

# GOODLY WORDS

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Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that  
I would keep Thy words. (Psa. 119. 57.)

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## GOODLY WORDS.

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### JOSHUA 24. 4-16.

**T**HIS is a remarkable chapter, tracing as it does the mercy and goodness of God from the call of Abraham to the close of the wilderness journey. Our purpose is to speak of seven things to which attention is drawn in the above verses. The first is

#### DEGRADATION IN EGYPT.

In verse 4 we read, "Jacob and his children went down into Egypt." In the light of such words as these our thoughts revert to the history of the children of Israel in Egypt. We see that however favourable the conditions were when first they went down, these conditions changed into those of servitude and degradation. Hard task-masters were set over them for the express purpose of afflicting them with their burdens, and their lives were made bitter with hard bondage.

What a picture Egypt is of the world, and Pharaoh of the god of this world. How Satan strives to bring us into bondage, to rob us of liberty, and to heap burdens upon us heavier than we can bear. He is indeed, as most have found to their sorrow, a hard task-master. Always exacting from us and never giving, ever pulling us morally down and never lifting us up, and then if we attempt to break away and go to God for alleviation he tells us that we are too bad for God to have anything to do with us. At last in utter despair we cease to struggle, and go on from day

B

to day an unwilling but helpless victim of his vindictive wickedness.

How hopeless the condition of the younger son in Luke 15 appeared to be. In the far country, his substance wasted with riotous living, his resources exhausted, endeavouring to satisfy his cravings with the husks that the swine did eat, and then having his eyes opened to the heartless character of the world—no man gave unto him. What a picture of degradation! Only a picture, you say. Yes, but one drawn by the Lord Himself and therefore *true* to the smallest detail. A moment arrived when he came to himself. Has that moment dawned for *you*? If so it is the first step to learning that it is God alone who can deliver from oneself.

#### DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

We might be tempted to ask when we begin to *feel* the chains that bind us, Is there then no hope? Thank God, there is, but the first move, as with the prodigal, has to come from us. The move in the case of the children of Israel was a *cry*. We read in Exodus 2 that the cry of the captives came up unto God, that He heard their groaning, looked upon them and began to move in order to bring them out of the house of bondage and from under the thralldom of Pharaoh.

Ours was surely a similar case, and God in His infinite mercy and compassionate love has for our deliverance moved in a most wonderful way. In the death of Christ a way has been made for us out of the house of bondage so that we might be brought into the liberty of the children of God. The Lord Jesus has been here, and through death He has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and opened a door of deliverance for them

## THE PROPHETS.—ELISHA.

3

who were all their lifetime subject to bondage. We see from verses 6 and 7 of our chapter how complete their deliverance was, and how entirely it was the work of God for them. In the celebration of it in Exodus 15 everything is ascribed to the power and might of God. How striking is their departure from Egypt, none able to hinder, for they were under the protective hand of God.

Do we want to depart from Egypt? God alone can bring us out. Are we fearful of the power of the enemy? God can give us to know His salvation, so that being delivered out of the hand of our enemies we might serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

May the cry of need go up from our hearts to God, and He will bring us from under the power of Satan to Himself, and we shall depart from Egypt never to return.

J. R. T.

## THE PROPHETS.—No. 5.

ELISHA.

**I**N studying the history of Elisha, we may expect to find distinctive features in his life and ministry, since he is more often referred to as "the man of God" than any other servant in the scriptures. His "example of suffering and patience" is one which is peculiarly suited to our own difficult day, a day of indifference and unbelief. Elijah with fervent zeal and ardour had wrought to recover the people to God, and as following that ministry Elisha moves up and down in the ease and dignity of grace, healing and fruitfulness following his word.

Power and grace were blended in a marked way

in Elisha. He is brought into view as ploughing (1 Kings 19. 19), the first operation in the activities of the patient husbandman of whom James speaks.

“The husbandman . . . hath long patience.” (James 5. 7.) Moreover, he “was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth.” No doubt he was content to be the last, for he would profit by those going on before. But spiritual promotion was in store for him, and the patience needed in his secular occupation was but suggestive of that which later marked his service for God. Elijah casts his mantle on him, and such an action is rightly interpreted by Elisha. He is thus claimed as a disciple of, and a minister to, the great prophet Elijah. And though he is temporarily detained by his natural affection for his parents, yet he uses the occasion on returning to them to publicly express his whole-hearted surrender. His yoke of oxen and the implements are all given up, and the people get the benefit of his surrender, for he “gave to the people, and they ate.” What blessed employment is now his portion! “He arose and went after Elijah, and ministered to him.”

It seems fitting that he is not again heard of till the day that Elijah was to be translated, for “the servant is not greater than his lord,” and Elijah’s service was not yet at an end. But if scripture is silent as to Elisha during this period, he was evidently performing a useful service, since we read in 2 Kings 3. 11 that when a prophet of the Lord was needed Elisha is remembered as one “who poured water on the hands of Elijah.” He had become known as a vessel of refreshment. Happy Elisha! Happy, too, for all who in joyous contentment seek by prayer



and sympathy to refresh those whom the Lord has endowed with gift for His service and the help of His saints.

It was a simple service that Elisha was doing, but it would mean much to Elijah, not only to be thus refreshed, but to have one standing by him in whole-hearted sympathy with his service. Spiritual promotion has often been entrusted to those who had been content to be merged in an out-of-sight service which resulted in comfort and refreshment to such as were serving continuously and arduously in the service of the Lord. This happy service of prayer is open to every young believer to-day and is greatly needed.

But sacrifice and surrender must ever precede service, else we do not rightly serve. So there are two outstanding incidents in Elisha's life which reveal to us the secret of his power. His first action was to surrender all that he had as to earth, his yoke of oxen, implements, natural relationships, etc., in view of serving Elijah in the path of God's will. But now, on the day of Elijah's translation, he virtually surrenders himself. It is said that when he saw Elijah no more "he took hold of his own garments and rent them in *two pieces*." Those garments were never to be worn again. He chose displacement as the one who had coveted a double portion of Elijah's spirit. 2 Kings 2 brings before us the last day of Elijah's service and the first day of Elisha's service as succeeding Elijah.

Neither spiritual nor senile decay marked Elijah on this his last day upon earth, if we judge by the journeys he took. He goes from Gilgal to Bethel, from Bethel to Jericho, from Jericho to the Jordan. Not only was his natural force not abated, but he

was spiritually active. Moreover, never was Elijah so spiritually attractive as on this day. He tests Elisha three times, "Tarry here, I pray thee," and three times Elisha responds in affection. He saw moral beauty in Elijah as he moved at the bidding of the Lord, and he clave to him. The sons of the prophets know what is *true*, but they are not moved by the *truth*. They can refer, but oh, how coldly! to Elijah's ascension, but they are not concerned to follow closely, neither to see him go up. Elisha says to them, "I *also* know it," but mere information cannot satisfy affection, so he moves with Elijah. There is a spiritual alluringness which compels Elisha's following. The representatives of the official system stand "*afar off*" to witness Elijah's movements, but Elisha is near and is enjoying holy intimacy with Elijah.

Elisha's threefold committal, "I will not leave thee," bespeaks a definite resolve of heart, and he is rewarded, for we read, "And they two went on," and again, "and they two stood by the Jordan," and yet again, "they two went over on dry ground." What holy preparation for service Elisha was passing through in all these significant journeys! His mind and heart, musing and burning as they walk together, find ready expression in his swift and appealing answer to Elijah's question, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken away from thee." Elisha answers without hesitancy, but with deliberation, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." He had seen his master's spirit and recognised that only a double portion of *that* spirit would sustain and maintain him in his service in the absence of Elijah.

"Thou hast asked a hard thing," says Elijah, but

not too hard we may say, for only one condition is imposed upon Elisha. "If thou see me when I am taken from thee." How intently would Elisha watch his master from that moment. He receives the final touches of his education in the holy walk and converse that is spoken of in verse 11, "As they went on and *talked*." But now there is a divine interruption and they are parted asunder, one to be triumphantly taken to the heavens, the other to be left on earth as the vessel of testimony for God. So "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into the heavens. And Elisha saw it," hence the double portion of Elijah's spirit is assured to him.

He would never forget "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," nor the power which had terminated Elijah's service on earth. But Elisha "saw him no more" and proceeds to rend his own garments in two pieces. It was no time to brood over Elijah's departure, neither the time to indulge sorrow, for the mantle of Elijah was beside him, and the path of God's will was before him. With what dignity he wore that mantle and with what wise steps and gracious words he moved and spake in that pathway!

J. H. T.

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## THE BIBLE.—THE PSALMS.

### BOOK V.

(Psa. 107-150.)

**F**ROM the first few verses of Psalm 107 contrasted with Psalm 106. 47, we learn that God's people are in this Book of Psalms generally regarded as restored to their land, and as in that position a retrospective view is given of the ways of God with them. A great variety of circumstances and experience

are recounted, and in all the dominating note of the psalms is that mercy marks God's ways, and the issue or end of those ways is a creation vibrating with God's praise. Psalm 107 illustrates this.

Before, however, going into details, a brief general division of these psalms may be given. Psalm 107 stands by itself, so also Psalm 108. Psalms 109 and 110 go together; and Psalms 111, 112 and 113; then Psalms 114-116; Psalm 117 alone; Psalms 118 and 119 concluding this first main section. The songs of degrees follow, Psalms 120-134. Then Psalm 135 and Psalm 136; Psalm 137 stands alone; Psalms 138-145 form another group; Psalms 146-150 concluding all.

Psalm 107 gives the general idea of the book. Our wisdom is to observe God's ways. (Compare ver. 43, Hosea 14. 9 and Rom. 11. 33-36.) Notice the divisions in this psalm, verses 1-9 giving normal wilderness experience; verses 10-16 God's ways with our rebel wills; verses 23-32 the circumstances of life; and verses 33 to the end giving the various character of the ways of God. Mercy, which results in praise, marks each section.

Psalm 108 is made up of the halves of two other psalms, namely, 57 and 60—the triumphant part of each. This is suitable here, for it is the *issue* of God's ways.

Psalm 109 is applied in Acts 1 to Judas. In a second sense it applies to the Jews, who gave up Christ to the Gentiles. It also applies to Antichrist, who betrays the godly remnant in the future and breaks his covenant. (See vers. 20, 27, 28, etc.)

Psalm 110 is the answer to this; Christ is set at the right hand of God. Observe the definite reference

to the present time between His rejection and His coming again in power: "Until." (See Acts 2. 34; 1 Cor. 15. 35; Heb. 10. 13.) The second reference to Melchizedek is found here. As Melchizedek the Lord is King and Priest. Verse 1 is the present moment; the rest of the psalm awaits display.

The next series of psalms, 111–118, have no titles. Psalms 111 and 112 go together, and are acrostic psalms. (See J. N. D.'s New Trans. note.) Psalm 111 brings before us what marks Jehovah—*His* works; and Psalm 112 what marks the man that fears Jehovah. 2 Corinthians 9. 9. quotes this psalm in a most interesting way and shews that righteousness in Christianity necessitates giving, not only paying what we owe. Psalm 113 is the *name* of Jehovah. (See also 1 Sam. 11. 8.)

Psalms 114–116 are another group, shewing the complete delivering power of God—the Red Sea and Jordan brought together as one, the complete power of death broken. God's dominion and His sanctuary secured. He is the help of His nation Israel, His priests, and of those who fear Him. The power is of God and not of us. (See Psalm 115. 1 and 2 Cor. 4. 7; Psalm 116 and 2 Cor. 4. 10.) We are "brought low" that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. Having the same spirit of faith we believe, and therefore speak. Notice in passing that we become like our idols. (Psa. 115. 8.) Does not 2 Corinthians 5. 14 answer to the vows of Psalm 116. 14–18?

Psalm 117 gives another instance of the general bearing of this Book of Psalms—"His mercy."

Psalm 118 presents the Lord as coming in the name of Jehovah. The day which the Lord hath made has

come, and the One disallowed has become head of the corner. (See Matt. 21. 42 ; 23. 39 ; 1 Peter 2. 7.) This psalm answers to Psalm 2, as Psalm 119 is the extension of Psalm 1. The Lord Jesus fully answered to Psalm 1. Psalm 119 describes those who through grace are like Him : the godly, the undefiled. Psalm 119 is another alphabetical psalm. (See J.N.D.'s translation.) Happy for us if all our language is made up of such an alphabet.

The songs of degrees follow, and with the remaining psalms form a sort of appendix to the psalms. The songs of degrees give experiences of recovery and renewed blessing. As far as I understand them they appear divided into five groups as follows : Psalms 120-122 ; Psalms 123-125 ; Psalms 126-128 ; Psalms 129-131 ; Psalms 132-134.

(1) Psalm 120. We dwell in a hostile scene, but confess that when we speak, they are for war.

Psalm 121. We are dependent, and God keeps us from falling.

Psalm 122. We rejoice to go into God's house, and as His interests are ours, we prosper.

(2) Psalm 123. Those at ease and the proud scorn us ; but (Psa. 124) the Lord gives us deliverance, otherwise our case would have been hopeless ; and we are once more brought to Jerusalem, and peace upon Israel. (Psa. 125.)

(3) Psalm 126. We sow in tears (see 1 Tim.), yet confident that all depends on the Lord (Psa. 127), and the result is again blessing and peace upon Israel. (Psa. 128.) Of course, the blessings here are earthly ; we have spiritual ones, which these may serve to illustrate.

(4) The history and experience of discipline had been

long and severe. (Psa. 129.) But the wicked, who had been the instruments of God's hand, come under judgment, and from the depths God gives deliverance (Psa. 130) and forgiveness, and we hope in Him; and (Psa. 131) we are taught to be lowly and weaned from that upon which we would naturally depend.

(5) Christ's devotedness (Psa. 132) is the basis of all. It is He who secures rest for Jehovah. No affliction is like His; though it is as having the same spirit we are brought to the blessing of unity (Psa. 133) under the power of the anointing, and are privileged to enter the sanctuary. (Psa. 134.)

These psalms, which describe the experiences of the returned Jewish remnant in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, foreshadow exercises which in a deeper way will be those of Israel in the future once more recovered. They also give principles applicable to us.

Psalms 135 and 136 seem placed together as recounting the ways of God in sovereignty and mercy in contrast to the folly and inability of idols, and those who regard them. His mercy endures for ever.

Psalm 137 depicts the sorrowful experience as captive in Babylon. Jerusalem, not Babel and its evolutions in Babylon, is our joy. (See Dan. 6. 10.)

Psalms 138-145 are another group.

Psalm 138. 1 is a contrast to Psalm 135. 18, and verse 2 to Psalm 137. 5. The psalm seems a description of lowly Israel's experiences as revived, as being the work of God's own hands. Psalm 139 sets out in vivid light the sense of God's all-seeing eye and His omnipresence, it is the language of His godly people who are His work, fashioned with infinite skill. To be searched through exercise is desired by a heart that knows God.

I have not much to remark on Psalms 140–144, save that though strictly applying to Israel in a future day, the expressions of confidence and piety find an answer in every heart who knows God.

In Psalm 145 Christ seems to lead the praises of His earthly people. The psalm begins with His voice alone (vers. 1–4); then His people join in (vers. 5–7); and it closes with all flesh blessing His holy name.

The next five psalms are “Hallelujah” psalms—each psalm begins thus. They are a great chorus, and what a chorus indeed! The psalms are full of what Jehovah is. Every element of creation is called upon to utter praise. So will it be. The death of Christ is the foundation of it all. Hallelujah! He made peace by the blood of His cross that all things might be placed on an unalterable basis of blessing, reconciled to God. Wonderful ways of God that can order all so that universal grace is the eventual result!

M. W. B.

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## RESTORATION.

(2 SAM. 11, 12.)

NOTES OF A READING WITH S. J. B. C. AT LEVEN, FIFE.

**R**ESTORATION, we have said, like David's is often very slow. Its pathway is measured by the measure of declension. The Lord counts our steps when we go astray (Luke 24. 13), and orders them accordingly when we retrace them. “Abram *went down* into Egypt” step by step, and “Abram *went up* out of Egypt” step by step. The point of departure is ever that of return. Where the stitch is dropped there it must be taken up again. Abram was not fully restored till he reached “the place of



the altar, which he had made there at the first." Then "Abram called on the name of the Lord." (Gen. 13.) So with Samson, "his hair *began* to grow." How slowly he got back his strength! Alas, he never got back his eyes! Spiritual discernment is the first faculty in the moral being to fail when decline sets in, and it is the last to be recovered, and sometimes it never is recovered. Peter's fall was a gradual one, starting with pride (Matt. 16. 22) and ending in cursing and swearing. He did not reach full recovery till he came to this: "Lord, thou knowest *all* things." It was as if he owned, Thou knewest me far better than I knew myself (John 13. 36-38)—Thou knowest all things.

Look at stricken David, fasting and weeping for the life of the child born in sin, and upon whom the judgment of God had been pronounced. (2 Sam. 12. 14.) How loth we are to pass *our* judgment upon and to relinquish that which God has ended and judged for faith in the death of Christ! We naturally cling to "that which is born of the flesh." What exercises we pass through till, like David, we recognise it as dead. (Chap. 12. 23.) Then we relinquish it. But before we give it up what chastening we go through. Beloved, the lesson can only be learnt by dearly bought experience. Somebody once said: "Experience is the best teacher, but her charges are very costly." And so they are.

Every bone in David's moral organism was broken. (Psa. 51. 8.) In the ordinance of the red heifer (read Num. 19), the heifer and the cedar wood, the hyssop and the scarlet, were altogether burnt to *ashes*. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psa. 51 prayed poor

David as he lay in the ashes of self-judgment. But both the ashes and the one who needed to be cleansed had to be taken “without the camp in a *clean place*.” What clean place can be found on earth except in that moral sphere—*resurrection*? What anguish of spirit David went through ere, in a figure, he reached it! There the ashes (death) and “the living water” (the spirit of life) were applied. “The third day” (Num. 19. 19) was, for David, when he knew that his sin was put away. But “the seventh day” he reached when he became a transformed man before others—morally clean. (2 Sam. 12. 18–20.)

Notice how the work of restoration went on! His lost vigour was recovered: “David *arose*.” “He *washed* and *anointed* himself”; he put off, so to speak, his old self, and the anointing was experienced. “He changed his *apparel*”; he changed his appearance and became outwardly a new character. Then he touched the sanctuary: “he *worshipped*.” And then he returned, so to speak, to everyday life, to *his own household*, who ministered to him. Thus David’s longing soul was satisfied; and yet God wanted *more*!

Another man child was born to David as the product of all the toil and the agony, the wormwood and the gall he had gone through.

David named him *Solomon*, which means *peaceful*; answering doubtless to the felt and seen “peaceable fruit of righteousness”—the issue of David’s exercises. (Heb. 12. 11.)

But the Lord sent Nathan again, and he called the child by another name, *Jedidiah*, which means “*beloved of the Lord*,” and which indicated what he was *to God*. “He called him Jedidiah.” Why? The reason given was “*because of the Lord*.”

“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.”

15

How precious it is to the heart of God—how He loves it—when Christ characteristically is formed and fostered in the restored soul! Paul, in touch with the heart of God and endued with the maternal spirit of the heavenly system of grace, travailed in birth again that the mystic Jedidiah might be seen in the Galatians, who had retrograded and needed to be recovered. (Gal. 4. 19–26.) The spirit of Christ in him laboured and longed to produce in them the lovely moral features of Jesus: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” (Gal. 5. 22, 23.)

(Concluded.)

“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,”  
and How to Spend Them.

(1) RUNNING THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

**T**HE path of the follower of Jesus is frequently referred to in scripture as “the race.” The expression doubtless assumes a heart attached to Christ, a single eye fixed on Him as the Object of the affections, and the feet in the path which leads to Himself.

The allusion is to the games of ancient Greece, when to win a prize was considered to be the highest honour to be attained on earth. The athletes of that day in order to conquer at the games refrained from many luxuries, and made many sacrifices to obtain a crown. They ran “to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”

How important then is the exhortation: “*Let us, laying aside every weight, and sin which so easily entangles us, run with endurance THE RACE that lies before*

*us, looking stedfastly on JESUS the leader and completer of faith.*" (Heb. 12. 1, 2.)

A well-known servant of God has written: "Oh, for single-eyed energy for Christ! If Christ is so precious to me that everything else is dross, it will be no difficulty for me to throw it aside. That is the secret—the power of an absorbing Object—to deliver me from all else. It is to the extent that my heart values any other object that it is a temptation to me. Suppose I have a very beautiful cloak and I am running a race, if my heart is really occupied with the prize I shall not mind the beauty of the cloak; I shall only know it as a weight and shall cast it off."

But every believer is not necessarily a runner in this race. Many are too busy in the pursuit of other objects; others are content to be interested spectators of the race; but some have been so captivated by the Person of Christ that they follow Him, saying, "Master, where dwellest thou?"

How are YOU spending "the days of thy youth"? Have you entered upon this path that you may run this race? Do not be content with a resolution that some day you will do so, but commit yourself wholly to Christ as one that loves Him and is prepared to follow Him to-day. That is

#### ENTERING

the race. There is a definite moment when each runner starts; it is the moment of *decision for Christ*. He divests himself of all weights and commits himself to the course.

Happy are the believers who enter this race while they are young, for they are saved from a wasted life and from many a snare.

Saul of Tarsus entered the race at his conversion,

## "THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH."

17

for he obeyed the word, "Arise, and go"! and he never turned back. He was marked by

## ENERGY,

which is so essential for running. The Psalmist had spiritual energy when he said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I *seek* after." So he could add, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

Even when nearing the end of the race the Apostle Paul could say, "I make no account of my life as dear to myself, so that I finish my course."

In addition to spiritual energy it is necessary to have

## ENDURANCE

if we are to run this race. Timothy was exhorted to "pursue righteousness, piety, faith, love, *endurance*, meekness of spirit," and to "strive earnestly in the good conflict of faith."

To enable us to endure hardness we need to feed on wholesome spiritual food that we may have strong constitutions, and to avoid all the poisonous literature that defiles and enfeebles the readers.

There are many subtle

## ENTANGLEMENTS,

and each one has proved how easily sin does entangle us. Samson when enticed by Delilah proved the entanglement of sin and lost his strength. Satan sets snares in the path to entangle us. A bad conscience, which is the result of sin, hinders progress in the heavenly race. Let us beware of these entanglements: self-love, pride, human ambition, love of money and love of pleasures, which will stop our progress and may cause us to leave the narrow way that leads to life.



## AFTER.

19

When nights were aglow  
                                   with high fancy a-roaming,  
 And dreams stood for truth,  
                                   and for wisdom alone.

How swift did they pass,  
                                   but how brave their successors,  
 When fancy gave place  
                                   to plain matter of fact ;  
 The sand in the glass  
                                   nothing taught their possessors,  
 But fame to outpace,  
                                   and its laurels exact.

Those days gone for aye,  
                                   with their schemes and their visions,  
 The days of my youth,  
                                   with their " standard of life " ;  
 Their " yea " and their " nay,"  
                                   and their constant revisions,  
 And " judgments," forsooth,  
                                   and philosophies rife !

