come to the fate our LORD predicted, and the green grass grows over all but few of its remaining relics.

Galilee is just as it was—the love of GOD is unchanged and the story of GOD manifest in flesh is as new as ever.

But what a future lies before that “delightful land,” that “goodly pleasant land,” when His feet shall once again stand on Mount Olivet, and the law go out from Zion not only to Galilee of the Gentiles but to the whole earth. Then the Sermon on the Mount will be practised by the subjects of the King, and the LORD’S Prayer given to His disciples on the Galilean hills be fully answered.

Then truly:—

JESUS shall reign where’er the sun  
Doth its successive journeys run  
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

*“And men shall be blessed in Him; all generations shall call Him blessed.”*

T. C. PACKER.

# Life's Handicaps

BY THE EDITOR

**F**OR all who are distressed in mind, body, or circumstances ; the blind, the deaf, the lame, the deformed, all who are hindered in the race of life by physical or mental handicap of any kind"—so we sometimes pray—yet rarely stay to consider the hard lot and heavy cross of these many greatly afflicted sufferers. To us maybe, a full life of health and strength has been granted, and we wake day by day with the use of our faculties and the kindly light of reason. Are we sufficiently grateful for what we accept as a matter of course ? Are we sufficiently thoughtful for those who labour under disabilities and disadvantages of which we only know the names ?

As one gets to know of most estimable persons with secret sufferings, the mention of which often only escapes the sufferer in an unguarded moment, one realises that the mystery of suffering is baffling and bewildering. "GOD had one Son without sin but none without suffering," and our blessed LORD's attitude to suffering is very significant. "He healed all that had need of healing" is the oft-repeated record of those three and thirty years.

The deaf and the blind were specially considered under the old law, with severe and sharp censures of any who curse the deaf, or put obstacles in the way of the blind. "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy GOD : I am the LORD" (Lev. xix. 14). So runs the stern but gracious command of the Mosaic law.

Almost every life, however, is conscious of some kind of handicap—whether health, or talent, or opportunity, or personality or social gift. Many and varied too are the bodily ills which others can see, and also the secret pains and distempers known only to GOD and the sufferers. Then, the chill of loneliness, and the awful atmosphere of constant misunderstanding through which so many seem compelled to live, all confirm the ancient sigh of the human spirit, "The heart knoweth its own bitterness."

"There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the LORD thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore

will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me."

But this was the blessed Apostle Paul, says one, and *I* am really less than the least of all saints ; *I* live in obscurity and nurse my grief in silence. Even if this is so, yet Paul by the grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST turned his unwelcome limitations—the messenger of Satan—to glorious gain, and by that same grace any man or woman today may surely do the same.

The writer is not conventional and unsympathetic in saying this, on the contrary, some of his own dearest and best loved are themselves handicapped in the race of life by physical disability of one kind or another. The thoughts suggested by this are therefore intended to be crumbs of comfort to all in like case.

"If in thy path some thorns are found,  
Oh ! think Who wore them on His brow ;  
If grief thy sorrowing heart has found,  
It reached a Holier than thou."

"My grace is sufficient for thee" is the spiritual cordial that made the Apostle Paul also write, "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" ; and it is from prison that this message is sent. The same grace also enabled him between a shipwreck and a prison to "thank GOD and take courage" when he met his Roman friends at The Three Taverns on his weary journey to Rome.

It is the grace of the LORD JESUS that thus enables because He was Himself the Great Sufferer. He suffered for righteousness sake ; He suffered in sympathy with all sorrowful and suffering ones ; He suffered the contradiction of sinners against Himself ; He suffered misunderstandings by those who knew Him best here, He suffered loneliness, was forsaken by His special friends, and He suffered the treachery of Judas—so His grace springs from a perfect and therefore understanding sympathy.

"How am I straitened" He exclaimed on one notable occasion, and in a different measure and degree some of His eager devoted disciples oft-times feel the same.

But whatever the limitation and handicap it will be an ample recompense if at the last we hear, "She did what she could, and she did it unto me." Or again, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant (not necessarily successful from our fellows' point of view). Enter thou into the joy of thy LORD."

“Well I know thy trouble  
 O my servant true ;  
 Thou art very weary—  
 I was weary too.”

So we may still pursue our way,” rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer,” till by the virtue of those other sufferings which none could possibly share—His atoning ones on the Cross—we find ourselves where we shall fully realize that though “weeping may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning.”

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## The Sprinkling of the Blood

(*Lev. xvi. 14*)

**N**O typical action in Israel’s ritual could exceed in importance that of the sprinkling of the blood in the sanctuary. It set forth in figure the death of CHRIST as fully answering the righteousness of GOD and the need of the sinner, by providing a place and a means of blessing, yet maintaining the holiness of GOD.

“Oh ! matchless way of grace divine,  
 To which Thy Cross gave right.”

The blood-stained lintel and door-posts in Egypt ; the sprinkled sanctuary and altars, and most significant of all the blood-sprinkled mercy seat with the sevenfold sprinkled way of approach to it is the very graphic manner in which GOD set forth in those types of old the eternal truth as to the blood shedding and death of our blessed LORD and REDEEMER.

Let us remember, however, that these things were but shadows and not the very image of the good things to come (*Heb. x. 1*). Now, the true light shines, for the High Priest of the good things has come, and by the greater and more perfect tabernacle has entered by His own blood into the Holy Place having obtained an eternal redemption for us.

The shadows, while setting forth the needed sacrifice, and character of the One competent to do the work, proved their own insufficiency. Then it was, that in view of the proved weakness of all, the impossibility of the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sins, that “once in the end of the world He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” He came as man to suffer and to die for men, since “Without shedding of blood there is no

remission" (Heb. ix. 22). To Him then, the Son of God and Son of Man, we therefore sing :

"That all was borne, that all was done,  
Thine agony, Thy Cross can tell."

Firmly, I believe and truly that *the work of redemption was finished* when CHRIST died on the Cross. Every need is met there ; every detail of type and shadow had an answer there in the glory of the Atoning Sacrifice which excels them all.

One might have sympathy with simple souls who have been led to think that some kind of ceremony needed to be carried out in heaven. But we can have neither sympathy for, nor fellowship with, intelligent propagators of such fundamental error in doctrine.

If I am asked, How was the blood sprinkled or presented in heaven ? I find a reverent comparison of Scripture most helpful. It was by the ETERNAL SPIRIT He offered Himself to GOD (Heb. ix. 14), and Gen. iv. 10 speaks volumes to me. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." Can we suppose that the precious blood of CHRIST shed on Calvary had less power effectively to reach the throne of the ETERNAL than that of Abel ? No ! It could not be so, for He gave Himself for our sins, and the moment His life was given physical testimony on earth was given to its spiritual efficacy in heaven by the rending of the temple veil, earthquake and rent rocks. Compare further (1 Sam. v. 12) "the cry of the city went up to heaven" ; also (Rev. xviii. 5) "her sins have been heaped on one another up to heaven." (J.N.D. Trans.).

These Scriptures show that the deeds of men, their acts, spiritual or physical, have *spiritual values* that are taken full account of in heaven ; as, on the other hand, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke xv.).

If these things are registered in heaven, how much more appealing to GOD, indeed to all heaven, those flowing wounds of the Sacrifice on Calvary of the fore-ordained LAMB of GOD !

The HOLY SPIRIT has come down here to witness to the value set upon that precious blood in heaven (Heb. x. 15) ; and also to the response given to the LAMB, whose blood it was (Rev. v.).

How and where do we ourselves "enter into the Holiest by the blood of JESUS ?" Is it on some mountain, or in some building ordained for it, or in some upper room, or even beyond the skies ?

The question provokes its own answer—for none of these have anything to do with it (John iv. 21).



It is, however, a blessed spiritual reality where the LORD JESUS Himself leads the praise ; where He Himself is the centre of the gathering, and also the object of worship as truly as the FATHER. Then again (1 Peter i. 2), How are we sprinkled with the blood of JESUS CHRIST ? Is it a spiritual application, and could be in no other way, for :

“The sprinkled blood is speaking,  
Before the FATHER’S throne ;  
The SPIRIT’S power is seeking  
To make its virtues known.”

C. Moss.

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## The Old Wine and the New

**W**INE in Scripture seems to signify joy and satisfaction, and after tiring effort, recuperation and even healing. Taken to excess it means the abuse of those things which ordinarily sooth and satisfy ; but there is in it a power that is difficult to gauge, and the man of GOD is warned against its use lest it should lead to a form of worship that is mere natural excitement. It is not a sin to drink wine, but it is wise to abstain from its habitual use, lest in a moment of weakness it should be taken in excess, and lest by example the partaking of it should be a stumbling block to a weaker brother with less power of self-restraint.

The LORD Himself drank wine with His disciples, and with those who entertained Him as a guest at their tables, in fact, the unfriendly religionists called Him in scorn a wine-drinker and a friend of publicans and sinners. He showed plainly, however, the inconsistency of His critics by pointing out that John came neither eating nor drinking, and they said of him that he had a devil, while the SON of MAN, who came eating and drinking in the usual way, they called a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber.

The first reference to wine in the Bible is the *misuse* that Noah made of it, which led to his own dishonour. Noah had been a “preacher of righteousness” for at least 120 years before the flood, while the ark was being constructed, but after the crisis was over, when things began to settle down in a natural way, he spoilt his testimony by drinking to excess. *What a picture he is of more than one preacher of righteousness !* The only thing that is able to keep the old Adam nature from self-indulgence is the restraining

power of the SPIRIT of GOD, and he who refuses or even neglects His restraining power does so to his own loss.

It is the LORD Himself Who draws attention to the distinction between the old wine and the new. Putting new wine into old bottles only results in the bursting of the bottles and the loss of the wine (Matt. ix. 17); (Mark ii. 22). New wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved (Luke v. 38). No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith "The old is better" (v. 39). What significance is to be found in the LORD's parabolic reference to this distinction. The highest form that religion could take was that which had tasted the old wine, and had learned to value it as such. The natural excitement consequent upon its abuse had been the ruin of the Jewish nation, and those drunk with it were the deadliest enemies of the LORD JESUS Himself. It refused to recognise the weakness of the old Adam nature, existent even in Moses in whom it trusted. Miracles had to be worked in order to convince it of its error, and when the old bottles had been made into new, they never lost the savour of the old wine. Peter, who was used by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD to introduce new wine to new bottles that had never known the old wine, had to be rebuked for harking back to the old (Gal. ii. 11-14); and Paul who administered the rebuke, did the same thing after he had gone up to Jerusalem contrary to the direct injunction of the SPIRIT of GOD (Acts xxi. 20-26). Then when Paul takes a retrospective view of the privilege of Israel as recipients of the old wine, he went so far as to say: "I could wish myself were accursed from CHRIST for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. ix. 3). He was drunk with the old wine when, before his conversion, he had "A zeal for GOD that was not according to knowledge" and now the same ignorant zeal burst out from time to time, and has not the professing church, alas! been carried away by it?

The old Adam nature is still ready to say: "All these will we do" (Ex. xix. 8), and to ignore the sin that is innate in it, making it incapable of doing so, however willing it may be. The LORD Himself said to His disciples when they professed to be willing to go with Him to prison and to death, but showed their weakness by sleeping instead of watching and praying, when the crisis was at hand, "The spirit truly is ready, but *the flesh is weak*" (Mark xiv. 38).

The old wine excites the flesh and appears to give it cause for glorying in its seeming possibilities, while the new wine, which

speaks of the precious Blood which has been shed, can only be partaken of by those who are "born again" and have within them the restraining power of the HOLY SPIRIT.

When the LORD JESUS was about to lay down His life, he drank wine with His disciples, and spoke of the contents of the cup which He presented to them as His "Blood of the new covenant shed for many for the remission of sins," declaring at the same time that He would not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when He drinks it new with them in His FATHER'S kingdom. Then the old wine which excites the flesh, and makes it manifest that it is "only evil continually" gives place to the new which signifies the death of the flesh and all that it stands for.

In the millennium the flesh is not dead, but under righteous restraint, and every outburst of sin is punished by death, even though the sinner be 100 years old ; but as soon as the devil is released from his 1,000 years' confinement, he is able to marshal an army that compasses the camp of the saints about, and perishes in fire from heaven. The flesh demonstrates its innate incorrigibility even after beholding the 1,000 years' administration of the world in absolute righteousness. The devil is then cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet already are when he is made to join them. All those in all the dispensations who prefer the devil to GOD can expect only the devil's portion. The whole Bible speaks of the rottenness of the flesh, and the salvation that is to be found in JESUS CHRIST alone to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

G. S. PURNELL.

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## On Prophecy

*(From an Exposition of Isaiah, by W. Kelly)*

THOSE whose theory is that all prophecy is ideal, have to face the fact that a vast deal given out by the prophets has been fulfilled literally. Ignorant self-will denies in vain what is patent. Its accomplishment is plain in Nineveh and Babylon, in Tyre and Sidon, in Edom and Egypt, as well as in the Medo-Persian and the Macedonian powers, to say nothing of Rome ; above all, in Israel before the Assyrian and Chaldean captivities, and in the subsequent partial return of the Jews to be dispersed again, as they were by the Romans, still more terribly after the cross of

CHRIST and the rejected gospel. In the predictions simple language, figures, and symbols were employed as GOD saw fit ; but the cities, the nations, and the lands were known historically, as the changes were punctually accomplished ; and many an unbeliever has been arrested by this evidence, to learn still better and deeper things from GOD'S word, even CHRIST and His redemption.

Take an example of symbol in Ezek. xvii. The parable of the eagles is as determinate as if the prediction had been couched in literal terms. The scripture itself interprets the first great eagle as the king of Babylon, the second as Pharaoh. By the breaking off the topmost twig of the cedar of Lebanon, and placing it in a city of traffic, was meant the king of Babylon putting down Jehoiachin, and carrying him captive to Babylon. By the taking of the seed of the land to become a vine of low stature, we are to understand his setting Zedekiah (for so Mattaniah was new named by the conqueror) to be his vassal king in the land. The king of Egypt, though typified by a great eagle with great wings and much plumage, is not said to be of long pinions, nor with feathers of various colours like the king of Babylon. Yet Zedekiah breaks his oath, and turns for aid to Egypt against Babylon, to the destruction of his kingdom by Jehovah's decree. The manner of conveyance differs from that of history ; but the parties in view, and the results of the action, are no less certain, fixed and exclusive. If there are general lessons in divine prophecy, so there are in inspired history. Nebuchadnezzar and Pharaoh-Hophra (the Apries of the Greeks, and perhaps Psamatik III. of the Egyptian monuments) are here intended, and none else. So it is with the two deposed Jewish kings.

But it has been contended with no small assurance that Ezekiel, referring in chapter xvii to Isa. ii., connects it with circumstances which oblige us to understand the elevation of the sacred mount spiritually, and as verified in what has already been, and not in what is to be. The reference is dim to moderate eyes, without disputing that the elevation of Moriah is of a moral kind. But the evidence is certain that the glorious promise is future in both chapters. In the tender young twig from the highest branch of the lofty cedar is undoubtedly meant the Son of David, and not Zerubbabel. Yet it is not the first advent, but the second, which is in the perspective of the prophecy. It is the kingdom, and in no way the church. Never will the "little stone" expand into the great mountain that fills all the earth till the blow is struck on

the toes of the image of the Gentile powers, and breaks them all into pieces, like chaff to be swept away by the wind. The lowly condition of Messiah is no doubt pointed out here, but yet more the power and glory of His kingdom, when He is set, as He will be set, on His holy hill of Zion. The church, on the contrary, is unfaithful to her calling if she be not a despised pilgrim and stranger here below, as He was, till she joins her coming Bridegroom in the air, before she appears with Him, when He appears to fulfil His glory over all the earth, as He will in that day. Symbolic language therefore is no more vague than any other.