Those days, ere their sun  
                                   to its zenith ascended,  
 Were more than outshin'd  
                                   by a glory divine ;  
 An epoch begun—  
                                   a mere episode ended—  
 A vista defined,  
                                   nor by plummet nor line !

An epoch begun !  
                                   but begun in the shining  
 Of Christ on the throne,  
                                   with all heav'n at His feet !  
 Yet—much to be done  
                                   by a process refining,  
 That His will alone  
                                   might our service make meet.

And now in that light  
                                   ev'ry move meant resistance,  
 For ne'er did the foe  
                                   from his purpose decline.

Each step to the right  
 would he dog with insistence,  
 But saw not the glow  
 of that shining divine !

The glow of the dawn—  
 of the day never-ending !  
 The light o'er the hills,  
 to illumine the way !  
 The glories unborn,  
 yet to faith all-transcending !  
 The vision that stills—  
 though world-empires decay

That shining divine !  
 how it fix'd a new centre,  
 A new point of view—  
 a new " standard of life " !  
 An issue benign,  
 and with no peradventure ;  
 Yea, everything new ;  
 and—the end of all strife !

A shining like that  
 we would ever remember,  
 And call too to mind  
 all the conflict endur'd—  
 With self to combat,  
 and faith down to an ember,  
 The glory that shin'd,  
 then, each vict'ry secur'd !

Oh ! cast not away,  
 now, your confidence treasur'd ;  
 A little while still,  
 and your Lord will appear ;  
 Think much of the day,  
 when your work will be measur'd ;  
 Pursue but *His will* ;  
 and your voice let Him hear !

But, bear with me yet :  
 just a word ere we finish—  
 You seek His " Well done " ?  
 and all else count but loss ?  
 Then do not forget,  
 lest your patience diminish,  
 The crown will be won,  
 only—AFTER the cross !

*Derby.*

W. J



## JOSHUA 24. 4-16.

(Continued.)

**I**N last month's paper we saw how the children of Israel were awakened to a sense of their condition and to their need of a deliverer, and how God came in for them; then how they departed from Egypt as a people who had been sheltered from judgment by the blood of sprinkling, and as a company whom God claimed for Himself they passed through the Red Sea and proved the salvation of God.

The next phase in their experience is

### DWELLING IN THE WILDERNESS.

In verse 7 it is said, "Ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season." Whilst recognising the overruling hand of God, at the same time it is evident that the purpose of God for them was Canaan. During the long detention of forty years in the wilderness, what wonderful opportunities they had of learning the faithfulness of God in meeting their *every* wilderness need.

### THE NECESSITY OF THE WILDERNESS

is surely found in the opportunity it affords of learning God and ourselves. How the necessity of the wilderness is seen in Deuteronomy 8. 2, 3: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna . . . that he might make thee

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know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." We all need to learn this lesson in the school of God, so that being humbled and proved we may learn what our hearts are.

#### THE NEEDS OF THE WILDERNESS.

In the wilderness we learn as nowhere else that we are completely shut up to God for everything, and therefore the great lesson to learn in this connection is dependence. The very multitude of our needs, coupled with our utter inability to meet one, turns us in our extremity to God as the only One able to come in for us. So He suffers us to hunger in order that He may feed us with manna, to thirst that He may give us water from the rock; in other words, give us to learn that Christ is available to us *all* our wilderness journey, and that there is a fulness of supply in Him for every wilderness need.

#### THE RESOURCES OF THE WILDERNESS.

How great these are—how infinitely greater than the needs. The very needs provide an occasion for bringing into display the never-failing resources there are with God to meet, and more than meet them. What a resource God is to and for His people; how constant is His grace in meeting *all* the necessities of the pathway, and that according to the dictates of His love. Well may we sing:

"Though our way be long and dreary,  
Eagle strength He'll still renew;  
Garments fresh and foot unwearied,  
Tell how God hath brought us through."

#### THE LESSONS OF THE WILDERNESS.

The study of the Book of Numbers is helpful in

relation to the history of the people of God in wilderness circumstances and the lessons to be learned in them.

Before proceeding further we would ask, Have we begun our wilderness journey? You reply, Of course we have. Let us pause a moment and think the question out and what it involves. Do we know that we are sheltered from judgment, and that when the great white throne is set that we shall *not* be standing before it? Further, are we saved? That is, have we been brought clean out of the kingdom of darkness, and do we know ourselves as no longer the bond-slaves of Satan? Are we justified? in other words, cleared, and cleared for ever, from every charge that can be brought against us? If so we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and are ready for the wilderness pathway with all its difficulties, testings, temptations and exercises.

We would like to suggest the passover and the feast of unleavened bread being the keynote of the wilderness. The passover was kept in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land, and there are important lessons to be learned from its threefold celebration. The first lesson is that God has passed over us in judgment, a judgment borne by Christ when forsaken by God on the cross, and so in the value of that wondrous sacrifice God says, I will pass over you. And now in all the trials of our wilderness life God would have us carry with us the remembrance and the joy of our redemption. Then as to the feast of unleavened bread, it would teach us the necessity of holiness as springing out of the grace of redemption. So the feast is a seven day one, covering the whole of our wilderness journey. In Deuteronomy 4. 24 we read, "The

Lord thy God is a jealous God." Why is this? It is because He loved His people and desired that they should be His alone, as He says in Numbers 23. 9, "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." In the New Testament we are told that we are not our own, we have been bought with a price.

How often during their wilderness journey did Israel turn from God, and just as often had to throw themselves upon the mercy of God and prove the truth of Deuteronomy 4. 31, "The Lord thy God is a merciful God." Then God had to say of them, "children in whom there is no faithfulness," but notwithstanding this God had been faithful to His promise to their fathers and brought them through. "The Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God." (Deut. 7. 9.) These are lessons we all need to learn, and there will not be any movement that is really progress until then.

"Sheltered, separated and saved,  
Thy death hath set me free.  
Satisfied, sustained and supported,  
By Christ who lives for me."

J. R. T.

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## THE PROPHETS.—No. 6.

ELISHA (*continued*).

**E**LISHA, having rent his own garments in two pieces, "took up the mantle of Elijah which fell from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan." (2 Kings 2. 13.) He was about to prove the power which maintained Elijah in testimony, but he must first pass through the Jordan,

the type of actual death. Elijah had left the land after witnessing for God in it, but Elisha now re-enters it, receiving an early answer to his faith as "he smote the waters, and they parted hither and thither."

The sons of the prophets recognised that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha. It was not merely that he had Elijah's mantle, but he was distinguished now as being characteristically like his master. Nevertheless they refuse, apparently, to believe in Elijah's ascension, and this must have been keenly felt by Elisha as part of the suffering and patience to which he had been called. They send fifty valiant men, but they go in fleshly energy and are lacking in the spiritual sensibilities which would have led them to follow Elisha as he had followed Elijah. "Ye shall not send," says Elisha, yet "they pressed him till he was ashamed." If the word of the man of God was not obeyed, they must learn their lesson in the three days' fruitless search, and their exposure is complete as they return to Elisha.

In our own day of much activity in Christendom, how few serve in the dignity and ease that marked Elisha. If we do not serve in the light of Christ as ascended far above all heavens, and in the power and conscious presence of the Holy Spirit below, we shall employ the flesh to our own inflation and that of others. Elisha's first recorded service is at Jericho, and from this point onward we cannot read his history without feeling how beautifully, if feebly, he sets forth His perfect Antitype—the Lord Jesus as seen in Luke's gospel.

Elisha portrays a man of another order—grace, healing, power and blessing all flowing from his ac-

tivities. He will serve all, from a king in his extremity to a poor widow in her deep need. He is at the disposal of the nation, as also is he available to a small company of the sons of the prophets. He will not only deliver the king of Judah and the armies with him, but he will also with gentle grace feast the Syrian bands, who had come to take him, ere he sends them back to their own land.

His actions are many, and almost all acts of grace, but his words are few and his prayers brief. He prays three times in chapter 6, but each prayer is of one sentence only. Yet how great and far-reaching are the answers to those prayers. What he *is* gives character to what he *does*, and his recorded words are so few that altogether they would not extend beyond one chapter of thirty or forty verses. Yet his ministry is one of volume and power, and influences whole nations. Elisha's is not lip service, but a ministry of grace seen in a vessel peculiarly formed by Jehovah.

We do not read that any one poured water upon *his* hands, as he had done for Elijah. Indeed, the service of Gehazi (his young man) bore no resemblance whatever to the service that Elisha had so faithfully carried on towards Elijah, and Gehazi ultimately proved faithless! Elisha gets little or no help from the sons of the prophets, though they appear to make progress under Elisha's influence (see in chap. 4. 38 how they are "sitting before him" at Gilgal), neither do any others specially come forward to succour this man of God, save perhaps the great woman of Shunem, who recognised Elisha as "a holy man of God." How entirely he was cast upon God in his service! No complaint issues from his lips, for he sought and gained divine approval, and nothing but this can

sustain the heart of any servant of God. Elisha was one who "said little, served all and passed on."

Let us look at these precious activities, for if the word of God records few of Elisha's words it records much as to his deeds. He deals first with the situation at Jericho—a type of this present world. The situation was good, but there was lacking that which could suitably minister to the needs of man. The water was bad and the land barren. So to-day, alas, many are drinking of earth's polluted streams and refuse to drink from the living streams of grace which are flowing freely as a consequence of the death of Christ. Elisha asks for a *new* cruse, and salt therein. "And he went forth to the *source* of the waters, and cast the salt in there." (2 Kings 2. 21.) Man after the flesh could never meet the situation. The impurity and barrenness have to be dealt with at the *source*, and this was done perfectly in the death of Christ. Thus the pure stream of grace, which began to flow at that supreme moment, will presently flood the universe for God.

But, as many in the place of light and favour have refused to acknowledge the work and worth of Christ, so also here in favoured Bethel there are those who mock at the truth of ascension. The little boys of the city mocked Elisha, saying, "Go up, thou bald head"—no doubt a scoffing reference to Elijah's translation. Strange product of the place so highly favoured as the house of God—an unbelieving and unholy generation in the place of light and privilege. But Elisha cursed them in the name of the Lord and judgment falls upon them. So Paul says later, "If any one love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maran-atha [accursed at His coming]."

The curse is certain, but it is delayed (consistently with this day of grace) till Christ's coming, so that all meanwhile may bow to Christ. (1 Cor. 16. 22.)

Elisha has now to meet the difficulties of three kings and their armies. After a circuit of seven days' journey they are without water. (2 Kings 3.) What wisdom is now displayed by Elisha. He sternly rebukes the wicked king of Israel, but for Jehoshaphat's sake (though as king of Judah he is in a false position) Elisha remains to serve.

But how much he must have suffered in his spirit at such a moment—making a difference between an apostate king and one who in the main was faithful. So keen are Elisha's spiritual sensibilities that he cannot at once act in blessing. The surroundings and associations are felt by him, so he calls for a minstrel. The abstraction of heart and mind so normal and proper to a spiritual man have been intruded upon. This ought to have rebuked Jehoshaphat, who had previously said, "The word of Jehovah is with him." And have *we* not at times hindered the Lord in His movements of blessing, either because of associations or our pre-occupation with the things of earth, so that as coming together there has been the need of "a minstrel"—one spiritually able to remove every hindrance so that the word of the Lord and blessing follow? On the other hand, it may be that our participation in church exercises and sorrows tends to become a burden upon us, so that we need the fresh strains of heavenly music to free our spirits. Often a hymn or prayer at the commencement of a meeting has been used of the Lord to soothe the spirits of His own, so that His mind becomes known subsequently and blessing follows. Distraction thus gives



place to abstraction and the heart and mind are filled with Christ.

How beautifully the heavenly minstrelsy comforts Paul on three occasions when outward circumstances and the sorrows of the testimony would discourage him. (See Acts 18. 9-11 ; 23. 10, 11 ; 27. 23-25.)

So we see in Elisha the blessed results flowing from spiritual abstraction. The word of the Lord is given and obeyed, and the valley is made full of ditches. The kings and people thus own their dependence upon, and their faith in, the word of the Lord through the man of God. They were deserving of God's wrath, but He intervenes in grace and the country was filled with water after seven days' testing and exposure. "And it came to pass in the morning, *when the meat offering was offered*, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water." (Chap. 3. 20.) How suggestive this is, for the meat offering speaks of Christ as affording a full and perfect answer to the heart of God, in the entirety of His pathway as a man on earth. The heart of God thus found an abiding resting-place in Christ, and God can thus announce glad tidings to men. So it is said here, "when the meat offering was offered" the water flowed! And it came by the *way of Edom*, God in His sovereignty ignoring both Jerusalem and Samaria. Then, too, every well of water had previously been stopped in order that God's sovereignty might shine out.

But how solemn to see that the water which meant life to many was a foreshadowing of judgment to others, for "the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood." To the one it was "the savour

of death unto death ; and to the other the savour of life unto life." (2 Cor. 2. 16.)

Elisha was a suitably formed vessel as bringing in that which spoke of the excess of grace, and his further movements reveal how usable he was as devoted to Jehovah and His interests.

J. H. T.

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### **"BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD."**

**T**HUS saith the Lord." We have been called out of the world. (2 Cor. 6. 17.) Have we obeyed the call ? Salvation in one sense is deliverance from the world, as typified by Israel's deliverance from Egypt. If we have not left the world, we are not saved in that sense. The world is judged as having rejected Christ, and is left under the power of Satan, who is said to be the ruler and god of this world. The world and its god will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord. (John 12. 31 ; 16. 7-11.) Christ gave Himself for us that He might *deliver us from this present evil world*, and purify to Himself a peculiar people zealous for good works. (Gal. 1. 4 ; Titus 2. 14.) The Lord could say of His own, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17. 14.) How many Christians there are who have never left Egypt ; they are still in the world, like Lot in Sodom. But there are others who, having professedly left the world, have taken the path of separation, they break bread on the Lord's day *announcing the Lord's death*, that He has died here, died to sin and to the world. In so doing they profess their identification with His death, that is, that they have died to the world. We may well ask ourselves

“ BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD.” 31

if in practice we are consistent with this profession ?  
A serious question for us all.

It is painfully evident that many such have brought a good deal of the world with them in manners and dress, and in the furnishing of their houses. All this must grieve the Spirit of God, and be the cause of much weakness in the meetings. In many cases one sees the newest fashions of the world adopted, shewing where the heart is, and evidencing a disregard for the word of the Lord at the head of this paper. No doubt this word covers much more than the matter of dress, but it would at least cover that. “If a man love me, he will keep my words.” “Ye are my friends, *if ye do whatsoever I command you.*”

In 1 Timothy 2 we have what should characterise men and women in the house of God. What is to mark the men is lifting up *holy hands*. The women are to be characterised by modest deportment and dress as becomes women professing godliness, or the fear of God. The fashions of the present day are the very opposite of this ; they are decidedly immodest and unseemly. The apostle in addressing women says, “Whose adorning let it not be that outward one of tressing of hair, and wearing gold, or putting on apparel ; but the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in *the sight of God* is of great price.” (1 Peter 3. 3, 4.) Do women dress as in the sight of God or in the sight of men ?

In the matter of wearing the hair, the present fashion of cutting it off is in direct contravention of divine order. It may be that some have done this in ignorance. For such a word of instruction and admonition may be used to save them from what is

dishonouring to God and unsuitable to the assemblies of the saints. In 1 Corinthians 11 we have the divine principle which should govern women in this matter. "The head of every man is Christ ; and the head of the woman is the man ; and the head of Christ is God." This is the divine order. It is remarkable that Christ as man has taken the place of subjection to God and retains it for ever. What a pattern for us. The woman's long hair is given her as a sign that she accepts the position which God has assigned to her, namely, that of subjection to the man, and thus to Christ and to God. The woman's hair is her glory, therefore it is shame for a woman to have her hair cut off. The apostle says that a woman when praying should have a covering on her head as a sign of her being under authority, "because of the angels." Angels looking down expect to see divine order maintained in the church, however much it may be departed from in the world. In the world to-day every divine principle is contravened more and more every day. Women are claiming equal rights with men, and pushing themselves into prominence in every sphere of life. Christ's day is coming when divine order will be established universally. This should be anticipated in the assembly. For a woman to come into the assembly with her hair cut off is dishonouring to God, unworthy of His assembly, a grief to the angels, and a shame to herself.

The whole matter of manners and dress resolves itself into the question whether we are walking *before God* or before men, having *the Lord before us* or the world and its ways. If a person imitates the prevailing fashions of the world, it is evident that she has man and the world before her. We need not go

to the opposite extreme and make ourselves conspicuous by adopting some special form of dress like monks and nuns. Without following the newest fashions of the day, it is possible for christian women to dress in a simple and comely manner, as becomes those professing godliness. If we are under the influence of the grace of God, our desire will be to walk so as to *please Him*, "not as pleasing men, but God"; like Enoch, who, before his translation, had the testimony that "*he pleased God.*" We are instructed as to how we ought to walk and *please God*. The Lord said to His disciples, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings."

Let my readers seriously consider the scriptures quoted in the fear of God. "Be ye *doers* of the word, and not hearers only" !

F. H. B.

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## "THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,"

### And How to Spend Them.

#### 2. WAITING FOR CHRIST.

**T**HE heart of every lover of Jesus beats high in anticipation of the glorious moment of His coming. It is "the blessed hope" of believers, for "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye . . . the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Our eyes will see the face of Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer, our ears will hear His heavenly voice when the whole of the redeemed respond to His call of power that will raise the dead in Christ, then "we which are alive and remain shall be *caught up*

together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

But this hope has its influence upon the lives of those who cherish it, and there is a deep concern as to how the days should be spent ere the Lord comes, whether they are many or few. The Lord Jesus desired that His disciples should be

#### WAITING

for Him, or as He said, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning ; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord." This means that they are so ready to welcome Him that "when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately." How important it is that there should be nothing to be adjusted or any preparation necessary, and that there should be no sins unjudged, but that we should be quite ready to go without even a moment's warning. Are you ready to welcome Him ? The apostle's prayer was : "The Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

Then, with the waiting there is also the thought of

#### WATCHING

for Christ. As a loving fisher-wife watches for the first glimpse of her husband's boat, or as those on beds of affliction watch for the break of day, so we would say with the Psalmist, "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that *watch* for the morning." There is a special blessing for watching, for the Lord said, "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find *watching*." It is not enough for us to hold the truth of the coming of the Lord as a doctrine ; He desires that there should be living affections causing the heart to respond to His promise,

## “THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.”

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“Surely I come quickly,” by replying, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

While waiting and watching there is also the important occupation of

## TRADING

in His interests during His absence. He is that certain nobleman who “went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come [or, trade while I am coming].” Now each one who is the Lord’s has received his pound, and it is well to ask Him to shew you what it is and how it can be used so that profit is gained. When He returns He will call His servants to Him “that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.”

Our lives, our voices, our opportunities, our light and our liberty may be regarded as part of the “pound” which has been entrusted to us, and with which we may trade that there may be gain for Him. What a joy if we shall be able to say, “Lord, thy pound has gained ten pounds”! Do not keep your pound laid up, but boldly and courageously confess your Lord and use what He has entrusted to you in His interests. There is glory to Him and present joy in profitable trading, for our days may be so spent that our Lord can say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

But the greatest of all the privileges that are open to us while we await the return of our Lord is that of

## ANNOUNCING

His death in the Lord’s supper, for the word says, “As often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye announce the death of the Lord, *until he*

*come.*" We do this in the same world in which He was despised and rejected of men. We are surrounded by His enemies who still say, "When shall he die, and his name perish?" but we rejoice that "His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun."

The Lord's supper will be continued as long as those who love Him are here, and there will thus be an announcement of His death and of the preciousness of His imperishable name "until he come." His followers cherish the anticipation of that day when He shall be publicly manifested. We long for the day 'until he come whose right it is.' We love His appearing—that day when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Such are the occupations that engage the lives of the lovers of Christ. May we each *wait* for Him, *watch* for His return, *trade* in His interests, and *announce* His death until He come. Thus shall we delight to sing :

" We wait for Thee, for Thou, e'en here  
 Hast won our hearts' affection,  
 In spirit still we find Thee near,  
 Our solace and protection.  
 In cloudless light, and glory bright,  
 We soon with joy shall greet Thee,  
 And in the air shall meet Thee."

F. S. M.



## SOME THOUGHTS ON FASTING.

“This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” (Matt. 17. 21.)

**P**RAYER we perhaps think we know something about, though truly, if we ask ourselves how much we really speak to God in the secret of our souls, we may be surprised to find how little it amounts to. But our present purpose is to consider what is meant by fasting.

In its original and most rudimentary meaning, to fast is simply to abstain from food. Specially it means to abstain from food (or other satisfaction of our lawful needs), not because food is not to be had, but on account of some occasion of mourning, it may be of repentance, or self-judgment, or heart-searching before God.

Thus Ezra: “Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us. . . . So we fasted and besought our God.” (Chap. 8. 21.)

And Daniel: “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed . . . and made my confession, and said . . . We have sinned.” (Chap. 9. 3.)

Fasting is not always associated with specific confession of sin, but it is safe to say that it is always associated with self-judgment and (its positive counterpart) concentration of spiritual purpose. It was in the church at Antioch, “as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted,” that “the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed,

and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”  
(Acts 13. 2, 3.)

Such special occasions of fasting are still called for ; yet the New Testament addresses itself to the tenor of our lives as a whole more than to specific moments in it, and it is this general tenor which is in view in the Lord's words relating to the conditions after His departure : “Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them ? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.” (Matt. 9. 15.) These days have come. The Bridegroom is gone ; we await His return, when He will lead the whole creation in joy ; meanwhile, “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Matt. 5. 4.)

It is rather striking that, while the New Testament contains numerous exhortations to prayer (many will at once occur to the reader), there are no direct instructions to fast. A direct exhortation to prayer is little likely to make us legal about it, but perhaps the same is hardly true as to fasting in its literal sense. If we begin to instruct another to fast in respect of this or that need of the body or mind (some need, perhaps, which we do not ourselves feel), we are likely to become conventional and legal in the matter, and such a state of mind is very damaging to the interests of grace and truth.

It should be observed that to fast means to abstain, not from things that are sinful or wrong, but from things that are, in the ordinary sense, legitimate. Many will ask, Why should we ever abstain from that which is legitimate ? The answer is to be found in the conditions of our life down here—conditions of weakness such that, without this deliberate self-

restraint and self-discipline, we are not able to see divine things clearly. Quite apart from specific occasions of self-judgment, such as those already referred to, without fasting it is not possible, in our present earthly conditions, to concentrate on the things of the Spirit; and if we do not so concentrate, as God may give us grace, we shall be useless as Christians here. A young man may ask, Why should I not do this, why should I not do that? There may or may not be a good reason why you should not do this or that particular thing; but one thing is certain, unless you know (of your own motion) how to fast, you will have no power as a Christian. "This kind [of power against evil] goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." You may say, Why does it not? Well, it just *does not*, that is all; it is a matter that can be verified by observation and experience. A man who does not (in some sort) fast, is a man from whom no spiritual power goes forth.

Fasting is a natural accompaniment of, or a necessary aid to, concentration of spiritual purpose, and the question of such concentration really arises only when we desire of set purpose to seek the Lord, to cleave to Him, to follow and to serve Him. This question—what is our object in life in relation to the Lord?—must precede any intelligent handling of the question whether it is wise and seemly to enjoy, or to refrain from, the several things on this varied earth that offer themselves for our interest and use. Many people ask whether it is *wrong* to do this or that, before they have settled seriously between themselves and God what is their central and commanding object in life.

The things that earth offers for our use and enjoyment may be right enough in themselves, but the

serious question is whether, unless I resolutely limit myself in respect of them, they will not dilute my spiritual energy and weaken my interest and joy in the things of the Lord to such an extent as to deprive my life of its properly distinctive character of witness to Him. This question of *dilution* merits the attention of any one who has believed in Christ, and to whom this present life is making attractive offers. The young believer little knows how strong is the world, and how weak he is in himself to resist it ; how easily, washed by its advancing tides, his distinctively Christian colour may become fainter and fainter.

We do not want to be legal ; we may rightly remember that "God . . . giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6. 17) ; but we may also remember that we are "sent" into the world (John 17. 18) ; we are, in a sense, soldiers, not mere civilians, and "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life ; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." (2 Tim. 2. 4.) We do not want to be among those who "bow down on their knees to drink" and take no part in the battle. (Judg. 7. 5-7.)

J. B. C——D.

### "FAITH."

(1) "*Faith.*" (Rom. 5. 1.) The divine principle and germ from which all blessing springs.

(2) "*The faith.*" (Titus 1. 1.) The totality of that which is believed—the whole truth of God.

(3) "*Your faith.*" (1 Thess. 3—five times.) It is that when the reality of the truth becomes my own.

S. J. B. C.

## WHERE SHALL WE SPEND OUR HOLIDAYS?

**H**OW often the above question is discussed by both men and women, young and old, as an important matter which has to be decided. It was so in the case of a young man one Sunday evening a short time before the recent holidays. Where should he and his wife and family spend them? Should it be with his parents, his wife's, or both, or should it be elsewhere? This was the theme of their conversation that evening. In many places at that same time the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ was being proclaimed, but though he had been brought up by christian parents in a godly home, and in childhood and youth taken to gospel meetings, yet apparently he had no interest in the gospel, no concern about his soul; the matter of the holidays was of more interest to both him and his wife. But, dear reader, though God was left out of their thoughts and plans, yet God was there; all was under His notice. He was about to say, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee."

The previous afternoon's holiday from work had been spent watching a football match, and on the Monday he complained of feeling unwell, and consulted a doctor, who prescribed for him. The next morning he was worse, and in the afternoon was *gone*. But, dear reader, where? He had gone without leaving behind him any distinct evidence of ever having turned to the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. The One who gave Himself a ransom for all, who had died, the just for the unjust, the One who pleaded, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest," had,

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so far as any one can say, been slighted. No great sin, as considered great in the eyes of men, no immoral life of vice and drink, but Christ slighted, the overtures of God in the gospel unheeded, and that too in the face of the solemn word of God, "I am come that they might have life." "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "He that rejecteth me . . . the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 10. 10; Acts 4. 12; John 12. 48.)

The above account of what has happened under the writer's own notice has not been written merely to record an incident, but to give our readers solemn warning, if they likewise have not turned to the Lord Jesus Christ in their need of a Saviour. Let me say that though you perhaps may also have had the privilege of godly parents and a christian home, that cannot save you; you still need a Saviour. You must have to do with God personally about your sins. He points you to Christ in His gospel as the One who came into this scene to seek and to save the lost. It involved His going to Calvary's cross, there to be made sin and endure the judgment of God against sin before ever He could be presented to you as a Saviour. The Lord Jesus has made God known as just and the justifier of him that believes. (Rom. 3. 26.) He has been into death to deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2. 14, 15), and God has given abundant testimony of having raised Him from the dead, that whosoever believes in Him should receive remission of sins. (Acts 10. 43.)

But what about those who neglect this precious gospel, neglect so great salvation; how shall they

## WHERE SHALL WE SPEND OUR HOLIDAYS ? 43

escape ? (Heb. 2. 3.) Satan is deceiving people, throwing dust in their eyes, and the children of godly parents do not escape his notice. He seeks to persuade them that there is no God, no hell, no judgment ; but God's own word stands sure, "As it is appointed to men once to die, but AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT." Thank God the scripture does not end there, but goes on to say, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. 9. 27, 28.) The question of sin having been so definitely settled at the cross, when Christ appears the second time there is no more question of sin to take up, He brings in salvation.

Dear reader, be assured of this, that apart from Christ there is no escape from eternal punishment. The writer fears for those who are accustomed to the sound of the gospel and yet have never openly confessed Christ as Lord—as Lord to them. The enemy would seek that you should continue in this state. Be warned, and do not any longer delay. If you have not yet been seriously concerned about your sins, about the certainty of your salvation, I would entreat you to pray God to give you concern lest you are lulled to sleep by the many things of this life (not perhaps sins) and are a neglecter of Christ. God in sovereign mercy warns people, young and old, but take heed, for He likewise says, "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Do not despise His proffered mercy, His love. He has given all that love could give ; His only begotten Son that you might not perish.

But perhaps you are concerned about your soul,

but not assured of salvation. If so, I would ask you to take your Bible and read the following passage, but first ask the Lord to make the words living to your soul: "COME — UNTO — ME — AND — I — WILL — GIVE — YOU — REST." (Matt. 11. 28.) You will find Him as good as His word. He will give you rest. You turn to Him and He will set you perfectly at rest in the knowledge of Himself.

Dear reader, "What think ye of Christ?" is the real question to be decided—your holidays may never come.

F. E. M.

### THE PROPHETS.—No. 7.

ELISHA (*continued*).

ELISHA now leaves kings and armies to serve in wisdom and grace a poor widow faced with destitution. He meets the sorrowful situation by drawing from her an acknowledgment of what she had in the house. No doubt she sets forth the remnant of Israel, being the wife of one of the sons of the prophets, but she is also characteristic of many believers who at the beginning of their spiritual history are perplexed as to sustenance and life. It was not a question of being freed from the enemy's power, but how the creditor was to be met. So her attention is called to the *oil*. It was not the measure but the fact that she had it. She needed light now as to its *use*.

Many a young believer looks within, or at circumstances, and becomes discouraged instead of getting the gain of the Holy Spirit. How can the creditor be met otherwise? Maybe one desires to pray yet does not know what to pray for as is fitting. God has anticipated this, so it is said, "the Spirit joins also



its help to our weakness," and again, "the Spirit itself makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered." The Holy Spirit presents in perfect order before God that faltering and stumbling petition which we felt in our hearts but could not express. Believers have a power in the indwelling Holy Spirit, and if found in separation from evil this power becomes increasingly usable.

This widow had power lying dormant, for she was neglecting the oil. "Borrow thee vessels . . . empty vessels; not a few." Then the door has to be closed to all without. Many look at others and wish they were like them, but the door must be closed to every person whilst these exercises are passed through with God. Every vessel must first be emptied ere it can be filled with the Holy Spirit. The soul history outlined in Romans 6, 7 and 8 is individual in practical experience, though another may be used to give light as to it. Elisha does not perform a miracle to remove the debt, but he gives light as to what this woman had. So she follows up the exercise in seclusion with God, and this results in selling the oil, paying her debts and living on the rest. So the speaker in Romans 8 is not in debt to circumstances but superior to them in the power of the Spirit. Thus his circumstances are made to yield a present return for God. (See vers. 37-39.)

It is only in this way that we can become morally great in testimony. So a "great" woman is next brought before us. As we make room for the Spirit we become wealthy in spiritual substance. As Elisha partakes of this great woman's hospitality she discerns that he is "a holy man of God, who passed by us continually." Such a vessel of testimony must be

detained in the house—serving an occasional meal would not satisfy this woman.

How her greatness shines out, for whilst she seems to be distinguished above her husband, yet she in the recognition of headship consults him in relation to the furnishing of a place suitable to detain the man of God who *was passing by*. She enters into the true simplicity suited to a man of God wholly absorbed with the testimony; as she says to her husband, "Let us make, *I pray thee, a small upper chamber with walls, and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a seat, and a lampstand.*" No ornate or elaborately furnished dwelling was needed, for ease and luxury tend to detain and divert from service. If we are marked by piety and contentment and are satisfied as having food and raiment, the testimony of our Lord wholly claims our hearts. How refreshing to a weary, suffering prophet such attention would be. The one who had poured water on the hands of Elijah is himself now comforted and she who serves him seeks no reward. She is content to dwell among her own people. Would that were true of all the people of God to-day!

Gehazi discerns, however, that she needed an object for her heart. A son is promised, received, and nurtured to boyhood. But he leaves the sphere of maternal care and disaster follows, for he is unequal to the conditions in the open field. He is carried *again* to his mother, and "he sat on her knees till noon, and died." Many a young person has left the sphere of maternal love and restraint (either a godly home or the circle of the saints) only to prove the loss of it in the presence of an atmosphere which they were not equal to. To be carried to his mother meant

salvation and life, and the greatness of his mother shone out in her reply to Gehazi. The child was dead, yet she says, "It is well." She did not bury him, but "laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him." In the faith of her soul she would look on to resurrection—the power for which was vested in the man of God.

But Elisha has lessons to learn here. *His* staff in the hand of Gehazi is unavailing; he must himself pass into the presence of death, feeling the bitterness of it in his own soul. He "shut the door *upon them both*, and prayed to Jehovah." Then he places himself in actual contact with the dead body, his mouth upon the lad's mouth, his eyes and hands too, becoming wholly identified with him, so to speak, in his death. Even yet Elisha's work is not done, for "he returned, and walked in the house to and fro." Who can tell the agonising soul-exercise Elisha passed through with God as he walked to and fro? It was not bringing life to light by a word, but he must himself, figuratively, pass into death. He was privileged indeed in these exercises, for was he not, in feeble measure, passing through *something* of what our Lord passed through so fully in the sufferings of death? surely a feeble type, yet nevertheless speaking to us of Him who only could "abolish death, and bring life and incorruptibility to light."

So life comes to light here and the son is again embraced by his mother. A son in life is not only worth beholding but worth embracing! So as brought into life we become occupied with Christ in resurrection, the first-fruits from Baal-shalisha speaking to us of that which is ours in Christ risen.

But the enemy is against that and would bring in

wild gourds, so destructive of fellowship, as it is suggested in the great pot. Human expediency and ingenuity as introduced into the things of God are like the untamed tongue, "full of death-bringing poison." (James 3. 8.)

"Then bring meal," says the prophet. He does not supply it, but looks to some one to bring in that which speaks of another order of life, that of Christ. As we bring in His thoughts, His words, yea, His death (for the meal was cast into the pot), the poisonous element is eliminated and there is food for all.

What a beautiful scene closes this chapter—a company set free in life and feeding upon Christ risen. It is *another* Man from another scene.

In chapter 5 we see with what ease and grace our beloved prophet passes from one phase of activity to another, needing little preparation since his early lessons had been so well learned. He moved with God, and withal felt in his spirit, surely, all the departure and distance of the people whom he served. But now as turning aside to serve a Gentile noble he still maintains the lowliness yet dignity of his place as a man of God. He will neither shew patronage nor receive it, for he courted not man's approval, neither did he serve for wages. He speaks face to face with Naaman only after that proud man had plunged himself in the Jordan seven times, but not before.

He sends Naaman away in peace, but immediately feels the grievous sin of Gehazi, who would nullify the free-giving of God. "Went not my heart with thee," says Elisha. Not his eyes, but his *heart*, proving how deeply he felt Gehazi's sin. He then fastens Naaman's leprosy upon Gehazi, and instead of indulging the sorrow he rightly felt he continued his incessant

service. His sympathies are alike quickened by an individual's distress—one who had lost an axe which was borrowed—as by the desire of the sons of the prophets to enlarge their dwelling. This feature marks a man of God—that no detail in the exercises of God's people is too small to enlist his sympathies.

Elisha next comforts and encourages his attendant who sees only the horses and chariots of the enemy. Through Elisha's prayer he can now see horses and chariots OF FIRE round about the man of God. Then in the straitness of the siege of Samaria the word of God in Deuteronomy 28. 53-57 is fulfilled, yet Elisha in the serenity of his position is sitting in the house and the elders with him. He has the mind of the Lord, and presently announces good tidings which test an unbelieving supporter of the king. He pays the penalty of unbelief, for he dies in the midst of plenty. Many, alas, are similarly dying to-day! Yet the glad tidings are to all!

The last service of Elisha to Israel is to bring fine flour and barley within the reach of all—the crowning act of his many-sided service. In his day, as in ours, grace was ever in the foreground, but judgment lay in the background. He ends his public ministry as a weeper in view of what was coming in judgment. (Chap. 8. 11-13.) He then directs that Jehu shall be anointed king for the execution of the judgment upon the house of Ahab. This commission was first given to Elijah (1 Kings 19. 16, 17), but was subsequently carried out by Elisha. (2 Kings 9.) It might appear as if the judgment was deferred till the day of grace ran its course, as seen in Elisha's activities.

The last mention of Elisha is in chapter 13, and even in his last sickness he still considers for God and

indicates to Joash a way of deliverance for the people. The energy of faith marks the prophet to the end, and even when dead and buried a dead body is restored to life as touching his bones. So that not only does the prophet's "example of suffering and having patience" remain to us, but in this last incident we are brought to the truth of resurrection. May we know the power of resurrection life more and more! *Our* capacity for suffering lies in such knowledge.

J. H. T.

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### DEFINITE DECISION.

**I**T is surprising often how indefinite we are in regard to spiritual things, hence so little result is seen in the way of growth and joy. The men of the world are often much more definite and decided than believers. The Lord Himself says in Luke 16. 8, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Let us consider this subject under three headings. First :

*The decision of the sinner.*

Many of those who read this can look back with joy to the moment when they first decided for Christ ; when in the language of a well-known hymn they said :

" My heart is fixed, eternal God,  
Fixed on Thee ;  
And my immortal choice is made,  
Christ for me."

But it may be some one will read these lines who is still halting between two opinions, still undecided. It may be even like King Agrippa, almost persuaded to be a Christian. How many perhaps have listened to the gospel being preached and felt their conscience

troubling them ; they have felt they ought to come to a decision at once, but, alas ! the enemy of souls has whispered, "Wait a little longer ; there is plenty of time yet." And so they have not faced this all-important question. There is an old proverb which says, "The road of by-and-by leads to the town of never." May God give *you*, dear reader, if still undecided for Christ, to yield to Him at once. Your eternal destiny depends upon it ; the love of Jesus in dying for you expects it ; your sinful state and the judgment of God demand it. Say, like those who came to David, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse." (1 Chron. 12. 18.)

Now let us consider

*The decision of the saint.*

All believers are saints according to God, as we see from Romans 1. 7, but how many of us lack a definite purpose in life, a definite object for our hearts. It is one thing to have believed the gospel of our salvation as in Ephesians 1. 13, but quite another to have seen it presented as the gospel of the glory of Christ. (2 Cor. 4. 4.) For in this character it presents a glorious Person to my heart, who is greater than anything this world can offer, and who totally eclipses every other object, myself included. It was this typically that led Rebekah in Genesis 24. 58 to say, "I will go," in answer to the question, "Wilt thou go with this man ?" The jewels and clothing did not satisfy her heart, it was Isaac she wanted. Many may know without a doubt that their sins are forgiven who have not accepted Christ as the Object of the heart. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." (Prov. 4. 23.) Paul could say, in Philipians 1. 21, "For me to live is

*Christ.*” Can you, dear reader? It is only as thus engaged with His glory that we can steer clear of the many snares in this world. As a pilot once said, It is not necessary to know all the rocks and shoals in the channel, but only the safe passage.

The third chapter of Philippians shews us a decided saint; we do well to read it again and ponder over it. What beautiful language: “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” It is because our hearts are not won that we are so indefinite. No doctrine, nor even scripture in itself, will hold our hearts, and hence we may still be indefinite and undecided. Jonathan’s decision went a long way, but not far enough, for he clung to Saul and perished with him. Ruth is a beautiful example of definite decision. (See Ruth 1. 16–18.)

Then, lastly, we might consider briefly

*The decision of the servant.*

We are all privileged to serve the Lord. Some perhaps have more ability given them than others and their service is more public. But surely we are often very indefinite as to what we have to do from the Lord, and even when we serve could perhaps be much more definite in our appeals to men. Perhaps the first act of intelligent service is in presenting our bodies according to Romans 12. We were the servants of sin and used our bodies very definitely in this service, but now we are liberated by the death of Christ to be servants to God. The same bodies are to be used as sanctified and available for this holy and blessed service. It may be our mouths to speak for



## "THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH."

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Him, or our hands to perform some good work, or our feet to carry us to some needy soul, but there must be definite decision in our surrender to the Lord.

Joshua's appeal in Joshua 24. 15 is very definite, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The Lord Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters," and His word in John 12. 26 is very important, "If any man serve me, let him follow me." May the Lord stir us all up in these few moments that remain until He comes that we may be marked by *definite decision* and that like Daniel we may have purpose of heart to God and come out here in power for God.

W. J. W.

**"THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,"  
and How to Spend Them.**

(3) GETTING WISDOM.

**I**T was Solomon, who was wiser than all men in his day, that said, "WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING ; THEREFORE GET WISDOM." The need for wisdom is realised more and more as life advances. A wise man is a man of resource. He knows what to do. when to do it, and how to do it ; he is not baffled in a crisis. Wisdom is required in every sphere of life ; in our secret lives before God ; in our home lives ; in our business lives ; in our service to the Lord and our testimony to men ; and in all the privileges of the house of God. At every step and each moment of our history the one great need is WISDOM.

But wisdom is an attribute of God, so that all true wisdom must come from above—that which is first

pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits.

In childhood the parents are wisdom to the child. The child looks to them for guidance, instruction and counsel, while all its resources are in its parents. But there comes a time in every life when each one has to make decisions for himself. It is at this critical period of life that so many young people listen to the voice of folly and depart from wisdom's way. But in grace wisdom has taken her stand "at the cross paths," at that point where two paths meet, and there her voice is heard: "Unto you, O men, I call. . . . Hear; for I will speak of excellent things." The vital question therefore for each one to face is, *How can I get wisdom?*

Perhaps the most beautiful answer is found in James 1. 5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him *ask* of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Thus we obtain wisdom by

#### ASKING.

While Solomon was still young and tender God appeared to him and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." His reply was, "Give me now wisdom"! and God said, "Because . . . thou . . . hast asked wisdom . . . wisdom and knowledge is granted to thee; and I will give thee riches and wealth, and honour." Thus God delights to encourage those who desire wisdom, for He says, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom," and "Whoso findeth ME findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord."

There is, however, a danger of asking without earnestness. Hence it is said, "If thou *seekest* her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;

then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom." How earnestly men will seek for silver, and what sacrifices they will make in their search for hid treasures. Yet wisdom is "more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." God would have each one earnestly

## SEEKING

that wisdom which He alone can give.

It is of greatest importance, too, that in our quest for wisdom we should listen to the voice of Christ. The Queen of Sheba, when she had seen the wisdom of Solomon, said, "Happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that *hear* thy wisdom." Wisdom's voice is heard saying, "Blessed is the man that *heareth* ME, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." It was the way to wisdom when Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and *heard* His word. Thus wisdom is gained by

## HEARING.

Not by listening to the many voices which are being broadcast in the world to-day, but to the divine voice of Him who is WISDOM personified—our Lord Jesus Christ.

Still more is it necessary that we should be

## TAKING HEED

to the word of God. It is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for instruction. The Psalmist asked, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Solomon said, "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings, and the years of thy life shall be many."

This would result in our

## WALKING

in the way of wisdom, and in this path God will give us wise companions that we may say, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." Then we shall "walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."

"May we still, God's mind discerning,  
To the Lord for WISDOM go;  
There new wonders daily learning,  
All the depths of mercy know."

F. S. M.

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### THE PRESENT CONDITIONS OF BLESSEDNESS.

**W**E all profess to want blessing; but what is it we want? What is it to be blest? We seek advantages for ourselves or our children, but "advantages" are not always blessings.

It is sometimes said that "blessed" means "happy." If so, we must rather carefully consider what we mean by happiness. Men count themselves happy when they enjoy good health; when their domestic surroundings are congenial; when they prosper in business; when their plans succeed; when they suffer few losses. Is this what we mean by being blest? Looking somewhat higher, Christians sometimes consider themselves happy when things go as they wish in the church, or at all events in that part of the church with which they come into contact (for we often leave the rest of it out of our thoughts). Is this what we mean by being blest?

We are not Jews, living under the old covenant, and we must not mould our thoughts altogether on the earthly blessings in the hope of which their spiritual training was provisionally carried on. The blessings

## THE PRESENT CONDITIONS OF BLESSEDNESS. 57

promised to us are largely different ; they are higher, deeper, more real.

The Beatitudes (Matt. 5. 1-12) give us instruction as to the conditions which we are to esteem "blessed" in the time during which the Lord's disciples wait for the establishment of the kingdom in visible power, and we find those conditions to be in almost every way diametrically opposed to those which men naturally regard as contributing to happiness. Happy are the rich, says the world ; but He who had not where to lay His head proclaims that "blessed are the poor" (in spirit). Happy are those who have no occasion for grief, says the world ; but the Man of sorrows teaches us that "blessed are they that mourn." Happy are ye when men speak well of you, says the world ; but our Lord says "blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." The contrast offers food for thought. Which do we desire and pray for, to be "happy" according to the world, or "blessed" according to God ? Until we are clear as to this, our thoughts and our prayers may be in some confusion.

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True blessedness is something which it is impossible to obtain from any mixed motives or by any unworthy methods. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." In spiritual things (and let us confess that the ultimate measure of all good is a spiritual measure), we cannot by any possibility steal a march. We cannot cheat God, however much we may deceive ourselves.

It may be objected that "advantages" are sometimes obtained by doubtful methods, even among the disciples of Christ ; and that not only in earthly affairs but in immediate connection with spiritual things.

A man may, for example, obtain the advantage of association with prominent or interesting persons, or of a place of influence in the church, from motives or by methods not free from self-interest. He may ; but it is not a blessed course, and he is not really blest thereby. "If a man also strive for masteries [literally, contend in the games], yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." (2 Tim. 2. 5.) It is not "playing the game"! and the day will declare it. We may try and gain our point by straining a scripture, even "wresting" it for our purpose ; we may even thereby get our way—but without being really blest ; we may accomplish our desire, and find leanness in our souls. (Psa. 106. 15.) We shall not in the long run gain any blessing whatever by any deviation from that which is right. Often, almost unconsciously, we try thus to cheat God ; but we cannot do it ; God is not mocked.

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And, just as we cannot gain any spiritual end by such "methods of rapine," so, conversely, if by the grace of God it is given to us steadfastly to seek true blessedness, no one can take it from us ; we are in a strong, even an impregnable position. For in seeking true blessedness—which means seeking, first of all, not our own happiness, but the will and glory of God—we are laying up for ourselves treasure in heaven, "where thieves do not break through nor steal." (Matt. 6. 20.) Our treasure there, both now and in the day to come, is the measure and the crown of our rightness of mind and motive here ; and where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

J. B. C——D.

## THE CROSS.

**T**HERE is nothing so solemn, yet nothing so glorious as the cross. It was a wondrous meeting-place, standing alone in eternity, and ought often to engage the thoughts of every believer.