Again, the attempt to turn the prophetic style and diction into an engine for setting one prophecy in opposition to another is unworthy of a Christian. Isa. lvi. 7, 8 ; lx. ; lxvi. 21-23, are in no conflict with Isa. lvi. 3-5 ; lxv. 17 ; lxvi. 1-3 ; any more than Jer. iii. 16 with xxx. 18-22 ; xxxi. 31 ; xxxiii. 15-22. Such objections spring from ignorance ; for evidently the statements arrayed, one against another, are quite consistent, and teach distinct truths. So Ezekiel's last vision, where the temple is so important on earth, in no way contradicts John's last vision of the New Jerusalem on high, wherein is no temple. These cavils are a fair sample of the follies of spiritualising, which confounds heaven with earth, and sets prophet against prophet, and even the same inspired men against themselves. It is too sad to find such teaching in a believer, set forth and accepted with no small blowing of trumpets, though worthy only of an infidel. But it may be for that very reason the more instructive a warning against false principles of interpretation. Nor is it prophecy only that is misunderstood. The error substitutes Jewish for Christian relationship to our LORD, destroys that bridal separateness which is enjoined on the church (2 Cor. xi. 2, etc.), and consecrates desires and ways of undisguised worldliness to the dishonour of GOD and His word about us.

Granted that prophecy in each case exceeds what history can tell. This is an essential constituent of its character. It is a vast system of divine prediction, the centre of which circle is CHRIST, and CHRIST assuming by GOD's gift the government of the world with Israel nearest to Him at the end of this age. If the prophecies, even about races supposed to have vanished, were exhausted, every one might be made of its own interpretation. But it is not so. They look onward to "that day." Their partial accomplishment is the pledge of all that remains to be fulfilled. Faith, accepting the part, assuredly awaits the whole.

Unbelief, overlooking the divine mind, works evilly in two forms. Some are too instructed to deny the tallying of facts with the words of the prophets. Starting with the assumption that prediction is impossible, they essay to prove that the alleged predictions must have been written after the event. Hence the importance of knowing when the prophet wrote ; for, this once clear, their inspiration by God flows from the correspondence of word and fact, which is confessed. There is another class, however, who, if they could, would pare down or eliminate all exactitude, and reduce the word of prophecy as much as possible to general principles and ideal forms, without definite line or historical issue. Vagueness of interpretation is so complete that even in the Apocalypse distinct prediction is nowhere, unless there remain enough Protestantism to discern Romanism in Babylon.

It is vain to reason from the curse on "the Serpent," or the raising up of "David" in the future (Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24), against a strict and full accomplishment of prophecy. All who are worthy of consideration agree that the context demands the great enemy in the one case, and the great King of Israel in the other ; all repudiate a lowering literalism, with which the surrounding words are incompatible. There is a genuine as well as a spurious literalism, with figures interspersed, as in Isa. ii. or xl., which none but adversaries urge in their efforts after allegory. As vain it is to argue the discrepancy of Isaiah in his later chapters, which await the days of the world-kingdom of our LORD and of His CHRIST ; as do the passages cited from Jeremiah, and yet more obviously those from Ezekiel. That Revelation xxi. is symbolical is true, as it treats of a heavenly object ; whereas all the others speak of Israel and the Gentiles on the earth in plain terms, with figures here and there. Scripture is perfectly consistent. The fault is in the confusion of its misinterpreters. Israel and Judah mean expressly the two houses or families of Jacob's posterity, and none other ; Zion and the mountains of Jehovah's house mean the seats of the throne and the temple respectively in the land, and the Gentiles are the nations of the earth, distinct from Israel here below, and from the church and risen saints generally on high. The attempt to spiritualise these objects is a mere dream, which no idealist among Christians at least has ventured to act on consistently. For the theory is that all these objects distinguished in prophecy are the Christian church now, or in the future, under the gospel. What ? Israel, Judah, Jerusalem, and the New

Jerusalem, Zion, Moriah, and the blessed Gentiles too ! Can any scheme to interpret be more despairing or grotesque ? It is really the aim of the enemy to discredit and destroy the true force of the prophecy, and thus of GOD'S word altogether. [W.K.]

(From "Isaiah," shortly being re-issued by our Publisher.)

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## Christ and the Bible

**T**HE Bible is the inspired record of the progressive revelation of GOD, and the LORD JESUS CHRIST is the climax of that revelation. He is the revealer of the FATHER : "No man hath seen GOD at any time ; the only begotten SON, Which is in the bosom of the FATHER, He hath declared Him." And so He is called "THE WORD." The title "WORD of GOD" is used both of the Living and the written Word, and this suggests certain resemblances between CHRIST and the Bible.

We have, first of all, certain verbal resemblances. "I am the *Bread of Life*," said the Saviour, "if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever" ; "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of GOD." This was spoken by Him of the written Word. Again, He said, "I am the *Light* of the world" ; and we may put alongside this the statement of the psalmist, "Thy Word is a light unto my path." The living Word is "*able to save* them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" ; and we are exhorted to "receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save" our souls. Other verbal resemblances might be traced out between the living and written Word.

Further, CHRIST and the Bible are both *Divine and human*. In what a remarkable manner do the Humanity and Deity of our LORD reveal themselves at Sychar's well, in John iv., where the Son of Man, wearied with His journey, asks for a drink of water from the woman, and then offers her the living water, closing the interview by announcing Himself as the CHRIST. And how human are the stories of the Bible, of Joseph and his brothers, of Boaz and Ruth, of Paul's shipwreck. At the same time what wondrous depths of revelation are contained in such a book as the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Again, the living and written Word resemble each other in that,

while both are *Jewish*, both are *universal*. Our LORD was a Jew, of the royal line ; but He is the SAVIOUR of the world. The Bible, on its human side, is an Eastern Book, written in the East by Jewish penmen, and having a Jewish outlook ; at the same time its central message of redemption is universal in its scope and appeal.

And *the Holy Spirit* is needed to understand both the Person and the Book. "No man can say that JESUS is the LORD, but by the Holy Ghost" ; and the same Interpreter is necessary to enable us to understand the spiritual messages of the Bible : "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the SPIRIT which is of GOD, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of GOD."

*The Bible is the Book of the Christ.* In it is contained the only original information we possess about Him. He is its centre, its heart, its life, its glory. The Old Testament points in promise and picture to a coming Deliverer and a coming Sacrifice. When we reach the Gospels we realise that the coming One has come ; we are face to face with the wondrous Person of the CHRIST of GOD. Passing on to the Acts we see the power of the same Person operating from the unseen world in and through His disciples by His Spirit. The Epistles contain the risen LORD's doctrines and precepts fully developed, and can be summarised in the two phrases, "We in Christ," and "Christ in us." And the Apocalypse gives us the programme of events to take place at the revelation of JESUS CHRIST.

*What does Christ say about the Bible?* He stretches one arm, as it were, over the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures and sets upon them the seal of His Divine authority. Of them He says, "They are they which testify of Me," and speaking to the religious unbelievers of His day, He declares, "Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me." He affirms that He fulfils the Hebrew Scriptures as the Messiah. The weapon that He uses against the tempter is, "It is written," and "Have ye not read?" is His answer to the criticisms of His opponents.

He mentioned the Flood, the destruction of Sodom, the miraculous preservation and deliverance of Jonah, the repentance of Nineveh, as real facts ; and after His resurrection, He said, "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me."



The Old Testament was CHRIST's library and His armoury. His speech was full of its sentences. And His attitude towards it is one great reason for Christians revering it.

And the LORD JESUS virtually stretches the other arm over the New Testament. During His farewell discourse in the Upper Room He said to His disciples : "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth." The further teaching which our LORD promised in this important statement is contained in the Acts, the Epistles and the Apocalypse. The whole of the teaching of the New Testament is the teaching of *one* mind, the mind of CHRIST. The apostles assert that it is CHRIST Who continues to teach and direct them. His teaching, as given in the Gospels, includes the substance of all the doctrines in the Epistles ; His utterances are amplified and explained by His apostles under the direction of His Spirit.

In view of all this, the question, "Do we believe the Bible ?" is really, "Do we believe CHRIST ?" CHRIST and the Bible stand together.

The position of the Bible in the world is unique ; so is its power over the minds and hearts of men ; so is its composition ; so is the nature of its contents ; so are its claims. The Bible authenticates itself. It has always had and has today the intrinsic power to convince men, at all events spiritual men, that it is the Word of GOD. The best proof belongs to the Christian believer. The truths of the Book are bound up with the experiences of the new life that is his because CHRIST is his. In CHRIST he has *the key* to the Book. He bows intuitively to its Divine authority, and goes to it inevitably and naturally to discover his Father's mind. The Book speaks to his spirit with the voice of GOD.

The Living Word and the written Word bear witness to each other. Happy is he who rests his soul upon the Person and the Book.

E. ADAMS.

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Satan always delights in drawing people down to earth ; it is what he is busy about at this present time ; he would have the heart occupied with anything short of a living CHRIST in the glory of GOD. The object of the HOLY GHOST, on the contrary, is to attract the heart to this living Man, this CHRIST of GOD in the glory, and thereby to detach us from all that is earthly and carnal.

## Correspondence

Dear Brother in the LORD,

Referring to your letter on "Eating the sin offering in the holy place" (Lev. x.), does not the incident recounted show the worthlessness of a sin offering which was offered by priests in an unfit state to offer? This seems to have been the thing that Aaron suggested, and that Moses accepted, as an apology. Would the sin offering have been any more acceptable if he had eaten it, in view of its already having been rejected in the case of Nadab and Abihu? The LORD's holiness was at stake. The offending priests had evidently mixed in the activity of the flesh with what was due to the LORD. They had evidently acted in a manner similar to that of Moses when his fleshly activity *smote* the rock that he was commanded to *speak* to; and, further spoke as if the bringing out of the water was his own doing in conjunction with the LORD: "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" For the unbelief that failed to sanctify the LORD in the eyes of the children of Israel, Moses was denied the privilege of bringing the congregation into the land. The direct mention of abstention from wine when entering the tabernacle seems to suggest that the fleshly activity consequent upon wine drinking was the basis of the wrong-doing of Nadab and Abihu. The LORD's honour and glory had to be safeguarded in all the offerings and every detail had to be in accordance with divine revelation. What an object lesson there is in all the offerings in as far as they show what the LORD delighted in and what befitted His presence G.S.P.

SIR,

Would your readers appreciate the following? A year or two ago, I went through the awe-inspiring Temple of GOD. I first entered the portico of Genesis, walked down through the Art Galleries, where pictures of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Isaac, Jacob and Daniel hung on the walls.

I passed into the music-room of the Psalms, where every pipe and reed in the great organ responded to the tuneful harp of David. I next came to the chamber of Ecclesiastes, where the voice of the Preacher was heard; and from there into the Conservatory of Sharon, where the lilies of the valley perfumed my surroundings. Then I came to the business office of the Proverbs, and passed on to the Observatory-room of the Prophets, where I saw telescopes of various sizes pointed to far-off events.

I then entered the audience-chamber of the King, caught the atmosphere of His glory from the standpoint of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, then on again through the Correspondence-room, where sat Paul and Peter, James and John, penning their Epistles. With timidity I stepped into the Throne-room of Revelations and there caught the vision of GOD, seated upon His throne. It was immense !

Yours, etc.,

F. G. HUGHES, F.R.G.S.

*Q.—Wales.*—Is it possible to associate Matt. xxv. 14-30 with the Judgment Seat of CHRIST ? If so, how can verse 30 apply ?

*A.*—To the first question the answer is, Yes, if we remember that all do not appear at the Judgment Seat of CHRIST at the same time. All judgment is committed to the SON, because He is the SON of Man.

To the second question, Matt. xxv. 30 certainly has its application directly to those who in these days, when the Kingdom of the heavens is known as Christendom, take the place of being servants of the LORD. Christendom is not the Church truly, but the true Church is perforce in Christendom which contains all those who name the NAME of the LORD. Into this general body admittance is by baptism, by the outward profession of Christianity irrespective of the genuineness of the profession. Hence gift and official position as servants of CHRIST may exist in it quite apart from the receiving of the grace of GOD in truth.

Balaam in the Old Testament had the prophetic gift, and Judas in the New Testament held the Apostolic office and each with the incurred responsibility. Neither of these, however, was a true saint of GOD.

“An unconverted man might have a gift from the LORD. The slothful servant was clearly one that never had the knowledge of GOD : proved in that he did not believe in the goodness of the LORD : he had no confidence in the grace that is in CHRIST JESUS. In this the evil servant showed what *he* was. The denier of the goodness of GOD is invariably a bad man himself.” [w.k.]

Scripture is clear that all must inevitably appear before Him ; some at the Judgment Seat ; some at His appearing to judge the quick and the dead ; others at the final great Assize ; but all, because He is the SON Who became SON of Man to be the SAVIOUR of mankind and to Him therefore all the affairs of mankind whether for eternal weal or endless woe are committed.

## They Shall Renew Their Strength

**W**E need to be constantly renewed. Without that, spiritual energy does not keep up. "They shall renew their strength" it is said "like the eagles," and it is not progress in knowledge which affects that, although, this is profitable for teaching christians, and well for rendering the gospel which we preach more pure. What is of moment, is the keeping of oneself near GOD—there love reveals itself and grows. His love in our souls, which finds its activity and its comfort in exercising itself towards poor sinners and towards the saints—one seeks the glory of the LORD in them, and their own well-being. GOD gives you to enjoy Himself, and reveals Himself not only as infinite blessedness in Himself, but who—in the activities of His love in which He finds His delight, and when His love is shed abroad in our hearts, we enjoy, assured by what He is ; but this love is active toward us by His grace—Activity unless refreshing itself in His communion may be sincere, but will degenerate into routine and into a habit of acting, and is even dangerous.

The soul is far from GOD without being aware of it—But in His love, dwelling in JESUS, and His word dwelling in us, we can count on an answer to the requests we address to Him in our hearts.

Study the Bible with prayer, seek the LORD there and not knowledge, that will come too, but the heart is well directed in seeking the LORD, the eye is single and the whole body is full of light. My earnest desire is that brethren may be very near the LORD and the LORD very near them, not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their minds—"CHRIST is all," the more one travels on down here in His ways the more one feels it.

J.N.D.



Peter left all and began to follow the LORD. CHRIST filled his heart and the glory of His Person eclipsing everything here, he left all and followed JESUS. Now was there ever a moment in your heart or mine like that ? Is there anything as fine in the history of your soul or mine ? That is the real question for us. •

# On Being Joyful, Peaceful, Hopeful

BY THE EDITOR

**N**OW the GOD of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the HOLY GHOST." (Rom. xv. 13.)

If it is true that "hope springs eternal in the human breast," and therefore miracles of patience and perseverance are wrought in human experience, it is even more so in Christian life and experience. Was ever so hopeful a Christian soul as the Apostle Paul? His inspired letters, whether written to churches or individuals, simply overflow with the abounding hope with which his believing soul was filled by the HOLY SPIRIT. Spite of overwhelming difficulties, disappointments, and discouraging experiences which seemed to crowd upon him as he resolutely pursued his course, the GOD of hope so filled him with all joy and peace in believing that at the very end of his journey he triumphantly asserted: "Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Not ashamed of what? Of the suffering, of the cowardly desertion of all those in Asia who owed so much to his tireless labours, but were now ashamed of the circumstances into which fidelity to CHRIST and His cause had brought him. The reproach of CHRIST lay heavily upon this valiant soldier of JESUS CHRIST and they apparently wished to avoid any connection with it.

But joy and peace in believing kept the Apostle overflowing with hope by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT so he could affirm,—Nevertheless I am not ashamed.

In his Roman letter, a dozen times over he refers to "hope" as characteristically Christian. "Hope of the glory of GOD"; "hope that maketh not ashamed"; "rejoicing in hope." Then when drawing the epistle to a close, citing from the Old Testament certain glowing prophecies of joy to Israel, mercy to the Gentile peoples, praises from both, and CHRIST as both the Object of hope and expectation of all blessing on the basis of His Atoning work and appointed Rulership, he writes: Now may the

GOD of "that" hope, "the" hope fill you with all joy and peace in your believing, so that ye may overflow in that hope, in the HOLY SPIRIT's power. This is what Miss Havergal so sweetly expressed :

Oh, the joy to see Thee reigning,  
 Thee, my own beloved LORD !  
 Every tongue Thy NAME confessing,  
 Worship, honour, glory, blessing,  
 Brought to Thee with one accord ;  
 Thee, my MASTER, and my FRIEND  
 Vindicated and enthroned,  
 Unto earth's remotest end  
 Glorified, adored and owned !