*On man's part*—led on by Satan—there was, alas! nothing but sin. Nothing tested man like the presence of God in goodness and grace. After a life such as no one had lived before, which is briefly summed up in a few words in Acts 10. 38, "Jesus . . . went about doing good," He was heartlessly rejected and accorded the most shameful death it was possible to put Him to. Nothing convicts of sin like the cross when it is understood; and nothing bears such eloquent testimony to love as the cross.

*On Satan's part* there was the putting forth of all his strength. The Lord had said shortly before, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." What an association! The devil had departed, as we read in Luke 4, "for a season." He knew when to come again, not when the Lord was in strength, performing miracles, "manifesting forth his glory" in one way or another, but in that solemn hour when the cross, with its untold agony to His soul, was in view. He would press upon the burdened spirit of the Saviour all the power of death.

*On God's part* there was His majesty, His truth, His justice, His holiness; and the One who had ever done His will and nothing else, He whom men ought to have welcomed and have given the highest place they could give, He was there. His perfect devotedness to Him who had sent Him on the one hand, His perfect love to that assembly for which He had given all that He had on the other, alike had conducted

Him to that solemn moment when His soul, as we read in Isaiah 53, should be made an offering for sin. We sometimes sing :

“Thy path, uncheered by earthly smiles,  
Led only to the cross.”

It should touch our hearts to think of it.

Yet never was the holy Sufferer so glorious as He was then ; never more precious to God than when—the necessity of divine holiness demanded it—He hid His face from His Well-beloved.

If we see sin risen up to its full height, we see too—blessed be God!—His grace abounding over it all ; as it has been finely said, “That which is so glorious in the cross, is that which was the perfect expression of man’s enmity, was the perfect expression of God’s love.” If we see sin in all its hideousness told out at Calvary, we see too an assemblage of moral glories that might well bow our hearts in adoration.

One could wish that all who are Christ’s were often in the attitude of heart expressed in a fine verse :

“On Calv’ry we’ve adoring stood,  
And gazed on that wondrous cross,  
Where the holy, spotless Lamb of God  
Was slain in His love for us ;  
How our hearts have stirred at that solemn cry,  
While the sun was enwrapt in night,  
‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani’ ;  
Most blessed, most awful sight.”

Let us, each one, allow the cross to have more of its subduing effect upon us on the one hand, and on the other, may it draw out our hearts more to Him who suffered there, and to His God and Father, whose infinite love was told out in all its mighty volume when man, led on by Satan, did his worst !      A. H. L.



## JOSHUA 24. 4-16.

**I**N previous papers we have considered the thoughts of degradation in Egypt, departure from Egypt, and dwelling in the wilderness. We now in verse 8 come to the

### DESTROYING OF THE AMORITES.

The presence of the Amorites is fatal to the realisation of the purpose of God for us in the quiet enjoyment of the land. The earliest mention of them is found in Genesis 10, where we learn two things—one that they were of the family of Ham, with which family is found the earliest development of world empire coupled with opposition to and forgetfulness of God. In chapter 15 of the same book we are told of the necessity for the seed of Abraham to sojourn in a land that was not theirs as the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full, and that the land of the Amorites was given by covenant to the seed of Abraham. Later in chapter 48 we find that Jacob had evidently been in conflict with these people, for there he says to Joseph, "I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

We may well face the question as to whether we have been in conflict with sword or with bow, and from the conflict won spoil, to pass on for the good of others.

The thought of God with regard to the Amorites is quite clear from Deuteronomy 20. 17, where we read, "Thou shalt utterly destroy . . . the Amorites . . . that they teach you not to do after all their

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abominations, which they have done unto their gods," There we have what our attitude towards the Amorites should be and the reason thereof.

In the Book of Numbers we have in Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites, set forth in principle the wisdom of the world and the lust of the flesh. We surely know something of the might and power of these Amorites. These things govern the mind and the heart. What a danger there is of the mind becoming enslaved by the wisdom of the world, holding out as it does to its votaries promises of fame, of glory and of empire. Then, too, the reasoning of things out for ourselves. Do we hear some one say the mind has been given by God and therefore we *must* reason things out for ourselves? This is indeed false reasoning, for God has thought out things for us and He wants us to reason things out with Him. Solomon in Ecclesiastes says, "I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things," and had to write vanity upon all "under the sun." What Satan is after is to bring our minds into captivity so that they may be set against God, the truth of God and the people of God, and set upon that which will perish with the using.

Satan not only lays siege to the mind but also to the heart, and would turn natural blessings into occasion for the indulgence of fleshly lusts, as set forth in Og. How susceptible we all are to these things, and how necessary for our spiritual well-being it is that the Amorite *in* us should be destroyed, and that utterly.

Do our readers say, But can this be, for these things are very strong? If it rested alone with us, it would of course be impossible. In this connection a word

## THE MERCY SEAT.

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in Amos 2 is most encouraging. There the Lord is speaking, and what does He say, "Yet destroyed I the Amorite . . . whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath."

Let us entrust our cause to God and He will undertake for us in the destruction of all that which would captivate our minds and our hearts. Joshua had evidently done so, and therefore can exhort the children of Israel, as he does later in our chapter, saying, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."  
(1 John 5. 21.)

J. R. T.

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 THE MERCY SEAT.

**S**IN having come into the world, and death by sin, sin has become the reason for all the activities of divine love and grace at the present time. As another has put it so well: "Sin is the groundwork of all God's dealings now. Judgment, mercy, grace, salvation. . . . all is in respect of sin." So that we see that instead of defeat by sin having entered the world, it has become the occasion for the display of all the resources of God in our Lord Jesus Christ, and this is seen in the mercy seat: "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation [or mercy seat] through faith in his blood." (Rom. 3. 25.) When

the mercy seat is viewed in connection with the tabernacle it is seen upon the ark of the covenant and completely enclosed inside the most holy place, and alone. That is to say, there is no man there. (Exo. 40. 35.) *Once* a year on the day of atonement only could the high priest stand in its presence. (Lev. 16.) Even then it must be under the cover of a cloud of incense (see Lev. 16. 13, 14) and not without blood. But the Son of God having come into manhood (Phil. 2. 7), He “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” No one else born into this world ever *took* anything upon themselves, but the Holy One *took*. He who made all things could do so, and while on the one hand He set forth *all* the thoughts and requirements of the divine mind—“Thy law is within my heart” (Psa. 40. 8)—He could say on the other hand He was Himself the complete answer to *all* those requirements as the blessed Man here for the pleasure of God: “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” (John 17. 4.) No wonder that the heavens opened upon Him, saluting Him from the excellent glory. (See Luke 3. 22 and 2 Peter 1. 16–18.)

Then this blessed One becomes the sacrifice, *offerer* and *offering*. He “through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.” (Heb. 9.) All the requirements of holiness and righteousness are met, and He enters in where man could only go once a year, in the power of His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. God is glorified in Him and He is received up in glory, and *now* in glad tidings to men Christ is set forth a *mercy seat*. “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested,

being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe : for there is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3. 21-26.) This is the meeting-place divinely appointed by God between Himself and the sinner. Here is seen all those wonderful attributes of judgment, mercy, grace, love, compassion, goodness. We may specially note the words, "*Whom God hath set forth,*" speaking eloquently, as it does, of the movement of *love* from the divine side, and the mercy seat was brought right out from its tabernacle setting of the most holy place and SET FORTH in the sight of the universe as *the* meeting-place between God and man. Man who has sinned and come short of God's glory is now to be brought back through the death of Christ (this the blood on the mercy seat speaks of) to stand without a fear in the presence of the glory of God. How wonderful, what a complete triumph for God in the face of the fact that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. (Rom. 5. 12.)

Here the heart can rest in the perfect satisfaction of God in all that has been accomplished "through" and "in" our Lord Jesus Christ. Note these two words in Romans 5 and 6.

All this known and entered into sets the heart at

rest, and not only so, but the soul begins to journey heavenward; other questions have to be met and solved, but the movement is now onward and upward. Grace reigns through righteousness, eternal life comes into view, and the inheritance to be taken up in the liberty of sonship.

Satan would, by introducing sin into the world, seek to overthrow the thoughts of the divine mind, but love has triumphed. Man is set in the light of the love of God and free in it.

“All our intercourse with God founded on this grace reigning through righteousness.” (J. N. D., “Dialogues.”) A. E. C.

“Thither by faith we upward soar,  
And time and sense seem all no more,  
For freely God our souls can greet  
Where glory crowns the mercy seat.”

### THE BIBLE.—THE PROVERBS.

THE Book of Proverbs holds a remarkable place in scripture; it gives us instruction relative to the government of God, and shews us how to order our path on earth. It is necessary for us to remember that whatever blessings we may possess as Christians (even every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ), being on earth, we are subject to God's governmental ways; and, indeed, being God's house, we are especially under the Father's discipline, who judgeth according to every man's work. (1 Peter 1. 17.)

Our blessings being spiritual and heavenly, and bestowed upon us on the principle of grace, we might forget this side of things. It is an immense mercy to

have directions from God Himself as to our behaviour as men here on earth in relationship to Him.

There are two prominent expressions of evil in the world, features which were seen even before the flood, they are violence and corruption. In the Book of Proverbs we are warned as to both. The imperial and commercial systems of the world are, generally speaking, marked by violence; the religious systems of the world are corrupt. This is their characteristic, though both forms of evil are found wherever man is to be found.

It will be noticed that wisdom is the main theme of the book. An interesting point also is that the book speaks both of the instruction of the father and the law, or teaching, of the mother. (Chap. 1. 8.) The father (or the man) in scripture frequently presents the thought of ideal: the mother (or the woman) the way the thought is worked out and given effect to. In other words, the father gives the idea of light, the mother of suitable state.

The first nine chapters are evidently introductory, the proverbs, properly speaking, beginning with chapter 10. In the introduction we may notice two evils referred to: first, men (sinners) who say, "Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse" (chap. 1. 14), and secondly, the strange woman, who draws the simple away by corruption. (Chap. 6. 24.) The evils spoken of are literal, and scripture refers to what actually occurs, but in addition to this, we may see, as I have said, suggested in the first the great commercial system of amalgamation in the world, and in the second the religious corruption (See 2 Cor. 6. 14 and Rev. 17 and 18.)

In contrast to this, we have wisdom brought before

us. God wishes man as an intelligent creature to be marked by what characterises His ways. (Chap. 3. 19.) This is the only way to walk securely. (Ver. 23.) The world appeals, but there is also the cry of wisdom : “Doth not wisdom cry ?” (Chap. 8. 1.) Sin has brought in folly : what more foolish for a creature to be lawless and alienated from its Creator ? We may think of wisdom as typical of Christ ; for He is made unto us “wisdom from God” (1 Cor. 1. 30) ; for every question and difficulty is solved in Him. There is also the system that wisdom establishes. She builds her house, and perfection marks it—seven pillars. (Chap. 9. 1.) It is important to see that a system of wisdom exists—Christ is the centre of it, hence chapter 8 may be taken to refer to Christ.

In chapter 10 and onwards we have the proverbs. They give us immensely important practical principles relative to life here, and that which pleases God in men and their actions. These proverbs continue to chapter 24. I do not purpose going into them in detail, save to note that we must be humble to hear the words of the wise. (Chap. 22. 17.) We must bow down our ears. The independency of the mind of man is folly. “They are all plain to him that understandeth” (chap. 8. 9) ; understanding is the necessary condition of heart to perceive wisdom. Nothing is more important in its place than recognising the principles brought before us in these proverbs. Being blessed with spiritual blessings, and in connection with Christ in heaven, believers are apt to overlook these important principles, which have reference to our practical life on earth. How many sorrows we should be saved from if we adhered to the principles enunciated in these chapters.



Chapters 25 to 29 give the proverbs which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out. This is an interesting detail, and shews the value of the different kinds of service. There are those who, being subject to Christ, are at hand to make available and preserve what God has been pleased to give through others. These proverbs of Solomon referred to here might possibly have been lost had they not been preserved by the men of Hezekiah. There may possibly be a reference in Hezekiah, the king, to Christ as the one who has died and risen again; so we read in chapter 25. 3, "Heaven for height, the earth for depth"—Christ's present place and that which He took in His stooping into death—the lower parts of the earth. He went down lower than any—He has ascended higher than any.

The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh, come next. (Chap. 30.) It is a prophecy. Three things seem presented: first, man's right place in the true recognition of God and His word. (Vers. 1-9.) Is there not again a reference to Christ as the One who descended and ascended? (Ver. 4.) Secondly, the true review of the various conditions of the world—the generation pure in their own eyes, etc. (Vers. 10 and 23.) Thirdly, a description of what is according to God here—things little upon earth but wise, and those which are stately in their going. (Vers. 24 to the end.)

The prophecy of Lemuel concludes the book. It is a prophecy which his *mother* taught him, and therefore gives the state that answers to wisdom. The description of the virtuous woman in a wonderful way sets forth the features of wisdom that consider for Christ, whether in Israel or the church. Happy for us, indeed, if through our consideration of wis-

dom (coming under the influence of Christ) we are found in such a state, really concerned for the interests of Christ here.

M. B. W.

### A SURE FOUNDATION.

**O**LD M—— was interested in divine things, and at times really concerned about the welfare of his soul. Not being very communicative naturally, it was hard to ascertain wherein lay his difficulty. So things went on for some years, during which time we longed to see him brought into blessing. To his aged wife's joy he purchased a Bible. Still the peace he evidently desired did not come. Visiting with a friend recently, we met him outside his cottage. "Do tell us, M——, what is your difficulty?" To our joy he replied, "Well, I do not see how my believing can satisfy divine justice."

Strange to say, the old man's words seemed to lift the curtain so we might view afresh the eternal strength of the foundation upon which the believer rests. To be thus reminded of it, was only at the same moment to have our own peace and joy deepened. We replied, "You are perfectly right, M——, for it is not our faith, but the precious blood of Christ alone that satisfied divine justice. At the cross every question as to sin, and the sins of all those that believe, was raised; and not only raised, but, praise God, eternally answered when Jesus died. God was glorified and all our deep need met, in the wondrous death of His Son.

"Stern justice can demand no more,  
And Mercy can dispense her store."

"Our faith, M——, is only the link between us

and Christ, whom God has raised from the dead and seated at His own right hand."

How we rejoiced to point our aged friend to this sure foundation. It is immensely important to see that God is satisfied with the work of His own dear Son. Surely if God is satisfied, we may well be! Trusting then alone in Christ we can sing:

"On the Lamb my soul is resting,  
What His love no tongue can say;  
All my sins, so great, so many,  
In His blood are washed away.

Sweetest rest and peace have filled me,  
Sweeter praise than tongue can tell;  
God is satisfied with Jesus,  
I am satisfied as well."

What peace and joy follows when Christ is trusted; yes, peace and joy even here on the journey.

Listen to the words of a christian woman. She has drunk deeply of the cup of suffering. Amidst the weariness and pain of a sick bed, her heart is so happy that she ventures to tell the doctor attending her of the deep joy that is hers. He replies, "Oh, that's all moonshine." "No, doctor, it is sunshine!" is her response.

Oh, the reality of walking in the light of God's countenance. (Psa. 89. 15.) Truly that is sunshine. And what peace in knowing that God has got nothing against me. All was atoned for, all was settled at the cross. My heart is free now to enjoy His love. Turn at once to this blessed God, who gave His Son. Have you far to go to find Him? No, for "He be not far from every one of us." (Acts 17, 27.) "Not far"—how this encourages us to turn to Him in repentance. God's goodness leads to repentance. In this, the day

of His grace, God is not judging men, but He is leading men to judge themselves. This is repentance. Then look to the Lord Jesus in faith. If the eye that looks to Him be wet with the tears of a penitent (Luke 7. 38) thou wilt see Him none the less clearly. Think what He passed through for us.

He is the only Man to bear that touching title, "A man of sorrows." (Isa. 53. 3.) "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20. 21) is God's way of salvation. It does not say how much faith, but simply, "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." What a comfort this is! Our faith may be strong or very weak, but if it is placed in the right Person, all is well.

In Matthew 15. 28 Jesus said to the woman, "O woman, great is thy faith." In chapter 14. 31 He said to Peter, "O thou of little faith." There is consolation in the thought that whilst "great faith" secured the blessing, "little faith" did not miss it. They both trusted One who is altogether trustworthy.

Trust Him, friend, He will save you. Then confess Him as Lord (Rom. 10. 9) and He will support you right through to the end of the journey. Thus you will be here for His praise.

H. E. W.

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### ONE THING.

"One thing thou lackest." (Mark 10. 21.)

"One thing is needful." (Luke 10. 42.)

"One thing I do." (Phil. 3. 13.)

**T**HERE was much to be said in the favour of this young man in Mark 10. He seemed to be in earnest; he came running to the Lord, and knelt down, saying, "Good Master." He was not like many

who in that day and ours scoff and jeer ; but with all that he lacked the "one thing." When tested as to keeping the commandments, he could reply, "All these have I observed from my youth." Jesus beholding him *loved him*. There must have been something about the young man that was attractive and in his favour, vastly different from so many who came to the Lord Jesus. He had no doubt been brought up in a godly household, and from his youth, like Timothy, had known the holy scriptures. There is oftentimes something attractive in children and young people brought up in christian households ; they are not lawless, and their bringing up and environment seems, as in the case of this young man, to leave its mark. But with all that they may lack the "one thing." If this falls into the hands of one such, let this scripture be a warning to you.

*"One thing thou lackest,"*

the Lord says, and He puts His hand on that which hindered him from blessing. "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved ; for he had great possessions." His possessions, not his sins, came between him and his God. The Lord knows what hinders any one of us, so often it is "one thing." How terrible to miss blessing for one thing.

You may say, I know what hinders me, but I cannot give it up. Well, the Lord says, "With men it is impossible . . . with God all things are possible." (Ver. 27.) This young man, with all that could be said in his favour, went away from the Lord ; may

none of us do this ! Although we may know the Lord, there may be one thing that is hindering us spiritually now.

*“One thing is needful.”*

As in the case of the young man, there was much to be said in favour of Martha. She received the Lord into her house, while many refused Him ; in fact He seems to have found a home there. Further, Martha served Him. But for all this, the Lord has to say to her, and also to us, “One thing is needful.” It was not pleasure that hindered her, nor riches, but “cumbered about much serving.” So much so that she would complain of her sister’s lack of service, and burden her. “But one thing is needful,” and Mary had chosen it. May it be our choice too, she sat at His feet and heard His word. How tenderly the Lord speaks to her, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.”

*“One thing I do.”*

In Philippians 2 we read of the Lord Jesus, although equal with God, that He emptied Himself and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death. In chapter 3, the writer, Paul, says, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” What a contrast to the young man in Mark 10, who allowed “one thing” to hinder him from blessing. The apostle counted *all* things but dung. How was he able to, while the other was not ? “With God all things are possible.” God will help you if you cry to Him.

## "THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH."

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So the Apostle Paul says, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Vers. 13, 14.) He saw the blessedness of what was before him and for him and all saints, that he allowed nothing to hinder, however legitimate it might be. His one desire was to apprehend that for which he had been apprehended of Christ Jesus.

If, therefore, there is any one thing hindering us from blessing, let us seek grace from the Lord that it may be judged and refused, remembering that with God all things are possible. How many are hindered by "one thing"? How easy, too, is it to allow even right things to be a stumbling-block, even service and ordinary duties. "But one thing is needful." Mary chose it. May we do so. Then, oh, for a single eye and heart, that we may have "one thing" only before us! The Psalmist said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." (Psa. 27. 4.)

W. G.

**"THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,"  
and How to Spend Them.**

(4) LOVING AND GIVING.

**H**OW could the days of our youth be spent more happily than in *loving* God and *giving* in His interests? We are living in a world which is marked by hating and grasping, but under the influence of

divine love it is the joy of every true believer in Jesus to be marked by another spirit.

“GOD SO LOVED . . . THAT HE GAVE.”

With these wonderful words the Son of God told the secret of the heart of God, and eternally linked together the thoughts of loving and giving.

True giving is the expression of love, for the only measure that can be applied to love is the worth of the sacrifice made for its object. How great is the love of God, for He has given His only begotten Son! The greatest love has given the greatest gift!

Touched by such love our hearts are made responsive to Him, so that by His Holy Spirit we are able to say:

“WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.”

Love begets love! The heart, moving in living response to God, inquires, “What shall I render [give] unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?” Human wisdom searches in vain for an answer, for “What givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?”

Yet God has graciously indicated a gift which can be given as the expression of our heart's love to Him, for by the apostle He saith, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present [give] *your bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” This is the “intelligent service” of giving which love produces in the hearts of the children of God. Happy are those who have thus yielded their bodies in response to His love!

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Let us think, too, of the love of Christ, the greatness of which was expressed in that “Christ also hath

LOVED US, AND GIVEN HIMSELF



for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Many can speak of Jesus, as Paul did, as "the Son of God, who *loved* me, and *gave* himself for me." Again, the greatness of the gift unfolds the depth of the love--He could not have given more; for having laid aside His glory, surrendered His rights, given up His wealth, at last He laid His precious body upon the altar as the greatest expression that love could give. Thus it is recorded that "CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR IT." Once more, loving and giving are inseparably linked together.

How can we express our love to Him? Only by responsive affection. Wisdom says, "My son, give me thine heart"! Of the Macedonian saints, it was said they "first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."

The response of love, the tribute of praise, the worship of our adoring hearts, are gifts which our Lord Jesus values beyond all else that we can offer Him.

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Then we are brought into a circle of love where His new commandment is heard, "That ye love one another as I have loved you." What a sphere this is for giving--both spiritually and materially, prompted by love. Every service rendered to those who are Christ's, for His sake, is a gift which is acceptable and well pleasing to Him.

The importance of practical gifts to meet their needs must not be overlooked or under-estimated, but there is peculiar value in personal service, for it is by loving sacrifice that the heart is so deeply touched. "He laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay

down our lives for the brethren." This is not the legal obligation of the Mosaic law, but the normal response of hearts brought into the warmth of the family circle—the family of God.

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Then when our hearts are moved by divine love to long for the blessing of other souls and to seek them for God, for Christ's sake, and for their own present and eternal blessing, we would go forth in the spirit of *loving* and *giving*. "The kindness and love of God toward man has appeared," so would we go out in earnest longing and desire "that they may be saved." With this in view, we would seek to impress them that our God is the *giving* God. He is making no demands upon men, but "the free giving of God is eternal life." Love for souls is one of the true marks of God's children, even as the apostle said, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart . . . for my brethren, my kinsmen," for his earnest desire was that they might be saved.

Actuated by the love of God, the spirit of giving will be developed with loving cheerfulness, so that even where the available means are small "if there be first *a willing mind*, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

How encouraging and inspiring are the exhortations of the word of God as to giving—for example: "*Freely ye have received, freely give*"! or, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Or, again, as the apostle wrote, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which

soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his *heart*, so let him *give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for

GOD LOVETH A CHEERFUL GIVER."

To miss the joy of giving is to lose one of the greatest delights of a happy life.

May we be moved by the love of God and His unspeakable gift, to "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

F. S. M.

## THE SHEPHERD AND THE SHEEP.

A CONTRAST.

(JOHN 10; PSA. 23.)

**I**N Psalm 23 we have the voice of the sheep, saying, "My Shepherd," and telling with evident delight of the many things the Shepherd does for them; but in John 10, it is the voice of the Shepherd, who says, "My sheep," and tells what they are to Him. (His Father's gifts—verse 29; what characterises them, "They hear my voice . . . and they follow me," verse 27; and what He gives them, "eternal life," verse 28.)

Sweet as it is to hear the testimony of the sheep, how much sweeter to hear the Shepherd's voice, as we sometimes sing:

"O Lord! 'tis sweet the thought  
That Thou art mine!  
But brighter still the joy  
That I am Thine."

May we be increasingly attentive to His voice, and be more and more ready to follow Him, though it will entail reproach, as we see it did for the sheep of chapter 9.

How precious to know that we are in the care of the true David, who feeds His sheep according to the integrity of His heart and guides them with the skillfulness of His hands. (Psa. 78. 72.) What perfect integrity, what perfect skill, does He display. Blessed be His name!

J. T. C.

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**HYMN.**

“ Jesus . . . having loved his own . . . loved them to the end.”  
(John 13. 1.)

O JESUS, Saviour, Son of God !  
Our hearts are won by Thee,  
Who bought us by Thy precious blood,  
That we Thine own might be.

With joy we contemplate the grace  
Displayed by Thee down here,  
Passed angels, to man's lowly race,  
The Father to declare.

The Father's name, the Father's heart,  
The Father's love to share,  
That we with Thee might have our part  
Thou Calvary's shame must bear.

God's righteousness, His glory, too,  
Maintained upon the cross ;  
Darkness and death Thou passedst thro',  
Suffering, and anguish, loss !

Soon heaven's " best wine " without alloy  
Will cause each heart to thrill,  
For Thou with love, life, light and joy  
The universe wilt fill.

We antedate that glorious day,  
Anticipate that rest,  
When God's own glory Thou'lt display,  
And we with Thee be blest.

O Jesus, Saviour, name of grace,  
Our hearts by Thee are won ;  
We long to see Thee face to face,  
Amen, Lord Jesus, " Come " !

F. A. P.

**“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,”  
and How to Spend Them.**

(5) GROWING.

**Y**OUTH is the period for growth, and there must be some very serious defect if a child does not develop. As in creation God has ordained physical growth—the natural development of all that is living—so God as Father takes pleasure in the spiritual growth of His children. There are many interesting references in scripture to this desire of God that His children may be marked by gentle heavenly growth. It is instructive to observe that when the Spirit of God records the fact that “the child grew,” He has the future of that child in view.

Of *Isaac* it is stated, “And the child grew.” As the promised seed he was a beautiful type of Christ and Heir of the Promises.

Of *Esau* and *Jacob* it records, “And the boys grew”—one, alas! to be a despiser of his birthright, but the other, after much failure and discipline, to be a worshipper.

Of *Moses* it is written, “And the child grew,” for God had a great future for him as the deliverer of God’s people to bring them into

SALVATION.

Of *Samson* it is recorded, “And the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him.” This was surely in view of the development of

STRENGTH,

F

which characterised him so greatly in his life and death.

Three times the word refers to the growth of *Samuel*, suggesting the three stages of growth in the family of God. (1 John 2.) It is first said, "The boy Samuel grew before the Lord." Then it records, "And the boy Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with Jehovah and also with men." Again we read, "And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground." This development was that he might be engaged in the

#### SERVICE

of the house of the Lord as an established prophet of Jehovah.

Then it is said of *John the Baptist*, "And the child grew and was strengthened in spirit." How important that this child, who was to herald the coming of Jesus, should grow in view of

#### SHINING,

for of him Jesus said, "He is a burning and shining light."

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How perfect was the growth in childhood, boyhood and manhood of JESUS. Of Him it is written, "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was upon him," and again, "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men."

Beautiful in its season was each feature of the development of Jesus under the eye of God, even as the prophet wrote, "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

There was nothing to hinder that growth, for "in him is no sin." He alone sets forth the beauty of perfect manhood according to the pleasure of God!

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In this day the growth of each of the beloved children of God is of deepest interest to Him. It is necessary that there are "*little children*," or babes, in the family of God, though it is not His thought that they should so remain. In the normal progress of spiritual growth they develop into "*young men*," strong, with the word of God abiding in them, overcoming the wicked one, loving not the world, neither the things that are in the world—the love of the Father being in them. Then there are those who have matured; the "*fathers*," who have known Him that is from the beginning.

It is important to recognise that even as food is essential to physical growth, so suitable spiritual food is essential to build up a strong spiritual constitution. If believers feed on polluted and unsuitable literature, growth will be hindered. Engaging the mind and heart with alluring, exciting and fascinating worldly pleasures will check all development according to God.

But there are suitable foods for God's children. We are exhorted to "desire earnestly the pure mental milk of the word, that ye may grow up to salvation." The daily supply of manna, the heavenly grace of Christ who was once humbled here, is food to strengthen and succour us in our wilderness journey and to sustain us and produce growth. Then there is the "strong meat" belonging to them that are of full age; that precious ministry of the Spirit of God based on the full revelation of God in Christ. It is

necessary to read the word and to *meditate* upon it in order to grow, for it is thus we assimilate that which we feed upon.

Pure air is another necessity for growth. The tainted atmosphere of worldly companionships and of the palaces of pleasure will dwarf the believer and prevent development. Peter and John "went to their own company," for they valued the companionship of their brethren. They longed to breathe again the pure atmosphere of love. In the writings of each of these apostles the thought of growth has a prominent place. Peter, who was commissioned by Jesus to feed His lambs, exhorts them to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Divine love has a marvellous developing power, for as we "keep ourselves in the love of God"—living in the sunshine—we shall expand and "grow by the true knowledge of God." Surely we can unite in the desire of the Apostle Paul, too, "that we may be no longer babes . . . but, holding the truth in love, we may grow up to him in all things, who is the head, the Christ."

F. S. M.

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### GENESIS—A THOUGHT FOR PRAISE.

**I**T is an extremely interesting and happy consideration that the wonderful revelation unfolded in the books of Moses was not given until there was a *people* to receive them. While there were divine communications made previously to individuals like Enoch, Noah and Abraham, yet there was no commitment to writing until there was a people holy to the Lord.



It is a wondrous insight to the divine pleasure that to a people in relation to God, He could commit that which had been passed on orally by the patriarchs with the addition of the details of creatorial operations from the outset. We may admire the extension of life in those who lived before the flood, where lives overlapped so that Adam could converse directly to his posterity, even unto Lamech, regarding the glad tidings in the garden of Eden, and of the goodness of God to him there. As regards the *years* of the patriarchs, they are manifestly the same length for Methuselah as for Moses; the same word is employed.

We may well consider the conditions in which God was pleased to unveil His past operations. It was not simply as a Creator-God, not only as an Almighty God, but as a *Saviour-God, a Redeemer*. "And God spoke to Moses, and said to him, I am Jehovah. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as the *Almighty God*; but by my name *Jehovah* I was not made known to them. . . . And I have heard also the groaning of the children of Israel. . . . Therefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah. . . . I will *redeem* you. . . . I will take you to me for a people." (Exo. 6. 2-7.) How rightly praises rose to Him when the mighty work of redemption was accomplished and the glory of Jehovah as a Redeemer was celebrated! (Exo. 15.)

Centuries afterwards God shewed by His prophets what He thought of that occasion. "I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was *holiness unto Jehovah*, the firstfruits of his increase." (Jer. 2. 2.) Also by Hosea: "I found Israel as grapes in the wilderness;

as first-ripe fruit on the fig-tree." (Chap. 9. 10.) To those who were the firstfruits of His increase, His grapes where no vines grew, His ripe figs where no fig-trees flourished, He makes known His words. He has the words written down and preserved in their midst. This indeed is a divine principle with God, who, while He does not give account of His matters to men as such (see Job 33. 13), yet He makes known His power and wisdom to those who do His will and keep His word.

Thus also it was in the day in which Emmanuel was here, in lowly guise, when the nations had refused Him whose presence shed light in darkness, in the country and shadow of death. (Matt. 4. 13-16.) The same principle is expressed in the words of Jesus, when He said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matt. 11. 25.) There were those whom He could recognise as babes, as a new generation, who did the will of His Father who was in the heavens. They were Wisdom's children, who owned His authority, and followed Him. To them He gave rest, and invited them to take His yoke; to them He committed the word of God, and made them the depositary of the truth. And the same principle abides to-day, the salvation and rest that the Lord Jesus Christ gives to those who own His lordship, enable them to be free to know divine wisdom and power, and to appreciate divine communications.

L. O. L.

## “WONDERFUL LOVE.”

“**W**ASN'T it wonderful love that could love an ugly old sinner like me?”

There she stood at her cottage door in the full glare of an Australian summer; and without doubt she was an ugly old woman. Not only had old age wrinkled her face and shrivelled her body, but sin and its pleasures had left their scars on her, and altogether she looked as if she deserved the unenviable reputation of being the ugliest old woman on all that country side.

She had just been told this—told it to raise her quick temper—told it because she was newly converted—told it by one of her former companions in wickedness.

But ah! the taunt produced a different effect from what had been expected. Instead of her eyes flashing with rage, they filled with tears, for her heart was filled with her Saviour's love; and, ugly though she was, the moral grace and beauty of Jesus shone forth from her as she replied: “Wasn't it wonderful love that could love an ugly old sinner like me?”

Wonderful? Yes, wonderful love.

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

(1 John 4. 9, 10.)

Wonderful love! Yes, wonderful love!

“Love strong as death; nay, stronger!  
Love mightier than the grave;  
Broad as the earth, and longer  
Than ocean's widest wave.”

S. J. B. C.

## THE RED HEIFER.

(NUM. 19.)

**N**UMBERS 19 and John 13 are akin, as they both speak of cleansing, not by blood but by water, from defilement incident to the normal circumstances of the pathway through the wilderness.

The ashes of the red heifer were placed in running water, with which persons were sprinkled when the need arose, typifying the application of the death of Christ by the word, in the power of the Spirit of God to the heart and conscience of the believer, separating him practically from all that is unsuitable with his calling. Ashes signify death ; water the word of God and running water the Spirit.

Several things are said about the heifer. It was red ; the colour is distinctive. So in 1 John 5. 6 it says : "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ ; not by water only, but by water and blood." He is thus distinguished from all others. It was to be without spot, without blemish and on which never came yoke. These three things are quite in line with the teaching of the three great apostles, Paul, John and Peter. A spot is something contracted due to our environments here. The Apostle Paul, who unfolds our place in Christ, writes in 2 Corinthians 5. 21 : "For he [God] hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." That is, Christ Himself spotless, took our place that He might bring us into His. A blemish may be a natural defect, something one is born with (Lev. 22. 22), and John, who writes much as to the divine nature, says in 1 John 3. 5, "in him is no sin." Peter, who writes on the line

of responsibility, says of the Lord, "Who did no sin," that is, He never came under its yoke or power.

When the church is presented to Christ, she will be like Him, and it is noteworthy that in Ephesians 5 she is said to be without spot, wrinkle or blemish. We have considered the application of both the spot and the blemish in speaking of the heifer as a type of Christ. The wrinkle is a mark of decay and of age, due to the fact that man is under the yoke of sin. Thank God, He has provided a perfectly adequate Saviour, in Himself intrinsically perfect, Jesus, His beloved Son! His present service in relation to the church is purifying it by the washing of water by the word, that He might present the assembly to Himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be holy and blameless.

T. F. C.

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### THE BIBLE.—ECCLESIASTES.

**I**T is exceedingly interesting to note the peculiar feature of each book of the Bible. Very strikingly is this seen in Ecclesiastes. We find in this book recorded the experience of Solomon, the Preacher whose wisdom excelled that of all other men, and who was king over Israel in Jerusalem. His remarks relate to things *under the sun*. We only need to read the book to see this. It is wonderful that God should have given us a book of this character, preserving a divinely inspired record of such experiences relative to things upon earth. We must not look for christian experiences here, nor christian hopes. It is the record of the experience of one who tried every sphere that might have returned happiness to him, but which he

found yielded only vanity and vexation of spirit. We must not think that Solomon went to excess in anything; Ecclesiastes tells us just the reverse. He was practising his heart with wisdom. (Chap. 2. 3.) In wisdom he tried madness and folly. He had become great and increased more than all that had been before him in Jerusalem; his wisdom remained with him. He went in for all kinds of work; building, planting vineyards, and every other sphere of human activity was touched upon in human wisdom, and he says, "What shall the man do that cometh after the king?" God allowed a man with these exceptional abilities and opportunities to taste to the full human experience on earth. There is no need that we should go through this path; in His mercy God has allowed another to do it, and put on record the fruits of his experience. He looks upon all the works that his hands had wrought and upon all the labour, and he went about to cause his heart to despair of all the labour which he took under the sun.

In one sense it is an exceedingly sad book. All seems to groan under the effects of sin; all is limited by time; all is ended by death. The question is even asked, "Who knoweth the spirit of the children of men? Doth it go upwards? and the spirit of the beasts, doth it go downwards to the earth?" As far as his actual circumstances on earth are concerned, man seems to come to the same end.

We may notice in chapter 3 that it does *not* say there is a time to rise again. There is a time to be born, a time to die. This is as far as the book carries us. We know from the New Testament that all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, some to resurrection

of life, and some to resurrection of damnation (John 5. 28, 29), but we do not find this in Ecclesiastes, which refers only to that which is under the sun.

The writer brings before us with the sadness of truth the conditions of the oppressed, "Behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no comforter." (Chap. 4. 1.) If there is success in labour, it is man's jealousy of his neighbour that moves him to such energy. (Chap. 4. 4.) It is well for us to remember these sober reflections. We might be over-disturbed at the oppression of the poor, the violent perverting of judgment and justice. (Chap. 5. 8.) We must remember that God is above it all, He that is higher than the highest is watching. Romans 8. 23-26 gives our experience in such circumstances. It is well to bear in mind also that that which is crooked cannot be made straight here. The book in its atmosphere reminds us a little of Psalm 90. It is well to be sober and humble in such circumstances—to number our days and apply our hearts to wisdom. The house of mourning is more suitable than the house of feasting. In chapter 9. 13-18 have we not an allusion to Christ in the poor wise man?

The words of the wise are heard in quiet. It is salutary to bear in mind chapter 10. 1, especially if we serve the Lord in any way. A little folly may hinder things greatly.

As creatures here (mortal men), it is well to note the principles alluded to in chapter 11, in our circumstances here and also in our service for the Lord, for, after all, we are still creatures. "He that observeth the wind will not sow," and we know not what shall prosper. It is not for us to sit down and do nothing, and wait till we can understand which

particular grain is likely to grow. We sow the seed, accepting our place of creature limitation and ignorance.

So also in the ways of God with us on earth under the sun, how important to remember our Creator in the days of our youth. (Chap. 12.) Death is surely coming, and dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

In the conclusion of the whole matter (vers. 13, 14) there is a suggestion that the horizon cannot really be bounded by that which is only on earth: "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

The title "Preacher" means strictly "a former of assemblies." It is interesting to link this with the Lord, and in this connection we may see how valuable companionship is as suggested in chapter 4. 9. We may well thank God for such a book as Ecclesiastes.

M. W. B.

## MORAL FEATURES OF GOD'S WORLD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS AT PAIGNTON.

THE glory of God has shone forth through the rent veil in the death of the Lord Jesus; and His grace is now free to bless according to His sovereign thoughts in mercy. The blood-sprinkled mercy seat is His vindication, in the presence of the whole universe—created indeed by Him, but into which sin has entered, with all its bitter fruits. The "fulness" of Godhead has come amongst men, in perfect lowly manhood, to reconcile all things to itself through



death ; in consequence, God can now be favourable unto all, and His righteousness put upon all that believe. His glory as Saviour-God is proclaimed, and response produced in those who are affected by the glad tidings. This response is man's side of Christianity ; and it is one's desire to dwell a little upon it.

As we have been hearing, it was God's thought to have in Israel a people for Himself on earth, "to shew forth his praise"—"a kingdom of priests"—an ordered community in priestly nearness to Him. But the people failed to rise to God's intentions, except to some extent for a brief moment in "the kindness of" its youth, when it followed Him "in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." Such attachment of heart God could never forget (Jer. 2. 2) ; and He will yet have them as people, through restoring mercy for their fathers' sakes, responding to Him in all His desires and in moral accord with Himself in their own land.

While awaiting this issue, He is forming a people upon earth *now*, from amongst Jews and Gentiles, who respond to His mind and is in accord with His revealed glory, as we see in the scripture often quoted. (2 Cor. 4. 6.) As we are occupied with the glory of God in the face of our Lord Jesus, we become "changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3. 18)—changed in measure now, to reach fulness manifestly soon. The heavenly city, constituted of saints of the present period, will have "the glory of God." What a distinguished community the assembly of God is even now while still upon earth !

Romans 4 gives us an interesting outline of what

God intends, the fundamental moral elements of His world distinct from, in contrast to, the surrounding world of evil. They are summarised for us in sevenfold array, introductory to the ministry, in the succeeding chapters, by which we are led into the good of them individually. Thus we have faith, righteousness, blessing, sealing, inheritance, national recovery for God, and quickening in a resurrection sphere. While it is my intention to dwell a little upon four of these important elements, cursory reference may be made to all.

**FAITH.** Needless to say, this is essential: "without faith it is impossible to please" God. Through faith wonders have been wrought throughout all time. It is the inward faculty of the soul by which we, like Moses, may endure testings, "as seeing him who is invisible"—invisible, that is, to natural vision. In the power of that faculty, faith, we substantiate things not seen.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS.** Faith is reckoned to the believer for righteousness, as it was to Abraham: in this sense he was justified, as was Abel, nearly two thousand years previously. But now, through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus, it can be said: "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness," etc. He is the believer's righteousness; subsisting as such; ever before God. And not only so but through God's new covenant dealings, righteousness is ministered to us, so that we may be practically in accord with Christ, who is our righteousness. Hence we read: "He that practises righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." This is made good in the people of God now in measure, and will soon be made good to the

full, on the ground of Christ's death, as we read: "He hath made him . . . to be sin for us, that we might *become* God's righteousness in him."

**BLESSING.** Following righteousness we have blessing. Though we all know something of it, thank God, it may be helpful to point out a feature of it which may have been overlooked. As presented in Genesis and, generally, in the opening books of scripture, the original term is derived from the word for knee. Hence bowing the knee to God in homage, and receiving blessing from Him go together. Those who looked for good things to Joseph were exhorted to "Bow the knee." Blessing from God involves subjection to Him. In the psalms the same thought is perceived in the term rendered blessing in many places; but the more common original term is one which implies *movement straight on*. To continue in happiness we have to move straight on—not diverted to the right hand or to the left. The name Asher (meaning happiness) is the original word in question. Asher's blessing was that he would "dip his foot in oil" in order, so to speak, in Spirit-power to glide on in an even course, uninterruptedly in a course of happiness. It is only by prayer that we can do this. We are constantly encountering obstacles, difficulties and besetments. God would have it so, for He is jealous to keep us near Himself; and this He does by making us feel our dependence upon Him. They who wait upon God renew their strength; they mount up with wings (Godward), walk and are not weary, run and not faint.

**SEALING.** The next great moral feature of God's world is sealing. It is not easy at first sight to see the connection between sealing, in our case, and

circumcision ; but with some thought the connection becomes clear. With us the Spirit is the seal—God's mark upon us. The Spirit not only sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God, but He represses that which is of the flesh still in us by applying to us the death of Christ. Hence the apostle says : "If ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," that is, according to God. And not only the deeds of the body but, as we read in Colossians 3, "Mortify [put to death] therefore your members which are upon the earth ; fornication, uncleanness," etc., which is an allusion to circumcision. So that sealing with the Spirit is, in its effects, manifest to those around us as well as to the blessed God.

**INHERITANCE.** It is not my intention to say much about this, however fruitful a theme, next alluded to in Romans 4. Abraham was to be the "heir of the world," and the promise that he should be so was to be made good to all the seed, on the principle of faith, as "in Christ"—*the Seed*. Abraham was invited to behold the extent of the inheritance intended for him by God ; and this is typical of the heavenly inheritance, for the spiritual seed, spoken of by Peter as "incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away"—further expanded through apostolic teaching to "all things"—the whole universe of God, "length, breadth, depth and height."

**UNIVERSAL SWAY.** This is the next feature of God's world—implied in the fact that Abraham was to be "the father of many nations," and realised to the full in Christ. He will hold all in the almighty sway of grace ; according to Isaiah 9. 6, 7. He is the Child born, the Son given, the government upon His shoulder—the Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

## PETER'S EDUCATION.

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All nations shall serve Him ; every knee bow to Him ; God "has put all things under his feet."

QUICKENING. This is the seventh feature of God's world. Everything being established on the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ—the blood-sprinkled mercy seat—we read in the end of this remarkable chapter that Abraham believed in God "who quickeneth the dead." It is thus intimated to us that He would have us to *live* before Him, in the new sphere opened out to us "in Christ"—a new place made available now to all His own, *in Him* as risen from amongst the dead.

Thus God in His dealings with Abraham of old gave light as to His great intentions—the world of His pleasure. He imbued the apostle with the spirit of it, and empowered him with the Holy Ghost, to lead His people into that world spiritually (as in Rom. 5 onward to Colossians), access and administration of its benefits being accorded "through our Lord Jesus Christ."

J. R. K.

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**PETER'S EDUCATION.**

**I**T is very interesting and encouraging to trace the way those who come in touch with the Lord are led on. This is seen especially in the case of Simon Peter. It has often been said there is a greater work to be done in us than by us. The object of this paper is to draw attention to the instances in which Peter is mentioned in that portion of the gospel of Matthew where the church comes to light. Young Christians are often very deficient in their knowledge of the church, which is so precious to the heart of Christ.

We naturally are very much occupied about our *individual* blessings for some time after our awakening ; and they are indeed very wonderful. But there is something beyond even these, and that is our place in the church or assembly which is the body of Christ.

Peter seems to be taken up in these chapters in Matthew not only for his own education, but also to indicate the way we all have to learn this great truth. So that Peter in his ministry afterwards can prepare souls for Paul's teaching where the truth as to the church is more fully developed.

Peter is mentioned in each chapter from the fourteenth to the nineteenth, and in some chapters twice. The first is the instance where he walks on the water to go to Jesus. He had said, "If it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water." And the Lord had answered "Come." It is not here a movement to the Lord because of our need, but a desire to reach Himself. And it seems as though the water here becomes a platform on which the soul can move to Him in this way, thus suggesting His death. First, Peter walks *to* the Lord and then *with* Him. It is true of course that he began to sink, but is held by the Lord. It answers somewhat to the "living stones" mentioned in Peter's first epistle, for natural life cannot walk on water.