That day of glory will dawn ; CHRIST will return and be glorified in His saints, and marvelled at in all them that believe. So we rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD.

In ordinary experience, to hope is to cherish a desire of good with expectation of its possible attainment. Always however a haze of uncertainty hangs around it. We hope, and expect, but cannot be quite sure until it is realised. People are semi-humorously warned "not to count your chickens until they are hatched" because of this very element of uncertainty entering into everything connected with human hopes. But the "hope" with which the Apostle prays the GOD of hope to fill His believing people is free of this defect. It is a certainty though yet unrealised, for GOD is not the GOD of a hope that makes ashamed by its frustration or unfulfilment. On the contrary the SPIRIT of GOD leads the believing soul at once to bank upon the fulfilment of the promise in spite of present appearances.

We readily recognise the effect of hope in human affairs. The hope of a rise in wages puts a new face on things for the young lad or girl in their place of business. A new interest is created and a new impetus given to the humdrum task by the hope of increased reward. The hope of gaining a better position, a higher post, is an unfailing incentive to an ambitious youth. The hope of complete recovery from a long tedious period of ill-health puts new life into the patient and makes endurance not so difficult.

So on the Christian course, as the road winds uphill all the way, and obstacles are encountered on the right hand and the left, and the strain and stress begin to tell somewhat upon the spirit, then the hope of the glory of GOD which is nourished by endurance and experience because the love of GOD is shed abroad in the heart by the HOLY SPIRIT, glows brightly. Encouraged by the things that were written aforetime for our instruction we then cherish more than ever the hope implanted in us by GOD Himself. Thus rejoicing in hope, patient in endurance, and persevering in prayer, the pilgrim steadily pursues his way with a lighter heart and a firmer step.

“The eternal glory gleams afar  
To nerve my faint endeavour ;  
So now to watch, to work to war,  
And then to rest for ever.”

Yet in that endless rest, His servants shall serve Him : and they shall see His face ; and His Name shall be in their foreheads : . . . and they shall reign for ever. Perfect service, perfect vision, perfect likeness and perfect triumph. For the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their FATHER.

“Now may the GOD of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the HOLY SPIRIT.” Rejoicing in hope of the glory of GOD. Thus we travel on, joyful, peaceful, hopeful by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT.

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## An Evening Meditation

(Psalm iv.)

BY QUARTUS

**I**T is evening. It is getting near the time to go to bed. The quietness of the hour lends itself to meditation. The Psalmist reflects upon past deliverances. He meditates upon present needs and dangers. He thinks of the petty spite that has fallen to his lots in recent times. Selah ! He is thinking, thinking, thinking, for he has much food for thought these days. And first he thinks of GOD Who alone can vindicate his cause. As he thinks of

“the GOD of his righteousness,” memory quickly comes to his aid. “When I was in distress ; in sore, sad and desperate straits.” How many the deliverances, how great the mercies ! “Thou has enlarged me,” set me at liberty, “delivered me from all my fears.”

Continue Thy loving kindness unto me, have mercy upon me and hear my prayer. So he thinks of GOD, His help in times past, and makes his prayer to Him “Whose mercy endureth for ever.” That is verse one of this Psalm of David delivered by him afterwards to the Chief Musician on Neginoth.

2. Then he thinks of men, the sons of men, the leaders in this revolt against his authority, in rebellion against their rightful king. The hollowness and falsity of it all. Dishonouring their lawful sovereign ; turning his GOD-appointed honour into shame ; loving an empty thing, a mere imitation of royalty, and seeking the falsehood of the usurper’s pretended power. Absolom, Ahithophel, leaders of the people, princes and priests, all drawn away from the king whom GOD had appointed and anointed. “O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame ? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing, lying ?” cries the dishonoured king of GOD’s choice.

3. “But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for Himself : the LORD will hear when I call unto Him.” So he thinks this time of himself, and of the grace of GOD shown him. “He chose David also His servant, and took him from the sheepfolds : He brought him to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.” “I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David My servant ; with My holy oil have I anointed him.”

So in this evening time, this hour of meditation, he thinks of GOD’s sovereign favour. He thinks of the covenant of blessing made to him by GOD.” “Although my house be not so with God ; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” He thinks of GOD’s favour shown as a prayer-hearing God. Nearly all the Davidic psalms are prayers mingled with praise until in the most magnificent perhaps of them all he exclaims, The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.



4. Still thinking, still meditating upon GOD and man, and his own relations to both, the mood changes. "Stand in awe, and sin not." Tremble and fear. Speak in your heart. Let the voice of conscience be heard in the quiet hour. Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah!

Self-judgment the medicine of the soul is needed. *Conscience has no comfort for the wrong-doer.* The sons of men need this in their vanity and falsity rebelling against their king. The son of Jesse also needs it. We need it. I need it. "Blessed is the man that feareth alway"; he who stands in awe as he remembers his faults and folly in the presence of Him Whose "eyes are as a flame of fire."

5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness. Self-judgment leads to the offering of the sacrifices of GOD, penitence and contrition. "The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit: a contrite heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not despise."

So he thinks, and ponders, upon the vital fact that in the approach to GOD *reality is of first importance.* Penitence, contrition, godly sorrow, amendment, and restitution mingle together, in offering the sacrifices of righteousness to the GOD "Who loveth righteousness."

"Put your trust in the LORD," for the first definite act of confidence, and the habit of confidence formed as these acts are repeated in life lead to the enjoyment and tranquillity of those whose minds are kept in perfect peace because they trust in Him.

6. Still thinking, thinking quietly as nature wraps her mantle over the landscape stretching around the door of his encampment that night, he reflects upon the voices that perhaps during the day, or even now may be heard borne upon the evening air. The voice of the pessimist looking around the horizon on a level with his own eyes for help "Who will show us any good?" "There be many that say, who will show us any good?" Many asking, Will good ever come? Who can procure it for us? The thousands of armed men massed against David and his little company. All the influential people against him. Is success even humanly possible? These are some of the suggestions that come as the voices are heard asking Who will show us any good?

To the question of the pessimist, the answer of the godly man comes as he appeals to the GOD of his righteousness. "LORD, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us." It is a prayer of faith and love born of the upward look. The LORD liveth. The sunshine of His approval dispels the gloomy forebodings and horrid shapes that unbelief would beget. The inner life is flooded with the light of His countenance.

7. Memory calls upon Experience to sing her song of what the LORD has done. One grateful acknowledgment is uttered of a joy independent of passing circumstances. The reckless gaiety and hollow mirth of the ungodly, and even the glad innocent enjoyment of GOD's good earthly gifts are not to be compared with the gladness which Thou hast put in my heart.

8. "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for Thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety." Like a tired child, without a care or a fear, with the pressure and the protection of his father's strong arms around him the Psalmist quietly rests in the knowledge of the care and interest and power of his GOD. An assurance of peaceful security without wakefulness caused by anxiety, or bitter thoughts of those sons of men who seek to turn his glory into shame, is his as he prepares for bed that night.

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## Some Experiences in Christian Work

### 3.—*How The Messenger Started*

WE are told in the Book of Judges of certain "who came to the help of the LORD" and among these were "*they that handle the pen of the writer.*" That He, Who could quite easily dispense with our help, should deign to accept and honour it with His blessing, is another proof of what a gracious MASTER we are permitted to serve. To *live* the gospel is the part of Christian testimony open to, and binding upon, *all* who have received it. To *preach* the gospel is the imperative call upon *many* who have received it and who feel that: "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." The world does not *want*, but very sorely *needs*, SPIRIT-filled preachers of the gospel of the grace

of GOD ; men who feel necessity laid upon them to do so. Men, who not only fill the allotted time at the usual hour of service, but who carry the burden of the unsaved always, and so must preach—the love of CHRIST constraining them. To *write* the gospel extends the boundary of those to whom the message will come, but this too is a gift which makes the possessor responsible to the MASTER for its use. By life, by lip, by pen to be able to make CHRIST known in this Christless world is a privilege reserved for those who themselves have tasted that the LORD is gracious. Sometimes the possession of this gift of writing the gospel is quite unsuspected, but all who could, should endeavour to serve the LORD in this additional way.

How the *MESSENGER* started is what the writer has been asked to state. It began like most people and things do begin, in a very small way. Now however that millions have been issued and readers of *WORDS OF HELP* distribute it widely in English-speaking countries, our Publisher suggested that some account of it should be given by way of interest and encouragement to these.

It was born on a sick bed in December, 1921, when the writer lay, day after day, feeling that probably his day of service for the LORD must be nearing its close. The quiet review of the past seemed to furnish nothing but regret at so little attempted and still less achieved for the One Who had done so much for him. Motives for busy activities in Christian work were challenged in the light of the Day of account.

A great longing to do one real piece of work that GOD would own in blessing to others took possession of him. Something akin to Samson's prayer to be strengthened this once was his desire. Then, casting about in his mind for a true and suitable incident around which the great story of GOD's redeeming grace could be woven, the story of *THE FRIENDLESS MAN* claimed attention.

With earnest prayer, and much labour the *MESSENGER* was born, and doubtful as to its probable reception the Publisher only ventured to issue a thousand or two. Only the one issue was contemplated, but the writer felt that GOD had answered his prayer for one more opportunity of service before the night came when no man can work.

The *MESSENGER* however was so warmly welcomed that the Publisher asked for more, and so the *MESSENGER SERIES* began nineteen years ago. It was quickly adopted by various Christian workers and localised.

One Anglican clergyman who had his Bishop coming in connection with a special Mission circulated three to four thousand in his parish with a picture of the church on the cover. He gave as his reason: "This is just the thing I wanted; the gospel plainly, yet interestingly stated." Other Church of England clergy also circulated them by thousands.

A Roman Catholic family in England regularly sends a copy to the old people in Ireland who are devout Roman Catholics, but who look for it month by month saying it is easy to understand what it means.

Letters from New Zealand have told of the regular arrival of the *MESSENGER*, and the memories of the old country and gospel services attended at Greenwich in days long gone by.

A country brother, an indefatigable visitor, was greatly cheered in an outlying district in Bedfordshire, when, on one occasion being a day or two later than usual, he was told: "We look for these little papers, Sir, each month; when we have done with them, we always post them off to a friend."

This experience of Christian work shows how much our ever-gracious LORD can make out of so little. To Him be all the praise and thanks. W.G.T.

(Next month (D.V.) "*District Visiting.*")

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## The Book of Ezra

*Notes on Bible Readings at Jumet, Belgium (concluded).*

**C**HAPTER VIII. This chapter begins by giving us the names of those who went up with Ezra. They were reckoned by genealogy and were *males*. There was among them spiritual strength, none of that feebleness which is mentioned in 2 Tim. iii. 6 under the title of contempt "*silly women.*" Among the names we see those

of the last sons of Adonikam. A number of the sons of Adonikam had already gone up with Zerubbabel (ch. ii. 3) and the last are here with Ezra. The family is thus complete. May it be so with all who have members of their families in the assembly.

From verse 15 we learn that there was no undue haste in their going up : it was necessary, before setting out, to take all the consequences into consideration and to weigh everything in the light of Scripture. Unhappily for David, he did not do this when he thought of bringing up the ark. (2 Sam. vi. 6.) Alas ! What consequences followed such an act !

In verse 15, Ezra discovered that there were absolutely none of the Levites among the people who were about to go up with him out of Babylon. The Levites are servants; they are absolutely necessary for the service of the house of GOD. What was to be done ? Ezra sent messengers to them in order that they might come up with him. We also have need of servants in the assembly, especially for pastoral service. There are few who devote themselves to this work for which they require self-denial, love and devotedness. A large number of saints who have the necessary qualities given them by the LORD are scattered among the various denominations of Christendom with the result that in many cases they are absolutely prevented from exercising their service by the organisations in which they find themselves ; a large number are even ignorant of such service and incapable of it. Nevertheless, they are gifts of the LORD to His church, but they are gifts which we must call unproductive. We may well pray GOD that He should deliver them, and lead them to the place where they could freely carry out the service which is theirs to do. In the end, before setting out, Ezra asks of GOD *a right way* for them, for their little ones and for all their substance. We are going to the house of GOD ; the family, and all that is under our hands, belongs to the LORD and we are but administrators. The LORD alone can lead us through all circumstances.

In the task of going up to Jerusalem it was necessary to count on GOD alone ; it is He Who is able to protect us from

the attacks of enemies and from dangers upon the way. It is a shame to the saints of GOD when they lean upon the arm of flesh : the hand of GOD is more than sufficient for faith. If we have spoken of the power of GOD, we ought to show by our manner of behaviour that we have confidence in it. This is part of our testimony.

GOD protects them in body and in all that they have, for they were taking with them the precious vessels of the house of GOD. They had the care of them, but only the power of GOD could preserve them from the numerous enemies who would have desired nothing better than to rob them of the riches which were in their hands. In this connection we may also recall the beautiful passage in Isaiah lii. 11 : "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing . . . ye that bear the vessels of the LORD. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight : for the LORD will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your reward." What a wonderful escort they had ! It was better than all the cavalry of the king. In fasting and in humility they besought GOD that He would *shew* them the way and *guard* them in the way. Off they go, and the hand of GOD, is with them to deliver them from the enemies and from such as lay in wait by the way.

When they reached Jerusalem, they could account by weight and number for all the precious things which had been committed to them. When we arrive at the end of our journey, shall we not also be able to give account of all the precious things which are in our hands, and which have been confided to us by the faithful witnesses who have gone before us in the path of testimony ?

After this, the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt offerings to the GOD of Israel : "twelve bullocks for all Israel." They set forth the unity of the people of GOD in its blessedness by means of the sacrifice which they offered. We can also, in a similar manner, in the midst of the outward ruin of the church, sing with adoring hearts :

"How sweet to Thee the fact Thy church is one,  
LORD JESUS, for Thine eye to look upon !"

Besides burnt offerings, they offered "ninety-six rams, seventy and seven lambs and twelve he-goats for a sin offering; all this was a burnt offering unto the LORD." Even the sin offering came before GOD as a sacrifice by fire of a sweet smell to GOD. When we shall come to the FATHER'S house, all shall rise up before GOD as a sacrifice of a sweet smell, even the sacrifice for sin which will never cease to be before the eyes of the Holy GOD; and there shall remain only the value of the precious sacrifice of CHRIST, and that for all eternity.

Ezra and his companions delivered the king's commissions to the king's lieutenants, and to the governors *on this side the river*, and they furthered the people and the house of GOD. Further, in this book, we find mention of countries which were on this side the river, that is to say, which were to the west of the river Euphrates. This river was the eastern limit of the land of promise. (Josh. i. 4.)

Only in the glorious reign of a Solomon, had the people possessed the whole of their heritage. Here, in the midst of the greatest ruin, a little remnant come out of Babylon again embraces the whole extent of this heritage and for them the boundary of this heritage is the Euphrates. Faith often takes in divine blessings in their fullness in a time of ruin more than when all is prospering in the midst of the people of GOD.

CHAPTER IX. The return to the house of GOD in a time of ruin, however, does not mean nothing but joy. In chapter iii. we find joy and tears. Ezra was soon, alas! to shed tears himself. All who are faithful have the same experiences at all times. The coming of these faithful men to Jerusalem gave occasion for the bringing out of the evil which was, unhappily, in the midst of the people of GOD. It is often the same to-day; those who have newly come in from outside have generally more fear of evil than those who are older. The character of the evil was *association with the world, a real danger to-day*.

What is to be done in the presence of evil? In the first place, it is necessary to humble oneself individually before GOD, before doing anything else without even requiring that others should do it with us. This is something we lack to this day when we have to exercise discipline

in the assembly. If we do not do this discipline is fruitless. Ezra began by humbling himself ; he sat down overwhelmed; then were assembled unto him all that trembled at the words of the GOD of Israel. He remained there until the evening sacrifice. It was at this hour, five centuries later, that CHRIST died on the cross, when the great SACRIFICE was completed. Without *this* sacrifice all would have been for ever lost, and there would have been no hope for the people then, nor for ourselves to-day. At the time of the evening sacrifice, Ezra arose and made his confession, a confession which goes right back to the times of the fathers.