In chapter 15 quite another touch is given to Peter's education. In answer to his question the Lord goes on to expose the natural heart in all its corruption. This surely is most important, for nothing of that order of man can be built into the assembly. In chapter 16 he is mentioned twice. First, his confession of Jesus as "The Christ, the Son of the living God," brings to light a revelation of the Father to Peter's

soul, and at once the Lord responds and definitely names him as a stone for this entirely new building that He Himself is going to bring into being, composed of such *living* material, linked with Himself, the Son of the *living* God, against which the power of death cannot prevail. Here, then, Peter is told something of this wonderful structure, however little he might have understood it. What follows is sad but necessary. He seeks to rebuke the Lord, who had been speaking of His death and resurrection as the only basis upon which this vessel could be secured. But the Lord now shews there is something in Peter which Satan *can* touch, although he is powerless against the work of God. Both these lessons must be faced. Satan can handle unjudged flesh in us.

In chapter 17 there are two more references to Peter. On the mount of transfiguration we learn the pre-eminence of Christ in glory, and yet He is not to be alone, for there are others with Him. We through grace have a heavenly part. Then at the end of the chapter the thought of sonship is just touched, but not developed: "Then are the sons free" (ver. 26), and "me and thee." (Ver. 27.) Liberty and dignity. Chapters 16 and 17 seem to bring us to the height of the education, and the last two references in chapters 18 and 19 bring us back to the responsible position. Chapter 18 our attitude to our brother in unlimited forgiveness, and chapter 19 the wonderful encouragement held before us as the end of the pathway if faithful to the Lord: a hundredfold and inherit everlasting life. May we all be encouraged to accept this divine education and thus learn both our place in the church and also the kingdom.

W. J. W.

## HOME.

**B**EAUTIFUL home of the soul,  
Far beyond evil and sadness :  
Bright do its visions unroll,  
Scenes of ineffable gladness !  
There, amidst glories above,  
Saints from all climes, e'er rejoicing,  
Bask in the sunshine of love,  
Heavenly anthems e'er voicing.  
Fair is that home unto me,  
Faith the fair prospect embracing ;  
There the Redeemer to see,  
His divine ways ever tracing—above !

Here to be true to His name,  
Ever rejoicing in favour !  
Here but to tell of His fame,  
Here to extol Him with fervour !  
His death ope'd the floodgates of grace—  
Oceans of mercy for many.  
Who would not join in His praise ?  
Why remain listless should any ?  
Dear is His home unto me,  
Heart's truest title possessing !  
We shall the Lamb ever see,  
*Radiant*, the Giver of blessing—above !

Hearken ! 'Tis He saith, " I come " !  
Jesus ! " Bright Star of the morning " !  
Long we for Thee and for home—  
Earliest beams of the dawning.  
Called from our wanderings and shame,  
Drawn by a love without measure,  
Graced in the worth of one name,  
Dowered with infinite treasure ;  
Blest is that home unto me,  
Full, divine title possessing,  
There the Lamb's glories to see—  
Blest of the blessed is He—  
There with our Lord we shall be,  
*Radiant*, in fulness of blessing—above !

J. R. K.



## **JOSHUA 24. 4-16.**

**I**N our last paper on these verses we were considering the destruction of the Amorites. This month we might look at verses 9 and 10, where we have Israel's

### **DELIVERANCE FROM THE HAND OF BALAAM**

brought before us. How wonderful is it that the thought of God for His people, whether Israel or ourselves, ever has been, is and will be just that one word—blessing. At the same time it is well that our eye should not be blinded to the might and the power of Satan, and that it is all directed against that which is of God and that which is standing for God in this present evil world. We must never underestimate the power of our mighty adversary, who would bring a curse upon us if he could. He has ever worked along the parallel lines of violence and corruption—these two principles being seen in Balak and Balaam. But how comforting it is to know that however great the might and power of Satan may be, and is, it is weakness and vanity when God steps in to speak or to act.

It is so here, and the victory which God secured for His people was not merely a negative one, in hindering the curse, but it was a positive one, seen in the pronouncement of blessing. What a blessing, worthy indeed of the heart of Him from whom it came.

It is well for us to be assured that the purpose of God for His people is deliverance and victory; these

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verses could not be true of us apart from what comes out in Numbers 21. There we see a company who look and live, and victory is the outcome of life, the life of a people who were to inherit and possess the land as the elect of God. How *could* such a people be cursed? The curse had been anticipated in the brazen serpent.

Might we now consider briefly the blessing which Balaam had to declare in Numbers 23. It is well to remember that this wonderful range of blessings was uttered in the presence of Balak; the enemy can do nothing but look on and hear from the lips of Balaam their orderly unfolding, and learn there is no enchantment against Israel.

Balaam first declares that the people of God are a separate company; this is *always* true, and to-day the church of God is a company separated to Himself, and therefore separate from the world. It should be a matter of soul exercise as to how far we recognise and answer to this separation. They were to dwell alone and not to be reckoned among the nations; a people unlike every other people; a people to whom you could not apply worldly rules and maxims; a people without a history that can be taken account of by the world. Who could write the history of a people whose life is hid with Christ in God and whose actions can only be spiritually discerned? a people who are prepared to go through persecution, trial, suffering, to wander in desert, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, truly a people of whom the world is not worthy.

Balaam's next word reminds us of the Apostle Paul's unanswerable challenge in Romans 8: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It

is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? ” How establishing for the soul is this and how disconcerting to the enemy. Completely justified, cleared from every charge that can be brought against us ; no accusation can stand ; no possibility of condemnation ; no longer in the enemy’s power, out of reach. of it for ever ; numbered amongst the elect of God. This indeed is peace.

Next we learn that not merely has God not seen iniquity or perverseness in Israel, but He sees beauty and order in them. Balaam here speaks as one who heard the words of God and had seen the vision of the Almighty. One in a later day in Patmos had a vision of the beauty and comeliness of the church coming down out of heaven from God having the glory of God, a vision of ordered beauty where all was according to God, for every perfection of Christ was seen in her. At the present moment the people of God are viewed by God as having all the grace of Christ upon them, and rivers of living water flowing out from them. What a spectacle for the eye of God to rest upon.

Then there is the coming of the Lord, a star out of Jacob and a sceptre rising out of Israel. All this foreshadows the appearing in glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and the destruction of every world power. All the pride of man as seen in Moab is smitten ; the independence of man portrayed in Edom is brought into captivity ; Asshur, the persistent enemy of the people of God, is afflicted and Amalek shall perish for ever. Every enemy power passes out at the coming of the Lord, for He shall have dominion. Well may Balaam say, “ Alas, who shall live when God doeth this ! ”

So if we have in Balak and Balaam symbolised

the whole force of the enemy's power set upon cursing the people of God, on the other hand what grace and love are in the words of God Himself, "But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand." J. R. T.

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### THE TEMPTATION.

(MATT. 4. 1-11; HEB. 4. 15.)

"**H**E was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." This statement seems to make it clear that the temptations to which the Lord Jesus was subjected were analogous to those through which His followers may expect to pass; and that one of the objects of the record of His temptations is to afford guidance as to the nature of the temptations which are liable to beset us in their world, and the means by which we may be enabled to overcome them.

The occasion of the temptation of the Lord is noteworthy. It follows immediately upon His baptism, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, and the announcement of the divine pleasure in Him. We might well have supposed that such an endowment would have been followed by the performance of mighty works of power and mercy; but the first impulse of the Spirit is to lead Him into the wilderness, "to be tempted of the devil." How often we forget this lesson, and assume that successful service can be rendered without the necessary preparation in secret.

It is clear from the narrative that the Lord Jesus was tempted throughout the whole of the forty days in the wilderness, and that the three temptations recorded in detail were only the climax of the series.

Moreover, during the forty days He was fasting, and, as Mark tells us, He was with the wild beasts. Thus the three crucial temptations came upon Him at a time when He was under every possible pressure, physical and spiritual. How often we find that it is at such periods of pressure that the enemy of our souls attacks us most effectively; and what a comfort to realise that the One who has suffered being tempted is able to succour them that are tempted.

The three recorded temptations cover a very wide field, perhaps in principle the whole field of our experience in this life. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." What an obvious, what a natural use, of the power so recently bestowed! That is the danger of so many temptations; they impel us to a course so natural, so apparently harmless. How often we fail to detect the dangers underlying them, the direction in which they are leading us. The question at issue here was to what end were the Lord's miraculous powers to be used; what was to have the first place in His life. Is not this the primary temptation of all? What are our aims and objects? Are we giving God the first place in our hearts? What is our aim in life?

The Lord's answer goes to the root of the matter. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." How often He had to enforce this lesson on His disciples. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth." "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness." And how much do we stand in need of the same lesson to-day. How largely our time and energy is spent in labouring for the meat that perisheth; and how little do we seek to live by *every word* that

proceedeth out of the mouth of God. What a rich provision God has made for our lives, if we will only avail ourselves of it. Let us seek grace to “put first things first.”

The second temptation deals with a very different danger, but none the less a real one. “If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.” The temptation was to secure notoriety as a religious leader by human means; to deliberately run a risk for this purpose, and rely on God’s protection against its natural consequences. How many a servant of God has succumbed to the temptation. How often a desire for recognition by the people of God has been an overpowering motive, and has led to the neglect of other considerations. The Lord’s answer is clear and decisive. “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” He courted no dangers; He was content to lead a simple and obscure life under normal human conditions until His hour came. There was nothing of self-advertisement or self-assertion in His course. Well may we covet “the simplicity that is in Christ.”

The third temptation completes the picture. “All these things [the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them] will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” Power, position, distinction, a recognised place in the world—how these things appeal to all in a greater or less degree. How gladly Satan would assign each Christian a place in the world-system, and how successful he has been in this activity. What was the so-called triumph of Christianity under Constantine but the acceptance by the church of a recognised place in the world—to the advantage, perhaps, of the world, but to the lasting detriment of the church. Satan is ever active on these lines, and many

a man who has been proof against other temptations has been captured by this one. What is the safeguard? "Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Half the battle in this, as in other temptations, is to recognise from whom they come. The connection of the world-system with its prince we are too often unmindful of. We have to live our daily lives here, and to pursue our lawful avocations, but let us beware of anything that will lead us into a path where we are not subject to the will of God—where demands are made upon us that are incompatible with that will. "No man can serve two masters . . . ye cannot serve God and mammon." What Satan offered to the Lord was His own by right and title; but He was content to forego it in order that He might do the will of God, which was to lead Him along a downward and not an upward path. What an example for us! "If any man serve, let him follow me."

"Then the devil leaveth him." His temptations for the time being were over, and He could now return "in the power of the Spirit into Galilee," and commence His service of love and power. In our case the temptations do not come to a definite end, but continue throughout our pathway, but the attitude which we take towards them at the outset of our christian course is of vital importance, and may have a determining effect on our lives.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him."

E. R.—N.

**“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,”  
and How to Spend Them.**

(6) SINGING.

**I**T has ever been the thought of God that His children should be a singing people. Happiness and singing are inseparable, for it is only happy hearts that can produce a song. With the entrance of sin and death into this world the joy departed, and weeping and groaning were heard instead of singing. Until the dread of judgment, the bondage of sin, and the fear of death are removed from any heart there can be no song.

The first song recorded in scripture is that which was sung when the people were sheltered from judgment, delivered from bondage and brought triumphantly, in figure, through the dark waters of death. It was on the resurrection shore of the Red Sea that the first great song of redemption was sung. Moses said, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord . . . the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” It was in the joy of

**SALVATION**

that they sang unto the Lord. Thus it is that only as we are able to exult in the mighty victory of God through the finished work of Christ that we can sing to the God of our salvation: “The Lord hath triumphed gloriously.” Have you sung this joyful song? Do you know God as the God of *your* salvation—able to deliver you from the judgment, from Satan’s power, and from the fear of death, and keep you in salvation right through to the end? God would have that song



maintained, but it is only as we are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” that such singing can be sustained.

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The children of Israel soon lost their joy, and the song died away. Murmuring took the place of singing, until at last God had to send fiery serpents among them. How this speaks of the fearful character of our evil hearts—of sin in the flesh—which must be judged unsparingly. It was when the people cried unto the Lord that Moses was instructed by God to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole and “it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent he lived.”

The people then journeyed towards the sunrising, and came to the well and sang this song: “Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it.” How beautiful is the interpretation of this type in Romans 8: “There is then now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. . . . God, having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh.”

Believers having received the Holy Spirit can now sing:

“Within us dwells that well from heaven,  
THE SPIRIT OF OUR GOD.”

It is only by the Spirit of God that we are able to sing the songs of the Lord in the house of the Lord.

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Centuries later, after the captivity in Babylon had been turned and a remnant of the Jews had returned to God and to His city, Nehemiah was sent to rebuild

the wall of Jerusalem. After much conflict and overcoming many difficulties the wall was at last completed, and the great joy of the dedication of the wall was reached. It is recorded in Nehemiah 12 that "the singers sang loud . . . and that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy; and also the women and children rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off."

This was the song resulting from

#### SEPARATION

from evil, and the desire to protect and preserve all that was precious in the sight of God.

This is a special joy which is only known as the divine principle of separation from evil is accepted; as the holiness of all that is divine is maintained; and as all that is of God is valued and preserved. That wall enclosed all which was to be cherished for God and excluded all that was contrary to His holy name.

Are you, dear young believer, making friends with unbelievers? Are you seeking your pleasures at the same polluted springs from which the worldlings are drawing theirs? Are you endeavouring to find your life in things of the earth and not in things above? You will not be able to sing to God until you have departed from iniquity and found your joy in the holy interests of God.

The joy of Jerusalem being heard afar off reminds us of the effect of the gospel upon those who are brought to God—they are so happy that those around hear the singing that arises from the deep joy of knowing God and His love.

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There is still a deeper joy and a more wondrous song than was ever sung by the Old Testament saints. It is the song of

## SONSHIP.

The merriment, the music and the dancing of God's house into which that son was brought, who "was lost and is found" (Luke 15), unfolds the secret that our God would have us joy before Him as sons in all the liberty and intimacy of sonship. This is the sweetest song and only sons of God can sing it. When the prodigal returned, his first joy was to receive the kisses of forgiveness, but a deeper and a calmer joy awaited him and filled his heart as he sat down, robed and ringed to partake of the fatness of the father's house as a son, and to share the joy that filled his father's heart.

This is our portion now! Do you know and enjoy it? If not, it is for you and within your reach, the result of turning to God and proving His great love.

The Lord give us to share in the deep joy and privilege of singing with grace in our hearts to God in the triumph of SALVATION, in the power of the SPIRIT OF GOD, in the holiness of SEPARATION, and in the liberty of SONSHIP.

F. S. M.

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"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." (Hos. 6. 3.)

THOU hast begun to shew me, Lord,  
 And what will be the ending?  
 I've touched the fringe of what Thou art,  
 And that is joy transcending!  
 I'm only on the rippling shore,  
 Love's ocean waves are all before.

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## “BEHOLD MY SERVANT.”

(MATT. 12. 16-21.)

WE read of many of God's servants of the house of Israel, as Moses, Jacob, etc., but Isaiah points to One who would serve in respect of all nations, who would bring everything into subjection to God. The house of Israel had failed, and God brings One in, His beloved Son, and announces, “Behold my servant.” This announcement is found only in Matthew, and comes in after the principles of the kingdom have been made known, the Lord rejected as their King, and the Pharisees seek to destroy Him. The multitudes flock to Him, and He heals them all, but He charges them that they should not make Him known, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet. He was not here to serve in the way that the Jews would have liked. They wanted a king who would deliver them from their enemies, and One who would be here to serve them in regard to their present condition, but God says, “Behold *my* servant, whom I have chosen ; *my* beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased : I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.” His service would be for God, and go out to all nations.

And then in regard to the hopes of the Jews we get a negative statement of His service, what He will *not* do, quite the contrary to what they would have Him do. He was not going to manifest Himself as a great public man. He would not strive or cry, neither should any man hear His voice in the streets. He will not take part in the political, commercial or industrial affairs of the world to set things right, nor in the

philanthropical or philosophical institutions. He does not take away the poverty, sicknesses or distresses of mankind, nor does He break down the wickedness of man or his opposition to God. Man is left as he is, for after the flesh there is no remedy. The Jews still remained under the Roman yoke, and they still rebelled against God, and right down the centuries man has remained the same. And the conditions that applied then still apply, for we see the weakness of man in all his sickness and inability to deliver himself from death. We see, too, his opposition to God in the crimes, wars, etc., with death at the end of all. How aptly the term “a bruised reed” applies to man; nothing to be relied upon, no strength.

The arm of flesh will ever fail, yet God will not take advantage of man’s weakness, “a bruised reed shall he not break.” He could come in in judgment and sweep the scene clean, and what is the smoking flax, or as the margin puts it, the dimly burning flax? Smoke speaks of judgment, and here it speaks of man sitting in judgment upon God; setting himself in rebellion against God and speaking blasphemously. Man’s hate and wickedness smoulders like flax; it dimly burns. It cannot burst into a flame, otherwise the world would soon be consumed. Flax will not flare like cotton, and when lighted will only burn dimly, sending forth a smoke, so is not used for burning or lighting purposes; and so with the heart of man, it is always in rebellion and set on destruction, but it cannot make a total end. Yet the Lord is not dealing with such at present; the smoking flax He shall not quench till He send forth judgment unto victory. The present condition of things shall not go on indefinitely, but in God’s own time, and through *His*

servant whom He hath chosen, everything shall be brought to a victorious conclusion, not in accord with the thoughts and plannings of man, but entirely in accord with the will of God.

The remedy for the whole position lies outside the resources of man, and God's judgment will be manifest. But it will be entirely to the working of His own good pleasure and through the Man of His own choice; One through whom there can be no failure, and One in whom all nations can place their reliance and hope. So God calls attention to His Servant and His beloved, and though here we get the negative statement concerning Him, how fraught it is with blessing regarding the ultimate conclusion of His service. He becomes the centre of all attraction and the hope of every nation, and to those whose eyes have been opened to behold Him now, how wonderful is the contemplation. As we know the truth regarding what we are as after the flesh we can say :

“ As weaker than a bruised reed,  
We cannot do without Thee.”

He only is our strength, comfort and hope, and He maintains us here, but it is as the One who has died and risen again, and we know Him on the other side of death. We lay hold of these things and are brought into the good of them by faith in Him, and know that we are not of this world, although in it, even as He is not of the world. So we sing :

“ Lord, we can see, by faith in Thee,  
A prospect bright, unfailing ;  
Where God shall shine, in light divine,  
In glory never fading.”

C. D—E.

## THE BIBLE.—THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

THE Song of Solomon stands in distinct contrast to the Book of Ecclesiastes. It is a love song, and brings before us the discipline and experiences of affection. Strictly speaking the experiences given relate to God's earthly people, the children of Israel, who will not know the full joys of the love of Christ until they have passed through the discipline which eventuates in their being consciously here the object of His desire and love. The book, however, may happily be applied to ourselves as learning our place as in the heart of Christ. (Which of us has fully learnt it ?)

It is difficult not to refer in detail to the sweet passages of this precious book, but my remarks must only be general. If God has been pleased to use the metaphor employed in this book, it would be folly on our part if we allow this to prevent our enjoying the spiritual experiences suggested by it. The terms used refer to natural or human love. We may see the deeper experiences of soul history and *divine* love in these expressions.

It may help us in reading the book if we note that whenever the word "beloved" occurs, it refers to the bridegroom ; when the words "my love" occur they refer to the bride. This enables us to follow the conversations more easily.

Chapter 1 begins by the artless request that the love of Christ may be better known. The soul had experienced discipline (ver. 6) and had neglected her own vineyard. At the end of the book (chap. 8. 12) her vineyard is before her. If we realised how necessary we are to the heart of Christ, we should look after our vineyard ; He is the loser if our souls are not right. It is wonderful that the Bridegroom can speak to the

bride and say, "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." We might understand our saying this to Christ, but for Him to say it to us is wonderful indeed. So, too, we may note that He uses the same terms as to our love (chap. 4. 10) as we do of His love in chapter 1. 4. There are three main steps of progress discernible. First, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." (Chap. 2. 16.) Secondly, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." (Chap. 6. 3.) Thirdly, the final experience is, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me." (Chap. 7. 10.)

We rightly begin with the precious fact that Christ is ours, but we are led onward to see that the reason for His reaching us in grace was because He wanted us in His love. The church is necessary for the happiness of Christ.

It is instructive to observe the discipline experienced in chapter 3, there has been unconsciousness of the bridegroom, and the bride rises to find him. In this instance it was not long before she found him. In chapter 5, however, the neglect was more deliberate. His voice is unheeded, her own comfort is considered, and though by the expressions of his love, myrrh, he leads her to seek him, he withdraws himself and she finds him not. She is smitten by the watchmen of the city, her veil is taken away. The discipline had to be more severe because the neglect had been greater, but it is in the portrayal of his features that she learns where he is. (Chap. 5. 10-16; 6. 2.) There is nothing like bringing the features of Christ before our heart if we desire Him to have a place in our affections. Love is strong as death. We must keep our heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.



His words to us are, "Set me as a seal upon thy heart." There is also the thought of discipline, as also comfort in the allusion to the north wind and the south wind of chapter 4. 16. Both are necessary if the garden is to yield its precious fruits for the beloved.

It is interesting to observe the movements alluded to in this book. Love is quick in movement: "He cometh leaping upon the mountains." (Chap. 2. 8.) There is also the coming up out of the wilderness. (Chap. 3. 6.) There is the movement to the mountain of myrrh, to the hill of frankincense. (Chap. 4. 6.) There is the movement in discipline of chapter 5. 6. There is the coming of the beloved into his garden to feed in the gardens; and there is the movement of the bride in chapter 8. 5, leaning upon her beloved.

The Lord give us to meditate on the beautiful expressions in this portion of scripture, and may we under the Spirit's teaching be led to know how much the Lord appreciates our love.

M. W. B.

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### THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE.

**D**IVINE principles never alter; divine order never varies. Men vary their laws to meet exigencies; God has met every exigency in His word, and honours those who obey it.

The longest psalm is the utterance of one deeply imbued with right regard of His word. The value of precedent is emphasised in the Book of Proverbs: "Hear, my son, the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the teaching of thy mother; for they shall be a garland of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck." (Prov. 1. 8, 9.)

The instruction at the outset was the apostles'

teaching, coming as it did direct from the Lord Himself by the power of the Holy Ghost. The arrival of the Spirit of God to take up His dwelling on earth was signalled by the mighty breathing, the sound of which filled the house, the priestly company (comp. 2 Chron. 5. 12) being empowered to speak what the Spirit gave them to sound forth. How precious the apostles' teaching! The actual words heard from the Lord's own lips, the powerful deeds of divine compassion seen by their very eyes, the divine grace of His manner in all He said and did while on earth, all brought to their remembrance as promised by the Holy Ghost.

Thus the apostles' teaching is that of the Lord Himself, the qualification of an apostle being the necessity of having assembled together with the Lord Jesus all the time in which He came in and went out among the apostles, beginning from the baptism of John until the day in which He was taken up. (Acts 1. 21, 22.) The pretension of any other men to be apostles is thus guarded against, such pretension being of Satan in order to set aside the apostles' teaching and fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers. These four cardinal principles change not, neither by the varying, uncertain minds of men, nor by the passage of the centuries. By the recognition of these principles, that which came in at the outset as paternal and maternal is duly regarded, with the result promised to the obedient sons, of honour from God on the head and ornament about the neck. (Comp. Dan. 5. 7.)