CHAPTER X. As Ezra prayed and made his confession, there assembled to him a very great congregation of men, women and *children*. His example brings others to humble themselves. Then (vv. 7 and 8) a proclamation is sent to *all* the children of the captivity that they should gather themselves together to Jerusalem in three days. Those who did not do this should be separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away. When discipline has to be exercised, precious instruction will be found in this. We should all be united in the exercise of discipline. One cannot be neutral to an act touching the glory of the LORD.

In verse 2, Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, of the sons of Elam, begins to speak and acknowledges the sin of the people, but he declares also that there is *hope* and that by separating from the evil which is in the midst of the people. This is the more remarkable since his own father is among the guilty ones. (chap x. 26.) He does not take counsel with flesh and blood, and, like the sons of Levi (Deut. xxxiii. 9), he says to his father and his mother : "I have not seen him." It is not for him to act on this occasion, but he says to Ezra : "The matter belongeth unto thee : we also will be with thee : be of good courage and do it." Ezra arises, therefore, and makes the people swear to act according to this word. While waiting until the people should purify themselves, he continues to mourn. So long as the evil removes unremoved from our midst, we have to continue in mourning ; "he did eat no bread nor drink water : for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away."



In verse 9 we see that external circumstances come in to complicate the matter and make the work of discipline the more difficult. Here it is the rain which complicates matters. All the congregation trembled because of this matter, and for the great rain. In verse 10 Ezra addresses the guilty ones now, and no longer says : "We have sinned," but, "Ye have transgressed and ye have taken strange wives." At such a moment he acts so as to make the evil weigh on the consciences of the guilty ones and cause them to purify themselves ; but it is a great task and is not the work of one day. In the case before us it took two whole months to put the affair in order. At times, alas ! it takes years before an assembly is completely rid of an evil which comes in, because the evil is attended by developments which spread far and wide.

Often there are those who *oppose* and *stand up against the discipline* (v. 15). Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah stood up against this (N. Trans.), and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them. Happily the opposers were not numerous in this case. Perhaps this Meshullam is the same as the one in verse 29 ; we could therefore understand his opposition.

In the forefront of those who had taken strange wives we find sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, the great high priest ; those who were at the head of the people took the lead in the transgression. They gave their hands that they would put away their wives and offered a ram for their trespass. After them we have a long list of the guilty ones. Some among them had children. Much distress must follow. None can break GOD'S laws with impunity !  
(From the French of Alf. G.)

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Rev. iii. 12. I do not write my name on a book which I may wish to get rid of. On the other hand, if I write my name on it, I thereby declare that it is in my possession, that it is mine and that I want it to stay in my possession. If I write another person's name on it, it is because I am going to give it to that person.

## The Old Covenant and the New

**D**OES the church belong to the New Covenant" (Testament)? and, "In how much was Paul a minister of the New Covenant? (Luke xxii. 20; 2 Cor. iii. 6), are questions sometimes asked. It is perhaps worth while to give these questions a little consideration.

The "old" or "first" covenant was based on legal obligations. When Moses had read the book of the covenant in the audience of the people with the solemn words of JEHOVAH: "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto Me," the people answered: "All that the LORD hath said we will do." Then Moses took the blood of the animal which was sacrificed to seal the covenant, and sprinkled it on the people, and said: "Behold the blood of the covenant which the LORD hath made with you *concerning all these words*" (Ex. xix. 5-8; xxiv. 7, 8; cf. Heb. ix. 18ff.).

This covenant was based, therefore, *on man's obedience*. "If ye shall," said GOD. From the very first this resulted in imperfection, indeed, in utter hopelessness. On such a basis there could not be a peaceful way of bringing man into relationship with GOD, of making a lasting connection between the HOLY ONE and the sinful, fallen creature. The blood of dedication might indeed flow, but it was only the blood of bulls and of goats which could never take away sin. Death indeed came in, but not that of a Holy Man, of a perfect Redeemer, who could take upon Himself the guilt of the guilty and take him with Him into an entirely new and heavenly place when the work had been finished. The blood of the old covenant only sealed the responsibility of man, "*to keep all the words of God and to obey.*"

The blessings of the old covenant, therefore, depended on man's obedience, its groundwork was the blood of bulls and of goats offered by a *living* mediator. On the other hand, the new covenant rests on the *death of the Mediator Himself*, and on *His obedience* unto death, even the death of the cross; its unshakable, eternally secure foundation is the *blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*. The old covenant *promised* blessing, if man would keep the

commandments of God ; the new covenant *brings* blessing and blessing which in no way depends on conditions attached to man, but exclusively on the sovereignty of GOD and the counsels of His grace from which it flows.

The old covenant of mount Sinai was made with the people of Israel. It is easy to assume that the new covenant will be made with *us* who are Christians. It is not so, however, for the new covenant is also in connection with the people of Israel but will be made with them only at the end of days. *The new covenant is therefore not yet consummated.* This fact is often overlooked although Scripture in both Old and New Testaments speaks in a way that cannot be misunderstood. "Behold the days come, saith the LORD, *that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah* : not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, said the LORD : but this shall be the covenant that I will make *with the house of Israel*" ; etc. (Jer. xxxi. 31-33). This passage is quoted in Heb. viii. 8-10 : "Behold the days come, saith the LORD, *when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah . . . .* this is the covenant that *I will make with the house of Israel* after those days." (See also ch. x. 16.)

The new covenant *will be made* on the ground of free grace : "for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi. 34). It is thus distinctly one-sided, i.e. one of the two parties undertakes *all* obligations, the other undertakes not one, but only *receives*. Therefore we cannot speak of the covenant as being drawn up between parties who had made an agreement, for the covenant will be accomplished towards both the houses of Israel and *set up by God*. All is grace and must be grace if the covenant is to stand : "grace which reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." (Rom v. 21.)

I repeat, therefore : The new covenant is not yet consummated. Its *ground is prepared*, its basis and its seal are the Death of CHRIST. We already enjoy its blessings

to-day, while its effects for Israel are not yet to be seen. The day of its accomplishment is yet future. The old covenant sets *typically* before us all that forms the basis of the new covenant but, as we have seen, man was not in a position to keep to it.

*Trans T.H.*

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

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## To Correspondents

*A. S., Bristol.* The sad case of a believer standing drinking in a public house in his own village and then pleading a good conscience, only shows how awfully easy it is to be self-deceived. Conscience needs adjusting by Scripture, and anything that tends to bring discredit on testimony to CHRIST is wrong—however one tries to excuse it. The text you quote Matt. xxiv. 49 has its application, especially as the “smiting of his fellow servants” nowadays can be done quite as effectively by the tongue as by the hand. The following verses describe what happens to such.

*S.E., Hull.* “Is it wrong for a Christian to smoke?” By asking this question you have answered it for *yourself* at any rate. “Take heed to thyself”—and pray for those whom you think are not acting as you feel they should.

*A.H.P., Shepherd's Bush.* The question “Where art thou?” was obviously not asked by GOD for His information, but that fallen Adam might realize where *he* was. Tract enclosed by you is a Pentecostal effusion, therefore very earnest, but going somewhat beyond Scripture.

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## THOUGHT

The Thessalonians had received two things by means of the Word, the service of a living and true God and the attitude of waiting for the Lord Jesus. He is a *true* God, not hiding from man his state nor the character of God Himself. With Him we enter into the communion of life. All of them were entirely uninformed as to the details of the coming of the Lord, but these Thessalonians waited for the Lord from heaven and that was enough to transform their lives. These two things, the service of God and waiting for the Lord, bring forth wonderful fruits in practical life, (1 Thess. i. 3), they were realities for the Thessalonians. This was the first love. The world knew about these things, not because the Thessalonians *spoke* about them, but because they *did* them.

## “In the Mount of the Lord it Shall be Seen”

BY THE EDITOR

**N**EITHER the Mount of the LORD, nor the Valley of Baca (Ps. lxxxiv) are to be found upon the map, but both on every road of life as the pilgrims of faith journey homewards. “Abraham called the name of the place ‘JEHOVAH JIREH’: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen that the LORD will provide.” Yet another rendering is both interesting and also instructive, “In the Mount of the LORD, the LORD will see to it.” All of which is vastly comforting to the people of the LORD, is it not?

As another has well remarked, “we never enter into blessing without passing through trial. It is not GOD’s way that we should.” So here, Abraham, the friend of GOD, and the father of the faithful, learns more fully both the faithfulness and friendship of GOD, in what at the moment appeared the worst possible circumstances.

So natural it seems to our hearts to doubt the goodness and unfailing interest in us of GOD, so hard to trust in hours of emergency. And when there came to Abraham that supreme trial of faith in regard to the call to offer up Isaac, it was so unexpected, so unusual and so unsettling that only a deeply rooted faith could confidently say, “My son, GOD will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” But faith is no faith apart from the confident venture it makes as the road of life dips down the shadowed Valley of Baca. Then the discovery is made that GOD is never nearer than in the dark, nor the Husbandman of the True Vine nearer, than when pruning the branches to make them more fruitful.

It was after the great trial of his faith that Abraham with a rejoicing heart calls the place of deliverance, “The Mount of the LORD, and affirms that there it shall be seen that the LORD will provide.” In after times these words became a proverb, an encouragement, a doctrine and a confident expectation. It is this argument from experience which led John Newton to sing:—

“His love in times past forbids us to think  
 He'll leave us at last in trouble to sink :  
 The LAMB in His glory is ever in view,  
 The pledge and the proof He will bring us quite through.”

Experience creates and confirms confidence since the LORD of the Mount is the Unchanging One, the great and gracious contemporary of every generation of believers. Of that part of the great host that have passed along the road and are now out of our sight we can truly say:—

“In every age Thou heardst their cry,  
 In every age they found Thee nigh,  
 And blessed Thy consolation.”

“For in the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen that the LORD will provide.”

In other words emergencies which arise, to us so unusual, unexpected, and unsettling, will always prove that the LORD will see to it, for He has said, “I will never leave thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, The LORD is my helper, I will not fear.”

On the physical level of daily recurring bodily needs, it is our comfort to reflect that He is the GOD in Whose hands our breath is, and Whose are all our ways; that in Him we live and move and have our being; that His mercies are new every morning because of His unfailing compassions. He it is Who opens His hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing; Who does us good in giving fruitful seasons filling our hearts with food and gladness. Whatever may be the faulty methods by which His bounty is often distributed, it is the LORD Who provides. Well indeed did a Psalmist exclaim, “Blessed be the LORD Who daily loadeth us with benefits.”

On the social level of our lives, the need for friendship, fellowship, strength for daily duties, sympathy in hours of sorrow, support in times of trial, courage and fortitude to face difficulties, disappointments and dangers, in the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen that the LORD will see to it. He knows the way we take. His way is in the sea as well as in the sanctuary; He rides upon the storms, and in the darkest hour across the troubled water comes the calm reassuring word, “It is I, be not afraid”; for “Thou art near, O LORD.” But just where is

the Mount of the LORD, in which all these comforting experiences may be known and seen? In the story of Abraham and Isaac (Gen. xxii) the Mount of the LORD was situated just at the place of the trial of his faith; the place reached in obedience to the will of GOD.

For the people of GOD to-day it is just at the place in the journey of life reached by them, and always at the time where obedience to GOD's known will is being exercised. There is always the real difficulty calling for an act of faith, for if we could clearly see how everything would turn out satisfactorily there would be no demand made upon our faith. Take the case of Abraham, who so confidently affirmed to Isaac that GOD would provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering—how, at such a time, in such a place it was not clear. But faith counts upon the One to Whom our handicaps, frustrations, disappointments, difficulties and misunderstandings present no problem to solve, and in "the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen that the LORD will provide."

Now, let us consider the highest level of human need, the need of an Offering and a Sacrifice acceptable to GOD for man. Pagan altars and sacrifices had witnessed age after age to a sense of a need they could not meet. The ordained sacrifices on Jewish altars for centuries told a similar story of a conscious want which they could not supply. All alike bore witness to a universally deep-seated need which they could not satisfy. The first of the Hebrew prophets says with a quiet confidence, "The LORD will provide Himself a lamb," and centuries later the last and greatest of the prophets exclaims, "Behold, the LAMB of GOD!" In the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen that the only acceptable Sacrifice to GOD for sin is the Sacrifice appointed by Him. With the New Testament in our hands, and the sense of need in our consciences how wonderful when by the eye of faith we see the prophecy fulfilled and the promise redeemed.

"Mark the Sacrifice appointed,  
See Who bears the awful load;  
'Tis the CHRIST the LORD's anointed,  
SON of MAN and SON of GOD."

In the Old Testament story the father and son went both of them together to the place of sacrifice. In the New Testament

record we read, "The FATHER sent the SON to be the Saviour of the world; and in this was manifested the love of GOD in that He sent his SON to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John iv). At Calvary as at Gethsemane, the FATHER'S presence is recognised by the SON—"FATHER forgive them—FATHER into Thy hands"; but it was the SON Who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. At Moriah there was sacrifice and substitution, but not of or by Isaac the son; at Calvary both were made by the SON of GOD alone, Who not only gave His life a ransom for all, but also suffered for sins, the Just One for the unjust ones that He might bring us to GOD. So in the Mount of the LORD it was seen that the accepted Sacrifice was that provided by GOD at infinite cost to Himself.

From this great fact two immensely important things emerge, first that such a sacrifice is sufficient to meet the deepest needs of sinful human hearts and that no other sacrifice is acceptable to GOD for such. And the good news is for every one who believes it and accepts the Saviour Whom GOD provided. "For GOD commendeth His own love towards us in that while we were yet sinners CHRIST died for us." (Rom. v. 8).

The second, and also immensely important thing, is the inspired deduction the Apostle was led by the HOLY SPIRIT to draw from this unique self giving of GOD, namely, "He that spared not His own SON, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him *also* freely give us all things?"

With the greatest gift, all other gifts that pertain to life and godliness are given. "For godliness hath promise of the life that now is as well of that to come." In the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen—that the LORD will provide. Happy indeed are they who with humble gratitude accept His gracious provision for poor guilty sinners and for poor needy saints, for verily "*In the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen.*"

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Faith brings GOD into the scene and therefore it knows absolutely nothing of difficulties.

\* \* \*

Independence and disobedience go together.

\* \* \*

It is better far to suffer in GOD'S path, than to be at ease in Satan's.



## A Wonderful Visitor

(A Dream)

I HAD had a very busy day, and experienced a delightful feeling of restfulness as I settled myself in a comfortable armchair, after having said "good-night" to my three children. They and their mother had just sung a familiar hymn, one verse of which lingered in my mind, indeed impressed me. It was:—

Not a brief glance I crave, a passing word,  
But as Thou didst with Thy disciples LORD;  
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,  
Come not to sojourn, but abide with me.

The thought came to me—suppose He were to come as He came to His disciples—am I altogether prepared to receive Him into my house to abide with me?

As I meditated on the subject I fell asleep and dreamed, and lo! the door of the room opened, and in walked One whom I knew at once to be the SAVIOUR.

It was not the glorified REDEEMER as seen by John in the Isle of Patmos; no, He had answered the prayer of our hymn, and had come in humble, human form

"Familiar, condescending, patient, free."

I knelt before Him, but He laid His hand on me and said, "Arise, for I have come to tarry with thee."

\* \* \*

My recollection of my dream here grows somewhat confused, but I remember that the next morning seemed to have arrived, and I told my children that JESUS had come to stay with us in our house. They clapped their hands with joy and my dear wife's face beamed with a rapture that seemed to transfigure her.

Just then the LORD Himself entered the room, and we took our seats around the breakfast table. But when the meal was over and we had had family worship, which to us that day was truly a foretaste of heaven itself, I was filled with perplexity. What should I do with my strange Visitor? It seemed disrespectful to leave Him behind me at home, yet it would mean serious loss to me to stay away from my place of business that day; but I could not take Him with me, that

was certain: who ever heard of taking CHRIST to a counting house? He surely knew my thoughts, for He said, "I will go with thee. How didst thou ask Me? Was it not

*'Come not to sojourn, but abide with me?'*

So whatever thou art doing henceforth I will be beside thee. Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

It seemed rather strange to me, but I could not of course question what He said so I started for my office with Him by my side.

\* \* \*

At my counting house I found a man awaiting my coming with a good deal of impatience. He was a stock and share-broker who transacted a considerable business for me. To tell the truth I was not greatly pleased to see him there, as I was afraid that he might bring forward matters which I would scarcely feel inclined to go into with the LORD listening to our conversation. It was as I feared.

He had come to tell me of a transaction he had arranged, which, whilst perfectly honourable according to the usual code of morals of the share market, meant the saving of myself from loss by placing another person in the danger of it. He *laid the whole scheme before me, without taking the slightest notice of the LORD; I know not if he even saw Him.*

I cannot tell the bitter shame I felt. I saw how impossible it was to square such a transaction with the golden rule, but I could not hide from myself the fact that the broker told me of it with a manner and tone that meant that he had no doubt whatever that I would applaud him for his cleverness and eagerly close with the offer. What must that mean to the LORD? Would it not tell Him that I was in the habit of dealing with one thought only in my mind—how I could benefit myself?

The broker was astonished when I rejected his proposals on the ground that they would be prejudicial to the interest of the other party in the transaction, and left me abruptly, apparently thinking I had developed a mild species of insanity.

Humbled I fell at my Saviour's feet, and cried to Him for forgiveness for the past sinfulness and strength for time to come.

"My child," said He in tender accents, "thou speakest as if My presence were something strange to thee. But I have

always been with thee, I have seen, and have seen with grief, the way thou hast dealt with thy fellows in business, and marvelled at thy unbelief of My promise that I would be ever with thee. Have I not said to My servants, Abide in Me and I in thee."

\* \* \*

Just as He had said these words another gentleman entered the office. He was a customer whom I could not afford to offend, and I had uniformly shown a cordiality to him which I was very far from feeling in my heart. He was vulgar, profane, and often obscene in his talk.

He had not been many minutes in my office, before making use of an expression which brought a hot flush to my cheek. I had heard him speak in a similar way before, and although feeling repelled by it, I had, for fear of offending him, met it with faint laughter. But now I felt as I should had it been uttered in the presence of a lady, only this feeling was intensified by the realisation of the absolute purity of the Divine One who had been a hearer of the remark.

I gave expression to my feeling in a word of expostulation, and he exclaimed, "You seem to have grown very prudish suddenly," and left in a rage.

Again I turned to the LORD with a cry for pardon, and again the thought came to me, that though unseen by me He had beheld all my former intercourse with this man.

\* \* \*

I was now called into the adjoining office where my clerks were employed, and found that one of them had made a foolish blunder which would mean a considerable complication, and perhaps loss. Now, I am naturally irritable, and at once lost my temper, and spoke to him in unmeasured terms. Turning my head I saw that the LORD had followed me out of my private office, and was standing close beside me.

Again I was humbled, and had to cry for mercy.

\* \* \*

Opening my letters, I found that difficulties of a very serious nature for me, had arisen. I seemed suddenly hemmed in, and unless help came in a few hours, loss and even ruin threatened me. From what quarter the aid would come I knew not, but I just took the letter containing the news, and

laid it on the table before the MASTER, and said, "LORD if Thou hadst not been here my heart would have been overwhelmed, but now I can with confidence and joy leave all in Thy hands."

Then He replied, "O thou of little faith; because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Yet though He rebuked me for my want of faith, He showed me how the difficulty was to be met, and put a new song of gratitude into my mouth.

\* \* \*

Through all that strange day similar incidents occurred, and the presence of the MASTER, which I thought would have been a joy, was a rebuke to me. It showed me as I had never dreamed before, that I had framed my life on the supposition that He had but little to do with it. But on the other hand there *were* times during that day when my soul was filled with rapture; times when He smiled loving approval; when He spoke words of pardon and absolution; and when He opened out before my wondering gaze some fresh beauty of His character and person. One such time was when on our return to my home our children came crowding round Him and wanted to show Him their toys, their pigeons and a brood of newly-hatched chicks, and I rebuked them, saying, "Run away, children; do not trouble the MASTER with such trifles."

But He seated Himself and taking my little boy on His knee, called my two little girls to His side, and said to me, "Suffer these little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

He laid His hand in tender blessing on their bright golden curls, and there came a joy to my heart which was as much as I could bear. Then He went with them to see their treasures listening to their childish prattle as they told Him of their love for Him who had first loved them.

\* \* \*

I awoke, and lo! it was but a dream. It made me ask myself, as I never did before, "Must not our realisation of His presence always with us, be very poor for it to exercise so small an influence upon our lives? Do we not often contradict by our daily conduct what we often assert, that Christ is abiding in us? And those words spoken by the LORD which

He had seemed to repeat in my dream, came back to me with a new and intenser meaning than ever before, "Blessed are they that have not *seen*, but yet have *believed*." "Abide in Me, and I in you. Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

It is the same LORD who said to some (Rev. iii. 1) "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." What would He have to say to the reader, now?

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## The Blessed Hope

(1 *Thess. iv. 13-18*)

**G**OD has not only saved us, but given us a *blessed hope*, a heavenly object. He has won our hearts by the exhibition of His love in CHRIST, and has made CHRIST to be precious to our souls. We have redemption through the blood of CHRIST, and a new life in him; but it is in order that CHRIST Himself may be our portion, and that we may be with Him for ever, to the praise of the glory of GOD's grace. JESUS, having accomplished redemption and having gone into the presence of GOD for us, is now seated upon the throne of His FATHER, crowned with glory and honour. There He waits the gathering out of this world the church which He has purchased with His blood; and then, at the command of GOD, He leaves the throne of His FATHER and descends into the air, the place of meeting where His Bride ascends to meet Him. The Person to be met is the LORD—yes, the adorable LORD JESUS, the One Who dwelt from all eternity in the bosom of the FATHER, the One who was cradled in Bethlehem's manger, the One who for three and thirty years trod the world of His Own creation, the One Whose hand was ever ready to meet the needy, and Whose heart yearned over the outcast one; and, above all, the One Who died on Calvary's cross, was raised by the power of GOD, and is now sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on high. This blessed One, this LORD from heaven, is the Person to be met, and from heaven, direct from His Father's presence, He comes.

Who are the persons going to this meeting-place, and where to they go from? They consist of persons in two differing

positions: "*We who are alive and remain,*" "*them which sleep in Jesus*"; as it says in Corinthians, "they that are CHRIST'S at his coming." There will be those who are alive on this earth, living amidst others, but having, besides their natural life, spiritual life—life in CHRIST. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they will be changed (1 Cor. xv. 52), and caught away from among their fellow-men to meet the LORD from heaven. And how suddenly! as quickly as a moment passes, as quickly as the eyelid falls and rises again, so quickly with the transition occur. But then what about those who have died in CHRIST? Shall they miss this blessed scene? shall they be left behind? No; if anything, they have the precedence, though it is but a momentary one. The first action of the archangel's voice is to awake the dead in CHRIST, "*the dead in Christ shall rise first.*" They shall only just have emerged from their hiding places, and have been clad in resurrection-glory, when the living shall be changed, and *all* shall be caught up *together*.

What a meeting! what a blessed hope! No more separation, none missing, none left behind in the darkness of the grave. The sheep will have heard the Shepherd's voice—"they that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth"—those alive changed, and they all go up together—yes, *together; not in various detachments, as some have imagined; not some left behind to pass through the tribulation for their unfaithfulness.* The Jewish remnant *will* have to pass through it; *but ere it occurs the Church and Old Testament saints will be safely housed "with the LORD."*

It is a summons, as we have been seeing, that all in CHRIST hear and obey. It is called in Corinthians "the last trump," which some think refers to the last of trumpets used in battle for marching; others believe it to have a reference to the jubilee trumpet. It is evidently CHRIST, armed with authority, summoning together those dear to His heart.

"*This we say unto you by the word of the Lord.*" St. Paul received this truth directly from the LORD, as he did that concerning the LORD'S Supper. (1 Cor. xi.) . Would the LORD have taken the trouble, or thought it needful specially to make this known to Paul, had it not been good for the Church of God

to enter into and enjoy the hope of the LORD's coming? And yet how many Christians know nothing about it, looking forward to a good old age, and a grave at the end of it. But GOD places the Christian, on resurrection-ground to start with, on the other side of death (see John xi, 25). It is blessedly true, that, if the Christian fall asleep in JESUS, his spirit is "with the LORD," and "to depart and be with CHRIST is far better;" but is that the *proper hope* of the Christian? No. The resurrection-morning is what he waits for, because GOD gives him resurrection-promises. When will he be like CHRIST, perfectly conformed to the image of GOD'S SON? Not until he sees Him in resurrection. "We look for the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) Christian Reader, you believe in the word of GOD—why not believe *all* it says? You would be horrified if any one doubted the truth "the blood of JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S SON, cleanseth us from all sin;" and yet this truth of the LORD's coming is founded upon the same authority, it is revealed in the same word. But you say, There is a difference between essential and non-essential truth. *You have no right to say so.* It is a notion encouraged by Satan to shut up from the souls of GOD's people much of His revealed word, but the soul that wishes to yield *an intelligent obedience, knowing what the mind of the LORD is,* must believe practically that "All scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.)

E.X.T. (Madras)

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## Ministering Servants

(1 Cor. iii. 5, New Trans.)

BY QUARTUS

**T**ENDER care and suited teaching would be found in one whom the CHIEF SHEPHERD of the flock of GOD has called out on His service. When the LORD gives pastors in His mercy, He gives them according to His own heart, to feed His people with knowledge and with understanding (Jer. iii. 15). It is

the method of the worldly church system to merge the individual into an official character, and to demand respect therefore for the office apart from personal gift and qualifications. But this is not the way of CHRIST in dealing with His church, although a great deal of true shepherdly care will only be recognised and appreciated by those who are spiritual.

For the servant of the LORD personally, the requisites at least, are a real sense of responsibility to the MASTER, a continual exercise of conscience towards GOD and man, the tasting and valuing of the doctrine taught by himself and a studying to show himself approved of GOD.

But love for the Blessed LORD is of necessity the controlling factor in all services rendered for Him to His people. "Lovest thou Me? Feed My lambs; Lovest thou Me? Shepherd My Sheep; Lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep." In this conversation between the GREAT SHEPHERD in resurrection life and Peter is given the real secret of a *Ministering Servant*.

All the LORD's people are called to serve Him as truly as those with whom this article is chiefly concerned. But there *are* some specially called of GOD to devote their whole time to His service, and to look to Him for temporal support. So many questions having been asked as to this, an answer is here suggested which may satisfy the more spiritually-minded amongst these questioners.

First, an inward call and conviction of it being the mind of the LORD is essential, since real Ministry is from CHRIST and Him alone. Nothing alters the truth that He Who is the Head of the Church, raises up those to serve Him at all times, in whatever sphere He appoints.

Secondly, the LORD does not call any one to special service who does not possess ability to render it. As another has said, "The servant must have certain natural and acquired abilities and qualifications besides the power of the SPIRIT of GOD to fit him for the service to which he is really called by the LORD." Where gift, ability, grace, and opportunity combine, controlled by love to CHRIST and His people, there will be found a ministering servant of the LORD whether he be known as a "home" or "foreign" labourer.

A very striking passage in *Lectures on Matthew* by W.



Kelly puts this in a clear light. "It is plain from this (according to his ability) that there are certain qualities in the servant independent of the gift that the LORD puts into him.

"His natural powers are the vessel that contains the gift, and wherein the gift is to be exercised. If the LORD calls a man to be a preacher, there is supposed a natural aptitude for it. Again the gift may be increased. First, there is the ability of the man before and when he is converted; next the LORD gives him a gift that he never possessed before; thirdly, if he does not stir up his gift, there may be a weakening, if not loss. He may become unfaithful, and may lose power. But if a man waits upon the LORD, there may, on the contrary, be increased power given to him. Many think that the one qualification of the servant of GOD is that of the SPIRIT. This is, of course, essential, and most blessed; but it is not all. The truth is that CHRIST gives gifts: but He gives them according to the ability of the individual. The union of the two facts, the ability of the servant and the sovereignly-bestowed gift given him to trade with, is of all importance to keep distinctly in view."

The servant of the LORD thus conscious of the inward call will not wait about in the market place until someone hires him, but will begin to serve where he is, and do all he possibly can in his spare time. If this is faithfully done the reward of work will be seen in more work presenting itself, until the choice has to be made in the fear of the LORD as to the step to be taken. If the LORD calls one to step forward it will be an act of faith in Him, and in His ability to provide both spiritually and temporally all things needful for the prosecution and support of His work. They who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true. "Why did you go out on the LORD's work wholly?" was an enquiry put by a sympathetic enquirer.

The answer given was: "He calls His people 'His beautiful flock' and for His sake one is glad to be of any service to them." It is because they belong to CHRIST that the true ministering servants of the LORD embark upon and continue, having obtained help of Him in His happy service.

But a shepherd's work is plain and humble. He has his eyes upon the sheep, and his great business is to feed the flock

of God where he is found. Feeding sheep is a prosaic but important task. It is not romantic, nor a thing of flourish of trumpets, and is never well done unless in simple dependence upon the Great Shepherd. How wonderfully far-reaching is the New Testament benediction pronounced over all Christian workers with special significance surely for those wholly engaged in His service: Now the GOD of peace, Who brought again from the dead our LORD JESUS, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through JESUS CHRIST; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The aim of the ministering servant is so to minister CHRIST, that His people are built up, cheered up, and stirred up to follow on to know and serve Him more devotedly.

One who does this with a single eye to GOD's glory, leaving everything behind, receives even now the best things that life can afford. A multitude of people become his friends. And, if love is the best thing in the world, then the faithful under-shepherd of the flock of GOD gets more of this rich treasure than any other. This however is a by-product arising from the truth that "Seek ye first the Kingdom of GOD and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." For the true ministering servant has the positive certainty that so long as he is living and working in the will of GOD, the LORD will provide. Of Barnabas it was recorded, "He was a good man, and full of the HOLY GHOST, and glad when he saw the grace of GOD;" a ministering servant indeed!

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## Fundamentals

**W**HATEVER is connected with foundations is said to be fundamental, and it is well to recognise what is fundamental in Scripture, and to be able to rely upon a sure foundation, even when "All the foundations of the earth are out of course." (Ps. lxxxii, 5).

The LORD Himself quotes from this Psalm, when He was passing through the chaos into which the whole earth had been brought by everything that rested on human responsibility, and He shows us plainly what is really fundamental.

The Jews were ready to stone Him for blasphemy because being obviously a man, He claimed to be GOD. He asked the question, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" and then "If He called them gods, unto whom the Word of GOD came *and the Scripture cannot be broken*; say ye of Him, Whom the FATHER had sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest: because I said, I am the SON of GOD?"

In His blessed person GOD was manifest in the flesh, and though this was shown unmistakably in His being able to work the works of GOD, yet the descendants of those to whom the Word of GOD came refused to recognise the divinity of the One Who was Himself the foundation of everything in existence. This Psalm goes on to state the fate of those who, given responsibility as gods, and the children of the Most High, failed to act according to that responsibility. Those called gods should die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

The LORD asked Job a fundamental question: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Job is challenged to declare, if he had understanding (Job xxxviii, 4), and he has to acknowledge that he was fundamentally wrong in all his thoughts even of the One Whom he knew could do everything. He confesses that he had need to be taught what was fundamental by the only One Who could teach him. In dust and ashes and abhorrence of himself he learns what it was to rest upon a foundation that could not be moved, even upon the LORD Himself. Is not this the secret of all assurance. The LORD has spoken and I tremblingly listen to what He has said, and seek His own explanation of it.

Everything that God has given utterance to for our learning points directly or indirectly to the One Whom He has sent. "The testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy." It begins with "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, though bruised himself in the process," and ends with the "Lamb as it had been slain" in the Revelation. Adam believed and showed faith by action. He was premature in his thought about the accomplishment of the Word. He called his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living, and he called his firstborn Cain (acquisition) saying 'I have gotten the man from

the LORD.' Then when Cain showed that he was of that wicked one and slew his righteous brother, Adam attempted to correct his mistake by calling his next child Seth (appointed) on the grounds that GOD had appointed them another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew, and the Royal Line to the LORD JESUS CHRIST passes through Seth, both in connection with Mary and Joseph.