The Apostle Paul, as indeed in many things, is an excellent example of one who regarded the apostles' doctrine and fellowship in the way in which he speaks

of them in 1 Corinthians 15. 9, Ephesians 2. 19, Hebrews 2. 8. We need to remember that the teaching was oral, the apostles and prophets being dependent upon the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit to furnish them with what should be taught. All the apostles and prophets had received impressions of Christ, whether with Him or by His appearing to them, as 1 Corinthians 15, so that, as then, the upkeep of the assembly has ever been living impressions of Christ.

The wall (not walls) of the holy city, Jerusalem, has twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Rev. 21. 14.) Thus were the foundations laid of the wall of the assembly, in the truth livingly presented in Christ Himself and taught by the apostles in the living power of the Holy Ghost. When, in times of declension, as now, the Lord scrutinises those responsible to Him on earth, He shews John, in the assembly of Philadelphia, things He can commend: brotherly love, His word kept in weakness, and His name faithfully honoured. (Rev. 3. 8.) These were surely traits in evidence at the outset, shewing how divine principles do not change whatever may be outward conditions.

L. O. L.

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### “HAVING DONE ALL TO STAND.”

(EPH. 5.)

**T**HE christian warrior must never be off his guard. After a victory we are liable to get careless and at ease. But the wily foe is watching his opportunity. “The land had rest,” we are told, *therefore*, said Asa, “Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars . . . so they

built and prospered." (2 Chron. 14. 7.) Thus they were *prepared* to do battle with "an host of a thousand thousand" (ver. 9) in the spirit of *dependence on God*. (Ver. 11.) "So the Lord smote the Ethiopians"; and ours will be smitten too if we act as did Asa.

S. J. B. C.

### "A VERY LITTLE WHILE."

(HEB. 10. 37, NEW TRANS.)

'Tis but "a very little while"!  
 To hear the taunt of those who style  
 Our hope as vain and it revile.  
     "Be of good cheer,"  
     Nor faint, nor fear,  
 Your loins gird up, your lamps trim clear,  
 Behold, the Bridegroom draweth near!

'Tis but "a very little while"!  
 To shun the things which here defile,  
 And struggle on thro' storm and trial:  
     Thro' strife and sin  
     And battle din,  
 The faith to keep, till safe within—  
 Where all is peace—the crown we win.

'Tis but "a very little while!"  
 Then, passed the road's last weary mile,  
 We'll rest above beneath His smile:  
     And 'mid the glow,  
     And rapturous flow  
 Of joy and praise, we'll gauge and know  
 The heart of Him who loves us so.

'Tis but "a very little while"!  
 And He shall crush the serpent vile,  
 And earth and heaven reconcile:  
     Ah! none can stay  
     His gracious sway,  
 Or dim the pure meridian ray  
 Of that long, bright millennial day!

S. J. B. C.

## OUR QUESTIONS, AND HOW THE LORD MAY DEAL WITH THEM.

**Q**UESTIONS we all have, and some of us puzzle over them exceedingly. A child of five, a youth of twenty, a man of fifty, each may think the other's questions of little interest or importance, but if we could uncover their minds and look inside we should find in each case—more or less, according to the degree of thoughtfulness or restlessness—a number of unsolved problems, some even relating to matters of the highest moment.

All questions will ultimately find their answer in God; of some, and those the most vital to us, the solution may be made known to us in the life that now is; others may be beyond our present capacity. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Our present understanding, compared with that which shall be, is as a child's to a man's. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Cor. 13.) Meanwhile we may assure our hearts that *God* understands. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15. 18.)

When our Lord was here, people put all sorts of questions and difficulties to Him, and it is very in-

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structive to notice how He dealt with them. Rarely, if ever, did He give the clear-cut answer, "Yes" or "No," "This" or "That," such as we often suppose would set our minds at rest. Rather did He lift the question to a higher plane, where the inquirer might see things in a new light and learn something of greater moment than the answer to his immediate difficulty. The questions were, so to speak, dissolved in a deeper or wider truth.

Take first the very simple example of the man who felt aggrieved that he was being robbed by his brother of his share of the property. "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." (Luke 12.) Not in terms a question, if you like, but at all events a difficulty of quite the same order; here is a man who believes himself wronged, and appeals to Jesus, confident that a word from Him will set the matter right, and, instead of intervening to see justice done, Jesus simply takes occasion to point out the danger (the eternal danger!) of seeking treasure for ourselves and not being "rich towards God." Very unsatisfying, you may say, to a litigant seeking justice; but is it not in truth a greater thing that my mind should be taught by Christ to value the true riches than that He should intervene to see justice done (what I think justice!) in my personal interest? If I feel aggrieved it is certainly good to lay the matter before Him—far better that than to nurse it by myself; but I must be prepared to find that He cares for me more than I do for myself; that while I may be anxious about what is due to *me* (what I call *right!*), He cares for my true welfare—that is, for my soul.

The next instance we will look at, of the way in which our Lord answered questions, is concerned with higher things than worldly goods. Some of the crowds who had seen Him feed five thousand had a vague desire (as many of us have) to do the right thing, and they came to Jesus with their question: "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" (John 6. 28.) They thought no doubt of doing some deeds, possibly quite good and meritorious and some perhaps not on any account to be omitted, but Jesus brings them at once to the heart of things, to the only true starting-point: "*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*" For such an answer they were hardly prepared; they had not discerned the beauty that was in Him, and they ask for a sign (a lamp by which to see the Sun!) and quote as a precedent the manna in the wilderness. And Jesus in one sense will give them nothing further; yet in another sense He offers them, throughout the discourse that follows, fresh opportunities of opening their hearts to the blessing that was before them: "The bread of God is he which cometh down out of heaven and giveth life to the world." That is where Jesus now will bring us as our starting-point, if, with any desire to do the right thing, we bring our desire to Him and honestly follow it up in His presence.

The next example is about places of worship, a difficulty which many people feel. The woman of Sychar was not quite happy about it, and after becoming intensely interested in the words of Jesus she ventures to put to Him the difficulty which perhaps had been in her mind for years, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain;

and ye [Jews] say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." And the Lord shews her in reply how her difficulty is going to disappear in a wider revelation, and the question of place is to yield to the deeper realities of spirit and truth. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, *worship the Father*. . . . God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4.)

Is it possible that, if any reader of these lines has a difficulty about "place of worship," the Lord has to leave that question altogether on one side, and, as He did for the woman of Sychar, first establish a clearer link with Himself and make known the Father's thoughts ?

For our last example let us look at a question put to Paul by the Corinthians concerning things that had been sacrificed to idols ; was it permissible to eat them or was it wrong ? We can hardly realise now the importance attached to such a question by men who had been by no means accustomed to regard meats as unessential matters, and who were living in the midst of pagans to whom flesh that had been sacrificed to an idol had acquired a religious character. But Paul, while laying down clearly the principle of liberty in regard to such material things, is careful not to look at the question through the microscope by which the Corinthians had been magnifying it, but, by including it in a wider field of view, to shew it as secondary to a more vital (if less exciting) principle, namely, not by any means to injure the soul of our brother. On this point he speaks warmly : "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend,



I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (1 Cor. 8.)

We may learn from such examples how often our questions, with their clear-cut alternatives, may imply a very incomplete view of things in our minds, and consequently the answer to them may sometimes be, Neither this nor that, but some deeper lesson of which we have not yet realised the need. "His disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, *Neither* hath this man sinned, nor his parents: *but* [what matters is a far greater thing, namely] *that the works of God should be made manifest in him.*" (John 9. 1-3.)

If we bring our difficulties to the Lord, He will tell us greater things than we have asked him—"the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (2 Tim. 2. 7); He will teach us to put things in a right proportion, to put the first things first; and our questions, like our prayers, may be answered in ways undreamed of.

J. B. C—D.

## EXTRACTS FROM TWO LETTERS AS TO THE LORD'S WORK IN A COUNTRY TOWN.

*From a town in the shires.*

*January, 1926.*

MY DEAR —,

I think I told you I would write you after we had had our young people's meeting, which was last evening, but before saying anything about that, I

must tell you how the Lord has been working in our household and has been giving us such joy and encouragement.

I mentioned in my last about a cousin of ours, who was staying with us, did I not? Well, she got interested in the meetings and reading of the scriptures, and eventually got very exercised about her sins, and, as you will know, we were continually praying for her.

On Sunday evening after the meeting our dear boy L—— came up to us with beaming face and said he had come to Jesus; he had confessed Christ to Mr. ——, but never mentioned it to us, but on this night he said he was so full up he couldn't keep it in; he said he was very exercised when G—— confessed.

On hearing this our cousin quite broke down and sobbed bitterly; we had prayer with her, and sang and read with her until almost midnight, but, poor girl, she felt the burden of her sins terribly, and would not tell us what hindered. So this went on till Wednesday. At tea-time on that day she said she would like to walk over to the reading at —— with the others. They had the ninth chapter of John, and after the reading she went up to H—— and said, "*I am saved,*" and her face was lit up with joy; so it was a very happy party that came back. She said everything seemed to be so plain all at once, whereas before it had been like a veil.

She cannot express herself in English very well, but she is so happy, and wrote straight away to tell her mother. Her father is a Catholic, and she has been to confession, but said how empty it all was; so it is really wonderful to think she was sent here for blessing. This is what we desired, but how the

Lord comes in and answers our prayers far more abundantly than we ask or think.

Now you will want to know about the meeting. Of course the weather was very, very bad and prevented many from coming, but still we had a most encouraging time. We were twenty-six in number. Mr. —— gave a very helpful word for the young believers, with power, from 2 Peter 2. 1, Acts 10. 36, John 20. 13, and Psalm 45. 11, all in connection with knowing Jesus as *Lord*. We were all very cheered. There was much prayer about the meeting.

Our little S—— on going to bed was so exercised, and sent for his father to go to him. He was crying, and was heart-broken about his sins, and this morning he was quite happy in Jesus. How you will rejoice with us in all this, the Lord's goodness to us. We are just filled with praise and thanksgiving, and who can say where the blessing will end. We trust it will widen out to some outside.

*A few days later.*

Just a brief line to let you know we have just had a few lines from my cousin, telling of her safe arrival at ——, and, best of all, she said her lady asked her how she had enjoyed the festivities at Christmas. So she told her of her new-found joy, and she says she looked at her with astonishment, but said nothing. We do trust she will be kept and be able to get into touch with the Lord's people. This would be such a help to her.

Now for another added joy: our dear G—— has expressed his desire to remember the Lord in His death. Isn't it lovely; he said he was very much helped on this line by the young people's meeting.

N.B.—G——, the eldest son, confessed Christ about

six weeks before. The cousin is from abroad in a post in this country. The parents of the children had them baptised as infants and have sought to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

G. J. E.

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**“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,”  
and How to Spend Them.**

(7) HOLDING FAST.

**T**HE perilous times, when many are turning away their ears from the truth, have already come. Many, too, are departing from the faith, but the word from the Lord in glory to every one that loves Him is

“HOLD FAST”!

As an encouraging message to soldiers in a besieged garrison, this word inspires fresh confidence in fainting hearts. The God of all encouragement, who knows how prone we are to give up under the pressure of the enemy, has repeatedly given this establishing exhortation to His people lest they should be discouraged and disheartened.

It was to a young man entering upon life that the word was given, “Take *fast hold* of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.” (Prov. 4. 13.) This message, so full of encouragement, to

HOLD FAST TO WISDOM,

was never more needed than it is to-day. The appeal of Folly is being responded to by multitudes, especially by the young, but yet the voice of Christ, as the Wisdom of God, is being heard, “Whoso findeth ME

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“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.”

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findeth life.” Because it is so easy to drift into the paths of folly, “we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

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The enemy is so subtle, error is presented in such a specious form, that it is not difficult to be deceived. Hence the children of wisdom are exhorted to “prove all things ;

HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.”

We should learn to “abhor that which is evil ; cleave to that which is good.” For this it is necessary to have our senses “exercised to discern both good and evil,” and also that we “may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment ; that we may approve things that are excellent.” Thus shall we be preserved in a world of unholiness and impurity for the pleasure of God. Happy are those who, in early life, learn to love that which God loves and to hate that which He hates !

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The inspiration and authenticity of the holy scriptures are being denied and doubted even by professing Christians, while much confusion exists through failure to grasp the main lines of teaching that run through the word of God. For this reason the apostle exhorted Timothy to

“HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS,”

that he might have a firm grasp of the summary, or outline, of God’s thoughts, and thus be enabled to state definitely and clearly what is held. We need to cling unquestioningly to God’s word, as the

only authority upon which our hopes can rest ; to be like Titus, who was "*holding fast* the faithful word," clinging to it according to the doctrine taught that he might be able both to encourage with sound teaching and refute gainsayers.

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Rationalism, philosophy and psychology are being widely read and studied by many who have professed the name of Christ, with the result that their confidence in God and in His word disappears and their rejoicing is turned into doubting and spiritual darkness. Flee these things ! They will rob you of your confidence, your joy and all that is precious. You will indeed "fall among thieves" if you expose your fallen and finite mind to the specious arguments and false reasonings of infidel writers. Absorb your mind with the truth of God as disclosed in the scriptures and your confidence and joy will be preserved. Thus only will you

" HOLD FAST THE CONFIDENCE

and rejoicing . . . firm unto the end." (Heb. 3. 6.)

Then having been delivered, and enlightened as to the revelation of God in Christ, your soul established and enlarged to appreciate heavenly things, you can respond to the exhortation of the apostle, "Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, JESUS the Son of God, let us

HOLD FAST THE CONFESSION."

We would desire to value every truth and every thought that centres in Him, for nothing connected with His glorious Person can be a matter of indifference to those who love HIM. His deity ; His perfect manhood ; his unchangeable priesthood ; his Sonship

coupled with all His glories are embraced in "our confession." May we "*hold fast* the confession of the hope, unwaveringly" !

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The real motive power of Christianity is affection. It is those who love Him who will be preserved. Loyal, whole-hearted, pure affection for Christ is the secret of all overcoming, and the greatest victory of all is to

HOLD FAST HIS NAME.

As He said to the assembly at Sardis, "I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of Satan is ; and thou *holdest fast* my name, and hast not denied my faith." (Rev. 2. 13.) What a joy to secure the approval of Christ in such surroundings, where all the power of Satan is in evidence ! His name is precious to those who love Him. They say, "Blessed be his glorious name for ever." They confess His name ; they pray in His name ; they are gathered together unto His name ; and they cherish the remembrance of His name in the world where He was rejected.

May His tender message from the glory touch our hearts with fresh power. "I do not cast upon you any other burden ; but what ye have

HOLD FAST TILL I SHALL COME."

F. S. M.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

**T**HIS subject is one of the first importance, and occupies a larger place in scripture than any other. It is a matter of the maintenance of the *rights of God* in view of the lawlessness of men and the usurpation of Satan. Satan had rebelled against the rule

of God in heaven, and usurped the rights of Christ on the earth, and so has become the god and ruler of this world. Man has taken possession of the earth without any regard to the rights of God. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." If God be God, He must establish His rights. In the end Satan will be cast out of heaven and shut up in the bottomless pit, and all lawlessness of men will be removed from the earth. The kingdom of God implies the *rule of God* established in the hearts of men. That involves men being delivered from a state of lawlessness and being brought to righteousness. *Righteousness* is the great thought in connection with the kingdom. "Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of thy throne." (Psa. 89. 14.) On our side it says, "The kingdom of God is *righteousness*, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14. 17.)

The righteousness of God's throne has been established in the death of Christ. (Rom. 3. 23-26.) Thus mercy rejoices against judgment, and *grace* reigns *through righteousness*. If God approaches sinful men as a Saviour God, it must be on the principle of *grace*. His throne to-day is a *throne of grace*. In the present time the rule of God is the rule of *grace*. Man's deliverance from lawlessness is in being brought under the sway of divine *grace*. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under *grace*." It is not an arbitrary rule, but that of *influence*. We see this illustrated in the way the sun rules the planetary system; it is the rule of *attraction*. The sun was set in the heavens to rule the day. If a planet got out of its orbit, it would rush to destruction. This is what man did when he turned his back upon God; getting away from the influence of law,



he became lawless, he got out of his orbit. The object of the gospel is to recover man for God; to bring him back to right relations with God. When the mercy and grace of God reaches the heart of a man, he is subdued and brought to God, so that in the sense of His favour and love, he desires to be here for the will of God; he thus comes into his proper orbit. Practical righteousness is to live and move and act in relation to *the will of God*. It is not merely doing right things, but doing them *to the Lord*.

It is evident that before a man could become a servant of righteousness, he must be delivered from the power and influence of the devil, and from the power of sin; just as Israel had to be delivered from the power of Pharaoh and the taskmasters of Egypt before they could serve God. The gospel is the power of God to salvation, because therein the righteousness of God is revealed. This involved the judgment of sin in the death of Christ. This was illustrated in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, when the blood of the slain victim was sprinkled on the door-posts of their houses under the eye of God. The blood was the witness that sin had been expiated in the death of the victim. Then God was able to manifest His power in the salvation of the people. When thus delivered, they came under the rule of God, as established in Moses, and thus became His kingdom. Moses represented the authority of God, he was king in Jeshurun. What was thus set forth in figure, has been fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ, which has become the way of salvation for all who believe on Him. The believer is translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. So that the kingdom of God is a

sphere of salvation and security, peace and blessing. The gospel is the proclamation that such a sphere exists and opens the door to all men, the door of repentance toward God, and *faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ. The door is a narrow one, too narrow to allow men to enter with any self-importance. Those who refuse to enter in are still in their sins and under the power of Satan.

As we have said, it is a *spiritual* sphere, apprehended only by faith. It is not yet set up in a *public* way; it is the kingdom in *mystery*. (See Luke 17, 21; Matt. 13; Mark 4. 11.) It has not yet come with observation, as it will do when it is set up publicly. Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. It will be set up in a public way at the coming of the Lord. In its present form it was established when Christ was raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God, and made Lord of all, and when the Holy Spirit was sent down at Pentecost to maintain His authority on earth. Christ in going into death had annulled the power of the enemy, but has not yet dispossessed him. Satan is still the god and prince of this world. Hence if the kingdom of God is to be maintained here it must be in a power greater than that of the enemy. There must be a power on earth commensurate with the power at the right hand of God.

When the Lord was here He preached the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn nigh; repent and believe the glad tidings." But now it has come to pass, and all men are called upon to believe in the Lord Jesus, and bow to His authority. In doing so the believer is saved, and enters into the kingdom

of God to enjoy the blessing of eternal life. In the Gospel of Matthew it is called the kingdom of heaven, that is, the authority and rule of heaven established and acknowledged on earth. "The heavens do rule."

In coming into the kingdom, there is the thought of *administration*, *protection* and *support*. We get the administration of all the blessing of God through the Lord Jesus if we are truly subject to Him. Then as we find ourselves here in the presence of enemies, what a great thing it is to have the protection and support of the Lord. When Paul stood before the court of Rome, he said, "No man stood with me, but the Lord stood with me, and gave me power." Everything is under the control of the Lord, all authority is committed to Him in heaven and on earth. Angels, authorities and powers are made subject to Him. No power can prevail against Him.

All through the Acts we see how He wielded His power in support of His servants and His testimony. He may if He sees fit allow His servants to suffer, but He turns all to His own ends and always triumphs, and the apostle could say, "who always leads us in triumph." Yet we must remember that the *King* is in *rejection*, hence His subjects must expect to suffer in proclaiming His kingdom. (2 Thess. 1. 5.) But if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. Victory in the end is assured. It is now the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus Christ. Christ is waiting in patience, and we must wait in patience, and not seek to reign before the time.

When the Lord comes He will bring in a state of righteousness and peace on the earth; till then it will be overturn, overturn, wars and rumours of wars.

The practical bearing of the truth of the kingdom is worked out in the Epistle to the Romans. It is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Righteousness is subjection to the will of God, in contrast to lawlessness. In confessing Jesus Lord, we surrender our wills, we own the rights of God as established in Christ as Lord. Otherwise there would be no reality in our confession. The Lord said when here, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" If we are walking in practical righteousness, we shall have peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; not only peace with God, but peace in view of all the adverse circumstances in which we find ourselves here, the peace of God. We shall rejoice in the Lord always. What a contrast this is to what obtains in the world; confusion, unrest, and men's hearts failing them for fear. A good deal of the trouble we find ourselves in is the result of exercising our own wills, and walking in our own ways.

How important it is not only that we should understand the truth of the kingdom, but that it should be wrought in us, and carried out practically. Until this is the case we are not prepared to go on to the truth of the assembly, the mystery, as developed in the Epistles to Colossians and Ephesians. We are not prepared to take up our heavenly privileges in Christ. The lack of this accounts largely for the lack of stability and spiritual prosperity with many believers. Many there are who have never come under the authority of the Lord, or who have got away from the Lord. If we were more subject to the Lord, we should enjoy in a larger measure the blessing of eternal life. It has been remarked that there are three great thoughts in the Old Testament: *reigning*, David;

*dwelling*, Moses ; *and blessing*, Abraham. The kingdom has been established that God might have a dwelling-place on earth, and He dwells that He may bless. The kingdom is a provisional thought. When it has served its purpose, and all things are subdued to God, then it will be delivered up. But the thought of dwelling and blessing will remain for ever. The state of subjection will be maintained under the influence of the love of God, which will be all-pervading, God will be all, in all.

In the coming day the kingdom will take a different form. Those who have despised the rule of grace will be shut out of the kingdom, they will come under the rule of the rod of iron. (Psa. 2. 9.) The Lord will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. 1. 8.)

In order that the kingdom of God may be established publicly all His enemies must be destroyed, and all lawlessness must be subdued. This will take place at the coming of the Lord, when He comes in all the glory of His Father with the holy angels, when the saints will come forth with Him as the armies of heaven. (Jude 14 ; Rev. 19.) This will be the day of the Lord, often spoken of in the prophetic scriptures. It will overtake the world like the flood ; when men are saying peace and safety sudden destruction will come upon them. He will come with irresistible power. In other words, He will first reign in the David character, subduing the enemies of God, and then in the Solomon character, reigning in righteousness and peace. It will be a reign of peace and universal blessing. The glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. To this time the promises and

prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament refer, and every word will be fulfilled. All other kingdoms will be destroyed and the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. (Dan. 2.) Faith enables us to anticipate that day, and enjoy the blessing of the kingdom now.

F. H. B.

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### MERCY AND GRACE.

“**E**ITHER lighten my burden, or strengthen my back,” prayed an old Puritan divine when in great distress.

When the Lord lightens our burden we have less burden and less grace—it is *mercy*. But when He strengthens our back to bear we have more grace, as it is written, “He giveth more grace.” In the case of Epaphroditus God took a little of the pressure off Paul: “God had mercy . . . on me.” But in the case of Paul’s thorn, Paul received grace to bear it—grace sufficient. (Phil. 2. 27; 2 Cor. 12. 9.) S. J. B. C.