The Word of the LORD endures for ever and this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you. Faith rests upon believing the Word of GOD and is followed by Hope which is centred in the One Who is our Hope, and love, which is of GOD, is the sign that faith and hope are real fundamentals. GOD has declared that heaven and earth shall pass away, but His Word shall not pass away, and we look unto Him, the author and finisher of faith, and walk as He walked amid the ruins of a desolate scene.

G. S. PURNELL.

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## The Christian Dress

**T**HERE is no trunk so small that it has not room for that priceless dress, the GARMENT OF PRAISE!

This garment is equally suitable for summer or winter wear; it is durable as eternity; it will never be singed by the fiercest fires of tribulation, nor soaked by the waters of adversity. It is a splendid workday dress, and it is resplendent in the service of the sanctuary.

The looms of earth produce nothing like it. For with the warp of hallelujahs and woof of hosannas it speaks of its divine workmanship, and befits the human being more than a crown does a king.

The LORD meant us all to be walking doxologies. Put on the GARMENT OF PRAISE, brethren, and let it cover you from shoulder to ankles. Its graceful folds will hide many a native defect and deformity. A songful soul is heaven's delight and an earthly joy.

## Grace and Government

BY THE EDITOR

**T**HE basis of all GOD's dealings with His people is love, whether for Israel or ourselves as believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. To Israel of old, GOD said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love"; to us the word by the apostle reminds us that "*God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" This love it was that counted nothing too great to redeem us and bring us back to GOD righteously, so that we are enabled to enjoy communion with Him as the FATHER and with His SON, JESUS CHRIST, and with one another, upon a righteous and eternal basis. It overcame every obstacle that stood in the way, even the supreme obstacle of sin—for He "bare our sins in His own body on the tree." His love won our hearts and drew us to Himself. And not only that, but brought us to know that "Where once the LORD His love bestows, He loves unto the end." The mercy of GOD endureth for ever; the love of GOD is eternal; *and the one indestructible reality of life is the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

This love is, as we have remarked, the basis of all GOD's dealing with us, being so clearly seen because revealed fully in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. This love has placed us in the light, and we now live and walk always in it; but do we walk *according to the light* in which love has put us? For the grace of GOD teaches us that grace and godliness go together, that calling and conduct run parallel, and also, in 1 Peter, that grace and government blend in GOD's dealings with His saints.

We are apt to be tempted to take liberties with GOD, to act sometimes as though GOD were not fully aware of our thoughts; as if He knew no more of us than our brethren do. But, "If ye call on the FATHER, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Peter i. 17); for grace and government go together.

"But the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

# “ Called ” “ Separated ” “ Let Go ”

(Acts xiii, 2, 3)

## *The Source of the Call*

THE call to service, whatever the measure or the sphere, whether at home or abroad, must come to the individual from the LORD. There must be personal dealings with Him. It is not the province of an assembly, or of any group of brethren, to *call*, or to *send*, any individual to the work of ministering the gospel, whether as an evangelist, pastor, or teacher. There is no Scriptural precedent for such authoritative action. All gift is from the HEAD in heaven (as Ephesians iv. makes clear). And those who so minister are to do so as ministering to the LORD (Acts xiii. 2). There is thus a very real *independence* of human authorisation, but the most absolute *dependence* upon the LORD.

## *The Feature of Interdependence*

On the other hand, it is well to remember that all such gifts are given in the body of CHRIST, to those who are His members and members of one another, to those who are united together in that SPIRIT-formed unity. This involves a very real inter-dependence. Thus the HEAD of the body has guarded against self-will, or a fleshly independence. Grace and wisdom properly belong to the servant's place—a place in which the mind of CHRIST and His example should govern and be manifested in its varied activities. That such inter-dependence is to be recognised appears clearly illustrated in Acts xiii. The HOLY SPIRIT said to the assembly (Compare ch. xiv. 26, 27), “Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” It is thus the HOLY SPIRIT operates on behalf of the HEAD in the distinctions of services pertaining to the work of the one body (1 Corinthians xii. 4-6, 11). First, the individual is called, then the HOLY SPIRIT communicates His will “to the brethren and says: “Separate Me,” etc. The laying on of hands soon followed, and “they let them go” (J. N. D. Translation).

It is then said: “So they, being sent forth by the HOLY SPIRIT, departed.” This guards against any idea of assembly ordination, or sending out. On the other hand, it indicates that the HOLY SPIRIT not only calls the individual in the first place but also conveys His mind to the assembly, and the

servants are thus sent forth by Him. Indeed ought we not to expect just such double action on His part within the unity which He has formed? Is it not an essential to that practical unity which it is His desire should mark the people of God in their fellowship as saints? Surely His operations must be ever in accordance with the truth, for He is the SPIRIT of truth. The saints will be fellow helpers to, better, "with," the truth (3 John 8), by being "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." In this connection ever remember the claims laid upon us by "the Name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST" (1 Corinthians i. 10). In due course Barnabas and Saul returned "to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended ("committed") to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them."

While we cannot stress too much the entire absence of all officialism or human authorisation, this must not be construed as meaning that we ignore that real inter-dependence which belongs to our spiritual relations as members one of another in the body of CHRIST.

An indication of similar import is seen in the brethren committing Paul and Silas to the grace of God when they departed on their journey. We may conclude that they had spiritually discerned the right of Paul in the controversy over Mark, and then shown their fellowship with him and his chosen companion (Acts xv. 36-40).

We should look for both of these features in this matter of the LORD's servant and his service.

### *Can We Expect These Features To-day?*

It may be objected that this obtained in the pristine days of the Church, but can we expect these features in our days? Let us remember that the LORD's promise abides, the HOLY SPIRIT is still present, and the *completed* Word of God is now in our hands, and that we are to learn from it what is suitable to the LORD in all that concerns His interests here. Though weakness, failure and departure abound, surely we who know and seek to practise according to the truth ought to endeavour to realise this two-fold aspect of fellowship in service—the reality of the individual call, and the communication of this SPIRIT-given call to the saints that they may

commit the servant to the work for which he has been called. And this seems the more evident since the LORD has ordained that His servants shall be ministered to by His people in temporal things. This is another feature of our *interdependence*.

### *How Shall We Know?*

It may be asked how shall we know the reality of the individual call, for the HOLY SPIRIT is not now making His will known by special visions or revelations? The reason that He does not follow that course seems found in the fact that we *now have the completed Word to guide us*. By that Word He works to form in us, through prayerful exercise, the spiritual judgment required in any given case. We cannot escape what this involves. It means that our path is, and *must be one of faith and constant exercise*, leading us to walk in and by the SPIRIT. Lack in this brings a corresponding measure of failure and weakness. As a result mistakes in spiritual judgment are made on both sides, that is, in individual and collective discernment. But we have no legitimate excuse, for the Scriptures will thoroughly furnish the man of GOD unto all good works (2 Timothy iii. 16, 17). From the Word then we should be able to learn what will enable us to discern the right in such matters. Laying on of hands, by which identification with the servant was indicated and his committal made to the work in view, *was not to be done suddenly* (1 Timothy v. 22). Evidently there was first to be some manifest proof of personal fitness and gift from the LORD. Clearly not a novice ("newly planted"), that is, one newly come to the faith. From among those prophets and teachers already ministering to the LORD the Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul. Paul instructs Timothy to entrust the holy things of the faith "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (or, 'such as shall be competent to instruct others')" (2 Timothy ii. 2). Verses 3-6, 15, 24, 25 suggest much that should characterize the true servant. Let him be one who shows readiness to take his share in suffering as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST; one who is not entangling himself with the affairs of life; one who is entering on the course of service lawfully—in accordance with the Word; one who like a good husbandman labours with the joy of partaking of the fruits in due season; one who strives diligently to present him-



self approved to God, a workman that has not to be ashamed, cutting in a straight line the word of truth; one who is not contentious, but gentle toward all, apt to teach, forbearing, marked by meekness. Timothy himself was well reported of by the brethren (Acts xvi. 2).

### *The Qualifications of a True Servant*

May not such questions as the following be asked in regard to one who claims a call from the LORD? What interest and activity has he shown in Sunday School work, tract distribution, faithful attendance at meetings—the weekly Bible-study and prayer meetings, as well as those on Lord's Day? Does the fruit of the SPIRIT mark the life (Galatians 20-26), giving assurance that there is a real measure of grace and wisdom for harmonious work with others? Is there evidence of regular and diligent study of the Word, and a prayerful spirit? Finally, since to go forth in service in the way we are now considering means in a very real sense a life of dependence upon the LORD for all needed supplies, what exercise or experience has there been along this line? Has faith been strengthened through circumstances in which God has proved to be his sole confidence and resource?

Furthermore, it would be well for all who are concerned about these matters to consider by way of example such Scriptures as 2 Corinthians iv. 1, 2; 1 Corinthians x. 31-33; ix. 24-27; iv. 1, 2; 1 Peter iv. 10, 11; 1 Timothy iv. 11-16; 1 Thessalonians i. 5; ii. 1-12; Acts xx. 18-27; Philippians ii. 19-30.

Brethren may not presume to say whether one is called or not, for that must be left to the individual in his responsibility to the LORD. But brethren can say in the light of the Word whether one *bears the marks and shows evidence of being one called*, and by this be guided whether or not they can commit the person in question to the grace of God and to the work in view. They may not forbid one to go, unless there is clear evidence of what would be to the LORD's dishonour, some manifest imperfection or weakness which is not suitable in those who fill so public a place (as a typical illustration compare the priestly regulations, Leviticus xxi. 16-24); nevertheless they must act, or withhold action, in the fear of God and not commit themselves to that which will not stand the test of the Word.

*(Reprint from THE FIELDS, Iowa, U.S.A.)*

## The Creation of Man

**E**VERY true believer should acknowledge that man was created, and not "evolved." In (Matthew xiv. 4) the LORD JESUS asked, in connection with Genesis i. 27, "Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and in (Mark x. 6) He states that from the *beginning* of the creation GOD made them male and female.

Human learning has been compelled to acknowledge that there is "an enormous gulf, a divergence practically infinite between the lowest man and the highest beast" a gulf which has not been bridged by all that science and discovery can do.

Man was made in the image and likeness of GOD, and consists of a trinity of spirit and soul and body (1 Thess. v. 23). His *spirit makes it possible for him to know and be conscious of GOD*. The LORD JESUS said to the woman of Samaria: "The hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth: for the FATHER seeketh such to worship Him. GOD is (a) SPIRIT and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (John iv. 23, 24). In 1 Cor. ii. 11, the Apostle Paul raises the question, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" and then he states that no man knoweth the things of GOD but the SPIRIT of GOD.

Man's *soul makes him self-conscious*, and is the seat of his emotion, desires and affections, as in Psalm xlii. 1-6. His *body is the seat of his senses* and is the means by which *his spirit and soul are conscious of his surroundings* in the world in which his lot is cast.

The LORD JESUS Himself had a spirit which He committed into His FATHER'S hands when He laid down His life (Luke xxiii. 46). He had a soul which could be troubled (Matt. xxvi. 38); (Mark xiv. 35); (John xii. 27), and He had a body prepared for Him in which He could be offered up in sacrifice (Hebrews x. 5, 10).

But why did GOD make man at all? Psalm 8, which is quoted in Hebrews ii. 6-8, raises the question, "What is man, that Thou visitest him?" Here we learn that he was made lower than the angels, and that it is GOD'S intention that in the person of JESUS, His SON, the SON of MAN should have all

things put under Him. We are then called upon to consider Him as the Centre of all GOD'S purposes and counsels and to regard Him as the means of blessing for all who are blessed. Further a supreme sacrifice was necessary to vindicate GOD'S honour and glory, and the SON of GOD is the only One capable of meeting the need. GOD has already been glorified in what the Divine SON of MAN has accomplished, and He will as surely be glorified to the full when all His purposes are accomplished, and the Divine SON of MAN delivers up the kingdom to the FATHER that GOD (FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT) may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28).

We know that as soon as he was created, man fell when he was tempted by a creature higher than himself, who had already fallen *without* a tempter. This one is described in his unfallen state under the figure of the king of Tyrus in Ezekiel xxviii. 12-15, and his fall is described under the figure of the organizer of Babylon in Isaiah xiv. 12-15. Before his final overthrow he becomes a trinity of evil (Satan, the beast and the false prophet), and when he is finally cast into the lake of fire, the beast and the false prophet are already there (Rev. xx. 10).

As true believers in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, we know that Satan is already a conquered foe, and we have only to resist him and he flees from us (James iv. 7); but alas, we know also that he is stronger than the strongest man, and that unless we are under the divine protection that true believers are entitled to by GOD'S grace, we are led captive by the devil at his will. The agnostic is as much under the power of the enemy as the unbeliever, and it is impossible to tread a neutral path. The LORD JESUS Himself called Satan "the prince of this world," and in declaring that "the prince of this world" had nothing in Him, He was expressing something that belonged to Him alone. No mere child of Adam could say this; but in virtue of our blessed position in CHRIST, we can now drive the devil away from us. There is a place prepared, never for man, but exclusively for the devil and his angels; and if men have to be consigned to this place of torment, it is because they deliberately prefer the devil to GOD, Who would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

G. S. PURNELL.

## The "Collective" Bible Reading

**T**HE *private* reading of the Bible is the privilege and duty of every child of God, that is, of everyone who rests for eternal salvation on the atoning work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST on the cross. Such reading should never be hurried. No rules can be laid down as to the plan of reading, the amount to be read at a time, the amount of time to be devoted daily to reading, or any such matters. But it is "natural" to the child of God to desire "the sincere milk of the word," and it is by this means that he will grow.

There is another valuable way of reading the Bible. Believers in the LORD JESUS, young or old, brothers or sisters in the LORD, may *come together to read and study* a passage of Scripture in the Presence of God. Meetings of this character are not exactly described in the Bible and, like private reading, could not have taken place in "Bible times" as they can now, because copies of the Scriptures were not then available for everyone as they are to-day,

There is however an interesting account in Nehemiah viii. of the reading of the law of Moses in which we find that thirteen named persons "and the Levites," caused the people to understand the law, reading distinctly and giving the sense. In New Testament times (we learn from Luke iv., Acts xiii. and other Scriptures that) it was the practice in the synagogues to read portions from the Old Testament and for teachers to teach from them. We find (in Acts xvii.) that the Bereans searched the Scriptures daily for confirmation of what Paul and Silas taught them. We learn too (from Col. iv. and 1 Thess. v.) that the epistles were to be read to the Christians at Colosse, Laodicea and Thessalonica. While therefore there are no actual examples in Scripture of "collective" Bible reading as we know it, there seems to be adequate justification for the conclusion that such meetings are according to the LORD's will in these days, and are a very great privilege made possible by the invention of printing. Further, many Christians can bear testimony to the very great profit they have obtained from such "readings."

As, with every occasion of Christians coming together, we are faced with the alternatives of organising such meetings by

certain man-made rules on the one hand or, on the other, committing the control in faith to the HOLY SPIRIT where Scriptural principles (such as those in 1 Cor. xiv.) do not already give us guidance. Some may contend that a "Bible reading" is not a "church" (or "assembly") meeting and therefore not an occasion for waiting on the SPIRIT of GOD, but simply an opportunity of giving out from an accumulated store of knowledge. The instructions (in 1 Cor. xiv.) apply however not only "when ye come together in the church" but, more generally, "when ye come together." Experience shows that neglect of the principles of this chapter when Christians come together to read the Scriptures leads to confusion, and sooner or later in an open (or still worse, a concealed) form of human control for the sake of order. In many cases it has led to the abandonment of the "Bible reading" for the address or lecture. Addresses and lectures may be very profitable but they cannot really replace collective Bible reading (or study) as a means of learning the various lessons contained in the Scriptures.

As the result of over fifty years' experience in "Bible readings" attention is drawn to certain points with the prayer that they may be a help to the younger brothers and sisters at least. The remarks are worded as if both brothers and sisters are present but it is not intended in any way to imply that such meetings may not be for sisters only.

A *sober attitude of mind* is appropriate when coming together to read the Scriptures. We need to remind ourselves that we are about to read the Word of the living GOD, His revelation of Himself, His counsels and purposes, a message to us in wondrous grace. To gather *chattering about all sorts of relative trivialities* is likely to hinder our reception of what He has to say to us.

An *expectant attitude of mind* is also appropriate. He has said His word shall not return to Him void (Is. lv. 11). We should expect a profitable time in which we shall receive from Him teaching, reproof, correction or instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. iii. 16).

The *selection of the passage* to be read and considered is a serious matter, sometimes undertaken too lightly and without due prayer for the guidance of the SPIRIT of GOD. It is quite

true that "all scripture is profitable," but on each occasion there may be one particular passage that is peculiarly appropriate to the needs of those who have come together. A common and healthy practice is to read a passage which is a continuation of one considered at a previous similar meeting, but it is happy if there is always liberty for any brother present (or sister, if only sisters are present) to suggest another passage or subject, if the SPIRIT of GOD has laid it specially on his heart.

After the reading of the Scripture brothers present who are "apt to teach" need the guidance of the SPIRIT of GOD as to *the particular line of teaching* which is according to the mind of the SPIRIT for *the particular occasion*. This point is important as the Word of GOD is itself so profound and many-sided that great confusion may result from "teaching brothers" taking up different lines (each correct in itself) and pressing them without consideration for one another. The exhortation not to be many masters—or "teachers"—(Jas. iii. 1) has a bearing on this point. Unless it is evident that the line taken up by a previous speaker is not according to the mind of the SPIRIT (a very serious decision to make) it is generally more profitable to support, and perhaps to amplify, what has already been said than to raise some diverging or conflicting line of thought. Similarly it is important to avoid obscuring the lessons in the particular passage by bringing in other Scriptures which, though apparently related, are concerned with a different *aspect* of the truth. One has heard the whole force of a Scriptural exhortation based on our *responsibility* neutralised by the importation of another passage from a different epistle bringing out GOD's *sovereign grace* in that it is the SPIRIT of GOD that works in us! In this connection it is often forgotten that each epistle (for example) was complete in itself when the apostle was led by the HOLY SPIRIT to write it; and that its interpretation or application was not dependent upon previous knowledge of another epistle sent to some other assembly. It would often help if the attitude of approach was "What would the SPIRIT of GOD *teach us, to-day, from this passage.*"

An important contributory help in a Bible reading is the *asking of questions* by younger and less instructed brothers.

The point is put in this way not to suggest any inferiority in the brothers concerned but because well-taught brothers occasionally ask questions "for the sake of the younger ones" and experience has shewn that *genuine* questions are very much more profitable. In practice no brother has all knowledge, and a genuine question may be asked by the oldest. The guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT is needed both in the asking and in the answering of questions; and even brothers who know the answers are not all equally capable of answering clearly and briefly. A trite platitude or "brethrenism" is not necessarily an adequate answer to a young brother's difficulty, however pious it sounds!

It is not consistent with the general teaching of Scripture that *sisters* should teach, or take part audibly in gatherings where brothers are present (they join in the singing of course). Sisters should, however, consider attentively the passage read, and what is said about it, and if any questions arise in their minds their silent prayers will undoubtedly be answered and the difficulties cleared up by some brother under the guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT where there is true dependence upon Him. Sisters can also contribute greatly to the general profit of Bible readings by supporting the brothers by their prayers.

Often in Bible readings of this kind there are various indications that *the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit is forgotten*. Time may be taken up with long-winded digressions roaming promiscuously over the Scriptures, which may reveal little more than the retentive memory of the speaker. Undue haste in answering a question, or in interrupting someone who has finished a sentence, but not the point he was hoping to bring out, *are not uncommon evidences of failure*. Occasionally, alas, there is the disorderliness of argument, and actual interruption of one speaker by another. All such failure is very humiliating and *should lead to self-judgment by all*—not only those immediately involved.

But let us not give up "collective" reading of the Bible because of failure. Rather let us wait on the LORD for the guidance and control of the HOLY SPIRIT. Many can testify to the very great profit they have obtained from Bible readings in days gone by. There is no reason, except our failure, why such meetings should not be equally profitable to-day. May

the LORD enable us to put His honour first, and to subject ourselves to the HOLY SPIRIT'S guidance. Then all will be done "decently and in order," and will be to "*edification, exhortation, and comfort.*"

J. C. KELL.

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## The Times of the Gentiles

(*St. Luke xxi. 24*)

THE times of the Gentiles are a fixed period which began when the GOD of heaven gave Nebuchadnezzar authority to exercise lordship over Israel. In Daniel iv. 17 we read, "This sentence is by the decree of the watchers, and the decision by the word of the holy ones: that the living may know that the MOST HIGH ruleth over the Kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." These times then began when the kingly government which had been committed to Israel was forfeited by them on account of their idolatry, apostasy and entire disregard of God's voice to them as a nation. "When the MOST HIGH divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people (peoples, R.V.) according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9). In the New Testament also we are told, known unto GOD are all His works from the beginning of the world . . . GOD that made the world . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts xv. 18; xvii. 24-26).

Now sin and punishment are by a great law of GOD bound together. Although in mercy ("for he delighteth in mercy" Micah vii. 18) GOD may hold back the execution of judgment, only allowing some slight token of displeasure to appear that sinful souls or peoples may not go to their doom unwarned, yet dire punishment is inevitable. Said an old observant pagan, "Seldom hath punishment with lingering foot parted with the miscreant advancing before." Disregarded warnings



of mercy are the sure precursors of disaster, and the history of Israel as a people fully exemplifies this.

The nation was divided, as all know, in the days of Rehoboam the son of King Solomon. Jeroboam I, who has the unenviable distinction appended always to his name—*Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin*, was the first King of the separate provinces. His doom foretold by Ahijah the Shilonite was fulfilled to the letter by Baasha of the tribe of Issachar. The doom of Baasha, in turn also foretold by Jehu the prophet, was fulfilled exactly by Elah his son after an inglorious reign of only two years, he being assassinated while engaged in a drunken brawl in his steward's house. The assassin was Zimri. Then came the reign of Ahab who attains notoriety in the Scripture account of his kingdom as being the man who "did more to provoke the LORD GOD of Israel to anger than all that were before him." On him, and his house also, fell the startling judgments of GOD as it had long been prophesied they would.

Things were rapidly going from bad to worse. Yet once again in the longsuffering mercy of GOD, Israel as a nation began to rise after these events, but regardless of repeated warnings and obvious tokens of Divine displeasure, the people turned back again to the very idolatries and evil moral excesses which had brought such condign punishments upon their predecessors. Jeroboam II was now on the throne, an energetic, resourceful statesmanlike ruler. Specially successful in his foreign policy the bounds of the kingdom of Israel were widely extended. His military expeditions also against Moab and Ammon were completely successful, and these two thorns in the flesh, so to speak, had been conquered; Syria, once all powerful, had been compelled to restore much of the territory extending from Hamath to the Dead Sea which they had wrested from his predecessor. The long reign of forty-one years of Jeroboam II was one continued era of prosperity but also of moral and social rottenness.

But the doom also foretold by Amos the prophet on the house of Jeroboam II was fulfilled at the fourth generation, and this was the prelude to the destruction of Israel, and the scattering of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser IV in the year B.C. 721. Since their disappearance and national destruction,

they have been known as the lost ten tribes. But their national restoration and future blessing when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled is also foretold (Ezekiel xxxvii. 11-14).

The history of the two tribes of Judah presents nearly as chequered a career as does that of Israel, somewhat brightened however by such truly godly reformers as King Hezekiah, Josiah, and in the main Jehoshaphat also. Manasseh, the Old Testament prodigal son, Jehoiakim, typical Modernist and Higher Critic of his day using penknife and fire on the written word of the Lord, and Zedekiah in whose reign direct disaster fell upon the kingdom, a king who feared his subjects but had no fear of God before him (Jer. xxxviii. 19, 20), however all prepared for the swift descent of the nation until, as it is placed on record: The LORD GOD of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His word, and misused His prophets until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16).

The "times of the Gentiles" had drawn near, for the Kingly government committed to Israel and now forfeited by them was about to be transferred to a great heathen monarch by the God of heaven. Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon is now styled by God as "Nebuchadnezzar My servant" (Jer. xxvii. 6). It is now plainly shown to whom the dominion is being given and Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab are bidden to serve this new authority. Amos, the prophet of the times of Jeroboam II, sets out in clear detail the prophetic judgments on these nations as well as on Israel and Judah with the causes why punishments are inflicted. Here they appear in orderly series the connection sustained and evident although as to time and character clearly separate. In considering these it is helpful to remember as another has remarked (Faussett) "God's purpose appears to be to give light enough to guide the willing, to leave darkness enough to confound the wilfully blind" when dealing with prophecy.

So it is to be noted and pondered that Amos opens by saying that his words are those which he "saw" and "saw" here according to competent Hebraists is not the mere "sight" but

"a vision" granted by God specially to the Seer. Then he shows how God speaks from Zion—Jerusalem—the centre of His worship and government in judgment to His own people. First, by a way of a general dealing with Judah and Israel preparatory to a specially detailed one in the rest of the prophecy. But a regularly constructed series of judgments occur in the earlier verses of the book.

The greatest at one time and most distant enemy of Israel were the Syrians who had tried to exterminate the nation, and these were to be driven back to the land whence they had originally come as conquerors and colonists. Gaza—the Philistine representative lying right on the borders of Judah had always been persistent enemies, and their doom as a people was to be annihilation. Tyre and Zidon, purse proud nation of merchants, engaged in universal commercial undertakings, who regardless of a brotherly covenant had made merchandise of their neighbours selling Jews as slaves to the Edomites, themselves bitter haters of Israel, were for this heartless covetous traffic to be severely punished by God.

Edom, to-day part of British mandated territory—Transjordan—has a very evil reputation in Scripture. Extending from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea she then, as now, was always the implacable enemy of Israel; all through their history Edom sided with the enemies of Israel (cf 1 Sam. xiv. 47; 2 Sam. viii. 14; Psl. x., title and verse 9; 2 Chron. xxi. 8, 10).

The pitiless pursuit of his brother the Jew, and the persistent enmity to him evokes the sternest judgment upon Edom; and no judgments more awful in their character or so ample in their statement as those concerning Edom are on record (Isa. xxxiv. 8 gives full and explicit statement; Joel iii. 19—Edom shall be a desolate wilderness for the violence against the children of Judah).

The cruelty and political scheming of Ammon to destroy Israel for selfish reasons and the land-grabbing passion specially characterising them is noted by God and the Ammonites are doomed to captivity.

Moab as a nation is simply wiped off the map, being found guilty of so many crimes against humanity, especially in those of high position and authority (cf 2 Kings iii. 26, 27).

Israel as we have seen, through the corruption of justice, oppression of the poor, prevalence of gross immorality, collapse of morale of the army had developed so corrupt a character that national destruction and disappearance as a people was her doom. Judah remains, but as again we have already noted, guilty of rejection of God's law; utter neglect of His statutes; gross idolatry and sabbath breaking, had gone too far, and nothing but seventy years in Babylonish captivity could serve to recall even a remnant to their true dignity as the Chosen People. There in the furnace of affliction she was purged from idolatry.

Then began "the times of the Gentiles" which still run on, and will only end when the true King of Israel comes, the SON of MAN in His glory, to judge the then living Gentile powers, and to re-instate a repentant remnant of Israel in the land promised to their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The Jewish people themselves thenceforth were under Gentile rule, whatever their false boast of never being in bondage to any man; they were unable to put to death their true MESSIAH, greatly as they so desired, without the sanction of their Roman masters. And then in consequence of not having known the day of His gracious visitation Jerusalem itself was totally destroyed (by the Romans—the then Gentile power in A.D. 70) as our LORD foretold on the Mount of Olives. Since that time, scattered throughout the world (like Cain to wander as vagabonds, with a mark set upon them on account of the Blood of the Righteous One—their rejected Messiah), they are "a burdensome stone" to all the nations as one of their own prophets by divine inspiration foretold they would become.

What of the Palestine situation to-day, one may well ask in this connection. They present the perpetual enigma, as another of their prophets said, *"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a King, and without a prince and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphin: afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days"* (Hosea iii. 4, 5).

W.G.T.

*(To be continued)*

## Notes on the Church of God

BY GODFREY KNIGHT

**T**HE Church of GOD is spoken of in Scripture in three ways—as a BODY, a BUILDING, and a HOUSE, or Habitation.

As regards the true body of CHRIST, it is become invisible, and Scripture contemplates this without sanctioning it. The statement that “the LORD knoweth them that are His,” though of course always true, foresees a state of things that would exist in the last days; but it was not the original state of the church, because, as we read in Acts ii. 47, “The LORD added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

As to the general truth of a body on earth, the Scriptures are plain. Thus in 1 Corinthians xii. 12, 13, “For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is CHRIST. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one SPIRIT.”

Again in verse 27, “Now ye are the Body of CHRIST, and members in particular,” (that is, members in part) “and God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” From this it is evident that there is a body, the church, and that that Body is on earth.

There are no healings in heaven. So “if one member suffer all the members suffer with it.” (Verse 26.) So in Romans xii. 45, “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in CHRIST, and every one members one of another”; and then they are exhorted to exercise their gifts accordingly. So Ephesians i. 22, 23, “GOD hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

Only here it is looked at in all its completeness and perfection in the counsels of GOD as a whole, not yet attained, for

“we see not yet all things put under Him,” though we own His title as exalted to the right hand of God.

We have the church also in the character of the building, and, which is of great moment, in a two-fold way.

First, CHRIST Himself says (Matt. xvi. 18) “And upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Whom Peter follows (1 Pet. ii. 4-5) “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of GOD, and precious, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house.” So Paul in Ephesians ii. 21, “In Whom all the Building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” Here, as also in 1 Peter, it is growing up to a future temple not yet finished, and no builder is mentioned. According to Eph. chap. 2, “the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple,” and in 1 Peter ch. 2, the saints come as living stones to a living Stone. Here it is growing to a temple, and CHRIST carries on the work, according to His words (in Matt. xvi.) on earth, but for glory.

But when we look at the building as entrusted to men, then the case is different. The apostle says in 1 Cor. iii., “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” Men may build with wood, hay, and stubble, and their work come to nothing; or with gold, silver, and precious stones, and their work abide. Nay more, a man may defile the temple of God and be destroyed himself. Here men are responsible for the way they build in this building of God on earth.

In the third place the church is looked at as a house or habitation. Thus we read in Eph. ii. 22, “In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the SPIRIT.” Here it is a present thing. God’s habitation in the person of the SPIRIT come down from heaven. The apostle speaks of it in a similar way in 1 Tim. iii. 15, “That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” Here it is on earth too, for the question is of Timothy’s conduct in it.

# The Paganisation of Christianity

BY QUARTUS

**F**ROM early in the third century of the Christian era Paganism, with its hosts of gods and demi-gods, which had appeared to have been overcome by Christianity, gradually reappeared in a more or less Christian guise. What fierce persecution of the faith could not accomplish, the patronage of the authorities well nigh succeeded in doing. For Paganism was not extirpated but only driven underground, and the multitudes of nominal Christians were easily seduced when the old deities began to make appearances under Christian names in the old haunts of Pagan idolatry. As a modern gifted writer, in replying to a question from a puzzled enquirer truly said, "The polytheism of the multitude shifted from the worship of a host of gods and demi-gods to the adoration of a host of saints and martyrs. In many examples the transference was direct and unmistakable, as when the temple of Apollo became the Church of St. Apollinaris, and the temple of Quirinus became the Church of St. Quirino, and so on."

But as everyone acquainted with Church history is aware, it was in the case of the Blessed Mother of the LORD that the most extravagant adoption of Pagan titles were gradually made.

Dr. Campbell Morgan in "*Searchlights from the Word*" (p. 313) very rightly remarks: "The Christian Church generally has, in process of time, fallen into two attitudes towards the Virgin Mother, one of which is utterly wrong, while the other is mistaken. The first is that of the Roman Church, which has placed her between humanity and the SON OF GOD. This is idolatry, and its effect has been disastrous. The second is that of Protestantism, which in a warranted rebound from Mariolatry, has forgotten to hold the Mother of our LORD in the esteem which is due to her. Mary was a member of the sinning race, and needed and shared in the redemption which was provided by her SON; but the honour conferred on her was of the highest, and our thoughts of her, and our language concerning her, should at least not lack the dignity and respect manifested in the words of Gabriel."

In another reference he also says, "Elizabeth lifted the first notes of the music in saluting the Blessed Virgin. Hers was the true *Ave Maria*, greeting Mary as Blessed, because she was to be the Mother of the LORD. Mary's Magnificat followed." (*The Graded Bible*, vol. 3, p. 188.)

But how did this Paganism of Christianity arise in the case of the Mother of our LORD? Simply that by degrees titles of some of the Pagan goddesses were given to her in mistaken honour of her unique position as being "blessed among women." Back in the times of Jeremiah, Artemis was worshipped as the Queen of heaven; and Aphrodite, Mylitta the mother goddess also; Astarte the Queen of heaven; the moon with crescent horn; the planet Venus, and later Diana of the Ephesians, all of these being variations of the generative powers of nature, being many breasted and with crowned heads. It was, however, at Ephesus, that home of mixed superstitions, where Paganism was finally driven underground in the days of Polycarp, whose Cybele the "*Great Mother*" was the centre of worship.

What a coincidence that it was there that the first traces of Mariolatry appeared, and among the titles given to the Mother of the LORD that of the Queen of heaven, the "*Great Mother*" should have been chosen by the devotee in her supposed honour. Also the month of May was the chief month of the year in the worship of the pagan goddess, and for many centuries the month of May has been observed as specially the month of Mary. This has nothing to do with the Annunciation nor the Nativity, but is purely a Pagan recrudescence. As the centuries passed the darkness deepened over Christendom in the Middle Ages, so that some priests even confessed such ignorance of their offices that an *Ave Maria* was said over the bread and wine of the Sacrament, they being unable to read or recall the correct form of "consecration," and the worshippers being thus forced into involuntary idolatry as they worshipped the unconsecrated 'Host,' it was in those dark days of ignorance that the cult of the Virgin flourished. It reached such a height of sheer superstition that even Dr. Pusey referred to it as "the Church of Mary." Yet Pusey was no Protestant, but on the contrary one who held out the olive branch of an Eirenicon to Rome, and longed for the reunion of Christendom passion-



ately. In the daily offices recited as of obligation daily by priests and regulars there is a list of festivals that exalt the Virgin—the Immaculate Conception (which even if true would only push the problem one generation back); the Assumption; the Name of Mary; the Holy House of Loretto; the feasts of St. Joachim and St. Anne (the supposed parents of the Virgin, of whom nothing whatever is really known), and special designation of the Virgin Mary as “The Virgin of Mount Carmel,” “of the Snows,” “Our Lady of Ransom,” “of Good Counsel,” of “Perpetual Succour,” “Our Lady Help of Christians,” the “Star of the Sea,” “Our Lady of Grace,” to name but a few of these totally unscriptural designations of the Blessed Mother of our LORD.

“Who is My Mother and who are My brethren?” exclaimed our LORD in the days of His flesh, and answering with that authority and perfect knowledge peculiarly His Own, turning to His disciples said, “Behold My Mother and My brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of My Father Which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.”

If she could be aware of the idolatrous homage offered to her, none would be so abashed and grieved as she who so sweetly sang her *Magnificat*. My soul doth magnify the LORD, and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD my SAVIOUR,” whom Elizabeth, filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, saluted as “the Mother of my LORD.”

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## The Times of the Gentiles

(Continued from page 80)

AS we have seen by the reference to Deut. xxxii, 8, Israel forms part of the systems of nations before GOD. In the Book of Daniel we find this whole system put aside, and Nebuchadnezzar given a universal dominion. There is, however, a remnant of Israel found in the new system, but subject to the Gentile powers. Part of this remnant settles down during the seventy years of captivity, and, as shown in the *Book of Esther*, is not concerned about returning to the land when Cyrus, the conqueror of Babylon, offers the opportunity to any who wished to do so. But there was also a faithful remnant who sat often by the rivers when the day's work

was over, and wept as they remembered Zion. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning," exclaimed not one but many of these. By their faithfulness in the midst of idolatrous surroundings they rendered a testimony to JEHOVAH the GOD of Israel.

In chapters 1 to 3 of Daniel this clearly emerges in the interesting history of Daniel and his three friends; chapter 2 is marked by the spirit of prophecy and understanding of the ways of GOD possessed by Daniel personally; and chapter 3 shows his three companions taking a bold stand, refusing all compromise with the evil then apparently all-powerful, affirming their complete confidence in their GOD, and leaving the consequences to him. "Our God," they say, speaking of Him as One personally known, trusted, and to be openly owned as such.

How in the presence of their sturdy stand it behoves us to reflect that it is never the *cause* of circumstances but their *message* that really matters to us; that every trial of faith possesses the same elements; that conviction not compromise, confidence not calculation is what becomes us as "the people who do know their GOD."

In chapter xi. 32 it is written, "The people that do know their GOD shall . . . do exploits." We need to remember that there is always the golden image, always the fiery furnace, always the moral challenge in actual life, and always the crisis when we reveal Whose we are and Whom we serve. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but GOD is faithful Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" (Rom, xv. 4, 1 Cor, x. 13).

Consequences are *God's Own department* in the business of life. He answers faith by His assured presence at the heart of the trial. One like unto the SON of GOD is seen walking with them in the midst of the fire, so they have no hurt! This faithful remnant, only four of which we know by name, but the LORD knoweth them that are His, showed that "the secret of the LORD was with them that fear Him;" and their intelligence as to the Divine mind fulfilled the rest of the verse, "and He will show them His covenant" (Ps. xxv.14).

In chapter i, they are all found keeping themselves from being defiled by even the smallest contact with what Babylon provided, with the meat with which it would feed them. And, we may well observe and ponder for our personal instruction three marks of the faithful remnant specially set out in chapters i-iii. They are: undefiled by Babylon's food; have understanding of the mind of God; and render unwavering obedience to the divine will; what a testimony indeed is given!

"In Judah is God known; His Name is great in Israel," sang Asaph the Psalmist; yes, truly, and also as the God of the whole earth. But now, in "the times of the Gentiles," when the first Gentile Kingdom was divinely established under the rule of "Nebuchadnezzar My servant," God is spoken of as the "God of Heaven" by Daniel. It is also interesting to notice how, when the fifth and final Kingdom is inaugurated, it is the "God of Heaven" Who sets up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed. Then the "times of the Gentiles" will be fulfilled and the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began will have come, and He Who was *born* King of the Jews, *confessed* as King of the Jews, and *crucified* as King of the Jews, will *reign* as King of the Jews, and God will be worshipped as God of the whole earth.

But the moral character of the Gentile powers in the times of the Gentiles is prefigured in the personal history of the first king. Nebuchadnezzar makes a great Image to be worshipped by all his subjects upon pain of death for refusal to do so. Then he builds Babylon and becomes in the eyes of men a commanding figure of splendour, pride, and pomp, but a man totally ignorant of the true God the Builder and Maker of all. Under Nebuchadnezzar Babylon became the mistress of the East, and having conquered Egypt the crowning achievement of his reign from a military standpoint, he turned to the improving and beautifying of the already great and ancient Capital of his kingdom. With a heart bursting with pride at the accomplishment of his ardent desires in this direction he was walking in the palace one day reflecting upon his great majesty when he became insane, totally bereft of the light of reason. Twelve months earlier he had been divinely warned, but just before the blow fell he spake and said, "Is not this

great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" While the word was in his mouth there fell a voice from heaven, saying, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee . . . seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most HIGH ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." The blow had fallen, and for seven years a deputy ruled in his place. Then the king who had been looking down like a beast was restored, and to paraphrase his own speech on this joyful restoration, he was now an intelligent, submissive worshipper as he praised, extolled, and honoured the King of Heaven.

There followed in course of time the four great empires symbolised by the vision of the four great beasts which came up out of the sea, diverse one from another. Out of the agitations of nations, the waves of human population, had come first the then great power of Babylon itself, like a lion with eagle's wings, noble, energetic, passing high over other nations with great rapidity of flight. Following on the fall of Babylon came the Medes and Persians represented in the vision as a ferocious, unwieldy, one-sided beast neither so energetic nor rapid in its movements; after this the Greek conqueror, Alexander the Great, his empire characterised by lightness, activity, and renewed power; the last of the four which actually came in the exact order shown in the vision was that which represented the Roman power—an exceedingly strong, fierce, devouring creature, with teeth of iron, and tramples down others it has already broken. It was different from all the others in that ten horns, symbols of ten smaller powers or kingdoms grew out of it. So "the times of the Gentiles" have already run on just as the vision showed, *but the end is not yet.*

The great prophetic empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, symbolised in Nebuchadnezzar's great image by four metals: Gold, Silver, Brass, and Iron; and by the four beasts: the Lion, the Bear, the Leopard, and the exceedingly strong Beast which devours and tramples down;—all have become matters of history.

But the fifth monarchy, the Kingdom which the God of heaven will set up when all the glowing prophecies of the

seventy-second Psalm, and countless other Scriptures will be fulfilled, awaits the coming of "JESUS CHRIST, which before was preached unto you (the Jewish people): Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things." But ere that time comes He will, according to His Own promise, come into the air to receive to Himself that body of which He is the head, formed of Jew and Gentile gathered out of every nation. This is "the blessed hope" which may at any time be realised by all living believers, who together with them that sleep in JESUS will be caught up to meet the LORD in the air, to be "for ever with the LORD." (1 Thess. iv. 16-17).

Then "when CHRIST Who is our life shall appear, shall we also appear with Him in glory," and "the times of the Gentiles" will be fulfilled.

W.G.T.

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## Abraham's Joy

WE know that Abraham, who is declared to be the father of all who have faith, rejoiced with a joy that God could recognise, because the LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself mentioned it.

The subject came up when JESUS startled the unbelieving Jews by saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep My saying, he shall never see death." They retorted, "Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead and the prophets, and thou sayest, "If a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death." They asked in scornful astonishment, "Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest Thou Thyself? JESUS answered, "If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing: it is My FATHER that honoureth Me, of whom ye say that He is your GOD: yet ye have not known Him: but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him, and *keep His saying*. Your father Abraham *rejoiced* to see My day: and he saw it and *was glad*. The Jews who saw in JESUS only the despised Nazarene, said, "Thou are not yet 50 years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?" Then when He said, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am, they took up stones to cast at Him, but He disappeared from their midst.

Abraham looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD (Heb. xi, 10). He could travel about amidst the ruins of a fallen creation in the confidence of the saying, "That in Isaac should his seed be called." He saw beforehand the day of which the LORD spoke, and rejoiced in it. We are privileged to look back on what GOD has already accomplished, to behold what He is accomplishing, and to anticipate what He is going to accomplish. We have a divine description of the city that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is GOD, in the Revelation that GOD gave to JESUS, Who is our LORD, for the express purpose of showing us the final accomplishment of His purposes in Him. (Rev. xxi, 10-27). Let us rejoice and be glad, and give honour to Him. GLORY BE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY GHOST.

G. S. PURNELL.

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## Paul and Philemon

QUITE apart from the beauty of the story of the letter with its gospel spirit of hope for the hopeless, life for the "worse than dead," joy and assurance for the haunted, it also breathes the very spirit of Him, Who personifies every gracious quality—the LORD JESUS CHRIST. There is a wealth of profit to be gleaned from Paul's writing: his unashamed love and appeal on behalf of a slave, who was without status, socially or otherwise; his sincerity of concern for his happy reception. This great scholar, aristocrat and Roman citizen yearns over one who is possibly illiterate and certainly of no great account or importance.

There is, too, in the attachment he formed for Onesimus, who has become Paul's slave in heart, a real sacrifice in facilitating his return to his rightful owner. In this matter, with gracious courtesy Paul refuses to indulge in tactics that would secure him the personal benefit of the care and comfort the continued presence of Onesimus would provide. In any case, Philemon would hardly have refused him in the matter. His refusal to assert his rights in support of his claim, his refusal to accept what was not actually granted, is indicative of his knowledge of his own LORD. For of Him (CHRIST) it can truly be said that His right and powers were never used to extricate

Himself from problems or lessen His own burdens; but His powers, His pleas, His own merit, were used only as a means of provision of healing, life and security for others.

The qualities of others never failed to evoke Paul's commendation. His acknowledgment of Philemon's worth, his readiness to credit with the highest motives, and later, his classification of "Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas and Lucas" as "my fellow-labourers," shows a generosity of spirit that is possibly not found elsewhere outside of the LORD Himself. True greatness is not afraid of competition and is ready to admit the merits of others. *The mark of inferiority is surely a readiness to criticise, condemn and disparage.*

Paul's prayers for others are a prominent feature in most of his writings, but here, in verse 22, he shows his practical valuation of the prayers made by others: "Prepare me also a lodging, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." Strong confidence, surely, for one even then a prisoner in Rome—a prisoner of the Roman Emperor! Such a view of the matter had never been considered by Paul. The opening words of his letter convey his viewpoint: "Paul, a prisoner of JESUS CHRIST." We may fret at circumstances which restrict our liberties; not so with Paul: he has learned to be content in "whatsoever" state he is placed. His imprisonment was to be the means of proclaiming the gospel to the Emperor; but that prospect did not blind him to the possibilities in persons of much less consequence that passed his way during the time of his detention. Onesimus, the slave, was only one of scores who benefited from Paul's prison ministry. I said "scores," but when one considers the letters that were also written by the "prisoner of JESUS CHRIST," to be passed down throughout the Church's history, the beneficiaries must total some millions!

W. S. ARGALL.

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## Review

"Heralds of the Dawn" by Dr. J. A. Anderson, 1/6.

**T**HIS is a clever book, stupidly clever indeed, seeing that its object is to hinder the bright beams of the Day Star rising in our hearts (2 Peter, i. 19), and by a large assortment

of scripture texts to defend the author's very dogmatic denial that our LORD may come at any moment to take us to where He now has gone, the FATHER'S house.

A careful consideration of a few scriptures prove the utter confusion of thought in this mischievous work. Ps. cx. 1, declares the present session of the LORD JESUS CHRIST at the right hand of the Majesty on high to be *until*—note the word *until*.—When that was written we may well believe that David neither knew when, how long, nor the purpose of its continuance (cf. 1 Peter, i. 10, 11). The prophets wished to know but were unable to discover more than was revealed (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). Like sunlight gleams on distant mountain peaks they saw, but it was not given them to see all the fertile valleys lying between. Now, however, through the New Testament prophets the sequences of events are revealed and a true perspective given.

So Peter (Acts iii. 21) repeats the “until” in connection with Israel and the whole creation. James too, a little later (Acts xv. 14, 15) is led to make plain what in GOD'S infinite mercy is happening during the present session of CHRIST in heaven. Note again specially the sequence “after this” when describing the present condition of the tabernacle of David “fallen down.” Israel is *not* GOD'S clock as the author of the book curiously affirms it to be. St. Paul assures us Gentiles that He Who has begun a good work in us will complete it *unto the Day of JESUS CHRIST* (Phil. i. 6).

However one may speculate as to the tendency of present events; or how they may merge into the final Tribulation, of this we may be sure, that GOD will complete His present work of gathering out a people to the Name of the LORD JESUS before He again takes Israel in hand. How near that completion may be we cannot possibly know; but He has given assurance to those who have kept the word of patience, “I will come again and receive you unto Myself,” that He will keep them from the hour of trial that is coming on all the world to try the earth dwellers. We Christian believers are not earth dwellers but strangers and sojourners—our dwelling place is in heaven. If that hour of trouble is near, as I believe it is, then that meeting in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17) is nearer still. Yet may we still learn to share “His patience” of which we read in 2 Thess. iii. 5; 2 Peter iii. 9. C. Moss.