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### THE APOSTLES’ FELLOWSHIP.

**U**NDIVIDED from the teaching of the apostles was their fellowship. The Apostle John writes of it after the lapse of years, during which the brightness of the earthly days of the assembly had declined, when those among whom the loving apostle Paul had laboured had turned away from him, when that which was so precious to the heart of Christ (Christ Himself all and everything to every heart united

in love themselves), as seen in Ephesus, was not found there.

John writes of the apostles' fellowship as unchanged, unaltered by any decline of testimony or love of the saints, unvaried by any deceit of Satan or men.

"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1. 3.) The teaching is also there, "That which was from the beginning" (see Acts 1. 21; John 15. 27), when they saw it at the first, as it is said, "We contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father." Wondrous record of the inception of Christianity in its highest and most glorious revelation, in the fellowship of the Father and the Son! And verily John has as his theme, *the Father and the Son*, divine Persons together: working together in sovereign grace and truth to secure an eternity of divine joy, in which, according to counsels before the world began, they would find their eternal satisfaction. Even in this day fellowship with the apostles is, as at the outset, that "your joy may be full." (1 John 1. 4.)

The Gospel of John reveals to us how that fellowship resulted as the Son of God walked on through a scene of darkness and death, until He could say, "Go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." (John 20. 17.) What a fellowship to participate in! And the apostles enjoyed that fellowship as personally in company with the Son. Like the young men with Abraham and Isaac, they could go with the Father and the Son, until, as was said to them, "Ye shall leave me alone; yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me." (John 16. 32.)

By the gift and reception of the Spirit the subjects

of the operation of this fellowship were bound in the cords of divine love, and "a threefold cord is not quickly broken." (Eccles. 4. 12.) How the wise man's words are confirmed by the true Solomon, when He says, "I and the Father are one," in regard to any attempt at plucking His sheep out of divine, omnipotent hands. (John 10. 27-30.) The Apostle Paul speaks of the same theme, when he bows his knees to the Father, that the eternal purposes secured by the fellowship of the Father and the Son may be known and enjoyed by the Father's Spirit in the inner man. (Eph. 3. 14-21.) Within the wall of the apostles' teaching and fellowship the divine building grows to a holy temple in the Lord, and the accumulation of divine power and operation through the apostles and Paul eventuates in display in the holy city and eternally in the new heavens and new earth. L. O. L.

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**LINES WRITTEN BY A SCOTCH FISHERMAN'S  
WIFE NOW WITH THE LORD.**

Just to wait in patience, calm and sweet repose,  
Leaning on His bosom—for my Father knows  
Just what things I've need of, His sweet will is best,  
In His love delighting, there my soul has rest.

Rest of God—Oh, precious!—joying in His love ;  
Yes, we joy before Thee : blessings from above,  
Rivers overflowing from Thy plenteous store,  
Excellent and gracious, giv'st Thou more and more.

There our heart doth linger—on Thy counsel sweet,  
Waiting in Thy presence, lying at Thy feet,  
Till Thy lips drop fatness and we see Thy face—  
Holy adoration—holy perfectness.

J. A. S.



**“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,”**  
**and How to Spend Them.**

(8) LEARNING.

**Y**OUTH is essentially the time in which to learn. Even as our schooldays begin early in life to equip us for our earthly career, so it is well that our spiritual education should begin early too. We are taught in God’s school how to spend our days, how to increase by the true knowledge of God, and are thus enabled to tread the christian pathway for His glory.

No loving earthly parent would neglect the education of his child or allow it to go forth into the battle of life unprepared and unequipped. Nor would our God and Father, in His loving care for His children, neglect their education, for He says, “I will *instruct* thee and *teach* thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will *guide* thee with mine eye” ; and again, “I will *teach* thee in the way of wisdom.” Surely we can say, “Who teacheth as he.”

There is divine provision for every saved one to be taught, “for the grace of God which carries with it salvation for all men has appeared, teaching us that . . . we should live soberly, and justly, and piously in the present course of things.” Every sober-minded young person earnestly desires to be taught how to live. The great problems of life, our secret and open difficulties, our conduct towards God and men, all produce longings for instruction, causing each to pray, “Teach me thy way, O Lord.”

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THE LORD JESUS CHRIST is TEACHER to His dis-

principles, for He said, "If I therefore, the Lord and the TEACHER, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example that, as I have done to you, ye should do also." His teaching is so marvellous, for He has exemplified all that He teaches.

He also said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from ME." We wonder, as we review what He did, at the gracious, tender manner in which He carried out every detail of His own teaching when He was here amongst men. He has left us an example that we should "follow his steps," as those who know Him and love Him—that we may be conformed to Him in spirit, in manner of life, in word, and deed, and thus in all things be pleasing to the Father. It was said of Him prophetically, "The Lord, Jehovah, hath given me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the *instructed*."

Even as a boy of twelve years Jesus was found in the temple "hearing and asking questions," thus fulfilling the word, "He that is wise will hear and *increase learning*." Surely He is worthy that we should sit at His feet and hear His word!

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GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT is engaged in TEACHING the children of God, for Jesus said of Him, "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance."

How encouraging that we have this divine Person to instruct our hearts in the things of Christ.

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## “THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.”

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THE WORD OF GOD is given for our LEARNING. The holy scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation. “Every scripture is divinely inspired, and profitable for TEACHING.” We find that it is so easy to learn that which is evil and unprofitable, and we often absorb that which has to be unlearned and refused. We need the pure mental milk of the word for our minds, constantly, that we may learn that which is pure and wholesome.

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THE DISCIPLINE OF GOD THE FATHER is largely in view of our education. He is ever moving for our profit, and all discipline is given that it may “yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.” “In pressure thou hast enlarged me,” said the Psalmist. It is promised “they shall be all *taught* of God.”

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THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD, whether directly ministered by the Holy Spirit, through the scriptures, or the oral or written ministry of the Lord’s servants, is a fruitful means of instruction and teaching the people of God. Every young believer should be encouraged to value the many opportunities of listening to or reading such ministry, taking care also to “roast that which he takes in hunting”! It is a serious matter, however, to receive instruction and not profit by it. One of the sad features of the last days is that there are those who are “ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” We would therefore desire to “Give heed to . . . the teaching.”

As another has suitably said, “It is well to aim to gather knowledge more from meditation than from

study and to have it dwell in us, not as opinions but as the food of communion.”

Thus would our God greatly encourage His children, as scholars in the divine school to be marked by teachable spirits, knowing that “the intelligent will gain wise counsels.”

F. S. M.

### THE BREAKING OF BREAD.

THE *place* the breaking of bread occupies both in regard to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and in regard to that which the Apostle Paul teaches, gives it a significance that no lover of Christ can disregard without loss.

It is interesting to note that in Luke 22 and in 1 Corinthians 11 it is the *same occasion*, linking up both scriptures as one in the mind of the Lord, both in its institution and continuance. It has this appeal to the heart susceptible of His feelings, that it is the same love, the same heart, the same voice, the same supper. The Apostle Paul, in the closest acquaintance with Christ in glory, is particular to state *when* it was, “the night in which he was delivered up,” and that it was *Himself*, “the Lord Jesus,” who broke the bread, and what *He* said on that occasion. All this is infinitely precious to a real lover of Christ.

Luke does not write history. The setting of the introduction of the breaking of bread, in his account of it, is such as only one acquainted with the heart of Christ could write. The Lord Jesus was about to fulfil the type of the passover lamb, and in place of the annual celebration of God's redeeming power on behalf of His people, He gives to the apostles the

precious institution of that which recalls Him to mind as the One who suffered for their sakes. The beloved physician, guided by the Holy Spirit, details events and conditions at the time, in regard to the chief priests, Judas, the direction of the guestchamber, the emulations of the apostles, and Peter, all important in their connection; in the midst of which the Lord institutes the breaking of bread in remembrance of *Himself*.

There are features connected with this memorable event inseparable with the continuance of it. The seclusion, the moral elevation of the upper room, the supply of water (the refreshment of living, Holy Ghost ministry), Peter and John going together at the direction of the Lord, and the fellowship of the apostles, are still in evidence where the breaking of bread is in truth. It was in an upper room that the apostles were at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles. (Acts 1. 13.) Also it was in connection with the apostles' teaching and fellowship that the breaking of bread was found. (Acts 2. 43.)

The assembly at the outset kept the breaking of bread as an integral part of the new system of things that had come in by the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, it was at once a privilege and a testimony in connection with the apostles' teaching and fellowship.

The Apostle Paul, with the divine wisdom imparted to him, places the breaking of bread, as instituted by the Lord Himself, in the seclusion of the assembly as "come together," having by his previous ministry made it clear that considerations of rank, family or any earthly or worldly associations had no place there. (1 Cor. 11. 20.) Pre-eminently one whom the Lord

used in the formation of assemblies, he writes to the Corinthians, and surely to all who would regard His apostolic commissions, as those who called on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ; saying also to them, "God is faithful, by whom ye have been called into the *fellowship* of his *Son Jesus Christ*." (1 Cor. 1. 1-9.) Again, in chapter 10 he speaks of the *communion* of the blood of Christ and of the body of Christ, and with the fellowship of the death of Christ is linked the breaking of bread. (Chap. 11. 23-25.)

Difficult times have arrived, profane, vain babblings have advanced to greater impiety (2 Tim. 2. 16), but divine principles are the same, unaffected by the uncertain mind of man, or the procession of the centuries. Now it is, "Let every one who names the name of the Lord withdraw from iniquity," "Youthful lusts flee, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." Iniquity has no part in the breaking of bread, lawlessness is not the connection in which the Lord has ever placed it ; He cannot associate His name with that which He does not approve. Thus there are conditions and principles associated with the breaking of bread connected with which the Lord is pleased to come.

Fellowship is an active principle, and where conditions are right all the precious activities of the fellowship of divine Persons and of saints in right relations are enjoyed. As in the early days of the church's history, the act of breaking the bread was the identification with the apostles' teaching and fellowship ; and on the construction of assemblies later on it was the identification with the teaching and fellowship enunciated by the Apostle Paul, so

now the same obligation rests in connection with it. Thus the breaking of bread has been placed in its own setting, a privilege unequalled by any previous or future economy.

There will be no breaking of bread in eternity, the opportunity and occasion will be over. The fellowship of the apostles, and that stated by Paul will have eventuated in millennial and eternal glory, and the true heart that venerated the breaking of bread in its precious meaning, will have a special remembrance of the visits of the Lord Himself in the days of His rejection, when the fellowship was despised.

What it is to the heart of Christ, Luke and Paul shall tell in their own simple yet touching language. It was instituted by the *Lord Himself* for a remembrance of *Himself*. Both Luke and Paul say the same thing. It is the appeal of the Lord's own heart. He would be remembered for His own sake. It was the night of His being delivered up. He felt it as no other could, yet His love found expression in the wish of His continued remembrance by His own. The separate loaf and cup speak of His death, yea, of His death in all the expression of His love to His own. "For you" is all saints.

The word "remember" shews His desire to be called to mind, not, of course, the usual meaning of the word remember, as recollecting something. He would be called to mind as living, who did die. It is the answer of love to His love. It is like the desire of the bride, "Let my beloved come into his garden." (Song of Sol. 4. 16.) It is an answer and an appeal His own love has raised by His wish to be called to mind, an appeal He loves to answer and say, "I am come into my garden," in anticipation of which He

said, "I will not leave you orphans, I am coming to you." (John 14. 18.) The end is thus gained of the institution of the breaking of bread; He can lead the praises of His brethren, and bring them consciously to enjoy the relationship established in Himself, with His Father, and their Father, His God and their God.

L. O. L.

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### ME AND THEE.

(MATT. 17. 24-27.)

**T**HIS incident in Matthew's gospel is of great interest to us, as we are taught the intimate relation in which it places each believer with the Lord Jesus.

The circumstances are the demands made by the powers that be in respect of the tribute money. Those who received the money came to Peter with the question, "Doth not your master pay tribute?" to which he replies, "Yes." "And when he came into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, What dost thou think, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive custom or tribute? from their own sons or from strangers? Peter says to him, From strangers. Jesus said to him, Then are the sons free."

The condition of things that prevailed shewed that the new legislation of Matthew 5-7, given from the mountain, was not yet operating at Capernaum, and that what was in the mind of the rulers was to deliver up and to kill the Son of man, who in wisdom gave the legislation, and in the power of which it will control a situation in which the sons will be free. This will be public and in display in glory. Verse 27



shews us the thought of the divine mind and how blessed it is to be let into the great thoughts of heaven, and that by One who knows so well what is proper to it. Creation, too, for He commands the sea, is laid under tribute, but He does so to make known something greater than creation ; and so those two words, Me and thee, open up to us in the most touching and blessed way that which lay next His heart, His own and His thought of association with Himself as sons free in the house. We are not told just here the result in Peter, though it would appear later on in the Acts when in company with John he could say to the lame man, "Look on us," in effect saying, As two free sons in the administration of the powers of the kingdom (though without silver and gold), "such as I *have*." Thus he sets another free in the liberty of a son, and secures in that one the thought of ME and thee.

Here we may move forward to what John would portray before us as he unfolds the movements of Jesus and the words of Jesus focussed for us in the twentieth chapter of his gospel in the revelation of the relationship and association He came to declare, saying to us in a way that only love could, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." At what a spiritual elevation do we arrive here. ME and thee in all its fullest and highest thought now laid open for our hearts' joy and delight. And so as we are in the company of Peter and John they would ever speak to us of ME and thee as they knew it. So we would be marked by the company we keep, and be kept in superiority to the claims here, able by divine power to meet them (for He is not unmindful of the claims), but free to enter into

increasingly all that ME and thee would convey to our renewed minds.

A. E. C.

### A DISAPPOINTMENT AND ITS SEQUEL.

THE first chapter of the First Book of Samuel gives us the story of a bitter disappointment and its issues in blessing.

We all have our disappointments in life, but it may be questioned whether they always yield to us the potential good that is hidden in them. We think ourselves "unlucky" (a questionable word this, for any one with a living belief in God), and we do not notice that God is speaking to us. "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." (Job 33. 14.) Too often we allow the experiences of life, the sorrows and the joys, to pass over us without leaving any impress on our knowledge of God. It was said of a dynasty of French kings which, after numerous experiences of failure, was given yet another chance of rule, that they had "learnt nothing and forgotten nothing." Do the many voices of God in our lives similarly leave us where they found us, obtuse, unresponsive, unmoved?

Hannah suffered a disappointment which to a Jewish woman was very poignant; she had no child. Her misfortune was aggravated by the greater good fortune and the provocation of Peninnah. Hannah may have felt, as we sometimes feel, that her outlook was very gloomy; that her sufferings were to no purpose, that she was merely the subject of a hard fate, without even the consolation that she was suffering in a noble cause or that any one was going to

be the better for it. "Therefore she wept, and did not eat."

Though our trials may be of a different sort, we can all go thus far with Hannah; we can (and often do) weep over them! It is a touch of nature that makes the whole world kin. But do we take the second step with her? "She was in bitterness of soul, *and prayed unto the Lord.*" Do we not, if truth be told, often stop at the first stage, the trial and the bitterness of soul? Is it not the last thing we think of to go and "pray unto the Lord"? Yet if the testimony of generations of believers is to be trusted (and many of us can add our own), the prayer of faith will never be found vain.

If we take this second step, and speak freely to God, it will help us also to have our ears open to Him, and we shall be encouraged to take that wider view of our individual experiences which is necessary if we are to see them in anything like a true perspective. In fact, we must bring them into relation with the mind of God for us, and we must allow Him to make them subordinate to His interest. For we shall find our blessing only as we put His interest in its right and central place.

This is what Hannah did; her mind moved toward the interest and service of God; the centre of gravity of her thought was shifted from herself to the temple of God. "She vowed a vow" (she shewed spiritual energy and decision), "and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thine handmaid, and . . . wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, *then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life*, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (Cf. Numbers 6.) This was a great step;

her thoughts were liberated, her horizon was extended, to take in a wider conception than that of her own need and her own enjoyment; she began to realise that *God* had need of a "man child" for His work. To have the mind thus enlarged, no longer centred upon ourselves, is in itself surely a great blessing. And our requests take then a different shape; what Hannah asked for from this point forward was in effect (and especially as it applies in type to us) a different thing; no longer a gift to keep for herself at home, but a gift to be given wholly to the service of God. "As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

She was none the less deeply in earnest; "she continued praying to the Lord"; "her voice was not heard," "only her lips moved," but "she spake in her heart." Incidentally we may notice that she was not moved to resentment, much as she had been provoked already, by the misunderstanding and consequent unkindness which Eli shewed; her answer is gentle. (Vers. 14-16.) If our minds have become subject in prayer we shall have that "charity" which is "not easily provoked."

But though thus deeply moved, in praying this new prayer she had found peace; her mind had been brought to the divine centre, and she had the sense that her prayer had been heard. "So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad."

She receives the answer to this new prayer. "The Lord remembered her . . . she bare a son."

It may be asked, could not God have given her a son at the beginning, in the ordinary course of nature, without passing her through all this anxiety and bitterness? Of course He could; Hannah might have been

as Peninnah, with sons and daughters and no record of prayer or exercise before God ; but, even if she had received such gifts in piety, she would have missed the impulse to identify herself with the divine interest and service with which the answer to her prayer was now to be for ever linked. A gift given to us "in ordinary course" is apt to leave us where it found us ; our souls neither subdued nor enlarged by it.

But a gift given to us after such an experience as Hannah's possesses for us quite a distinct character ; we can name it "Samuel," "Because I have asked him of the Lord." (Samuel—Asked of God.) It is a gift for the temple of God ; it is a new link with God ; we give thanks ; we remember the experience. "For this child I prayed."

Our chapter tells us much of prayer ; but with prayer (and its answer) the scriptures constantly link thanksgiving. The gift of God called forth from Hannah and her husband a responsive homage. Bringing the child to the house of the Lord, there to remain, they brought a large offering—three bullocks, an ephah of flour and a bottle of wine ; typical to us, no doubt, of a large measure of appreciation of the gifts of God in Christ.

The divine gain is indeed manifold. In the heart of Hannah a song is awakened such as no natural good fortune would ever have evoked. "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord. . . . There is none holy as the Lord : for there is none beside thee : neither is there any rock like our God. . . . He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory : for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them." (Chap. 2.)

The service of God has gained a young Levite who "ministers before the Lord" in the temple, and who soon becomes the channel of the divine communication, and the starting-point of a new prophetic ministry in Israel.

And as we read the history of Samuel we feel that the prayerful exercises of his mother have shot their effects right through the years of his life, for in all the vicissitudes of his service among an unfaithful people the way in which in every perplexity he prays to God is continually brought to our notice. "Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord" (1 Sam. 7. 5) is typical of many similar passages which the reader will easily find for himself in the chapters that follow. If it be true that "the mother gives character," certainly we have here a striking illustration of it.

May God help us to see to it that our "disappointments" are not wasted on us, but that they yield their due fruit in the advancement of the cause of God, alike in our own souls and in the service of His house.

J. B. C—D.

### A WORD TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

WHAT suggested this paper is a reference to the attractions of the cinemas in a recent letter by a brother abroad, who has a very large family; and finds that some of his children want to go. A brother here has been speaking to the writer about the same thing.

Now what I want to submit to the consideration of heads of families is this: the importance of beginning *early enough* to give children an idea of what

the world with all its attractions for the young really is. Do not wait until they are in their teens. Impress upon them again and again that the world as a system is no real friend of children, and that the less they know about it and what it has to offer the better for them.

If children, especially the older and more self-willed ones, are simply forbidden to do this or that, or to go here or there, without any clear idea as to the reason, there is real danger of a state of mind being brought about that is unfavourable to the bringing of them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Indeed, in some cases, when the young people are old enough to please themselves they may go right off into the world. I like to quote to our young people J. N. D.'s weighty words: "The world is a vast system, kept up by Satan, to blind the eyes of men, and to keep them away from God."

Would it not be well, as a counter-attraction to the world, of which Satan is the god, if parents took pains to get the children interested in the world of nature? How a walk in the country could be made interesting and profitable by explaining and commenting on the various things that illustrate the wisdom and knowledge of God, whether in the vegetable, the animal, or the mineral kingdoms! It is an easy step from the contemplation of God in *creation* to the contemplation of His gracious activities in redemption. I mention this suggestively.

One feels the immense importance of giving young people right *impressions* of the greatness of divine Persons and divine things, so that they shall never think of them lightly. The moral tone of the parents is of deep importance. It is happy indeed when Christ

is so deeply appreciated that the children are made familiar with those sweet incidents in the gospels that bring out His preciousness, and that thus their young hearts are drawn to Him very early in the appreciation of the fact that He was rejected here.

One word more, in connection with which one may well quote a bit of wise advice by another: "Without making any great external appearance, seek to tighten the links of charity among yourselves." One happy way of doing this is by fathers and mothers taking a practical interest in the children of others.

Young people are more easily affected for good, and, alas! for ill, than the grown-ups. The writer well remembers the practical interest—not confined to spiritual matters—taken in him as a youth by one a little older than himself, and although more than thirty years have rolled by since then, he still has a special place in his heart for that large-hearted brother.

A. H. L.

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## CRUMBS.

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GATHERED BY S. J. B. C.

"Looking up . . . he sighed." (Mark 7. 34.) Too often we sigh and look *in*; Jesus sighed and looked *up*.

*Query*: "Who will shew us any good?" (Psa. 4. 6.)

*Answer*: "Come and see." (John 1. 39.)

"*We know in part.*" Ere thou refuse to learn, reflect and doubt! A little truth shut in leaves much shut out!

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*Talents.* It was the man with the *one* talent, not the man with the ten, that failed in fulfilling his responsibility.

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*What* thou art before God, that thou art and nothing more !

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*The Bible.* As in Belshazzar's startling vision, the hand may be "the hand of a man," yet the writing is the writing of God.

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*Of two brothers*—the first mentioned in the Old Testament: the one murdered the other. Of two brothers—the first mentioned in the New Testament: the one brought the other to Jesus.

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"*Guard me* when I am off my guard," prayed one. It was a wise prayer. Another prayed: "Give me to guard myself, but, Lord, guard my guarding of myself."

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"*The end of the Lord.*" (James 5. 11.) The heaviest and longest troubles, like Job's, have an end. The beginning may be Satan's work, but the end is the Lord's; which shews that the Lord was at the beginning with His purpose in view.

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*Conscience* is "the candle of the Lord." (Prov. 20. 27.) Conscience is God's searcher and man's overseer: as the Latin epigram expresses it—*index, judex, vindex.*

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*Psalm 101. 2.* The householder's psalm. A mirror

for those who walk within their house "with a perfect heart."

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*Gold* in the furnace. (1 Peter 1. 7.) A beautiful image! But in the furnace gold is never *increased* by the furnace. But faith "tried with fire" "*groweth exceedingly.*" (1 Peter 1. ; 2 Thess. 1.)

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*Pride and Vanity.* Pride makes us esteem ourselves ; vanity makes us desire the esteem of others. It is possible to be too proud to be vain.

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### CHRISTIAN QUALITIES.

**CONFIDENCE.** This, as the word assures us, is the secret of our strength. The arm of flesh will fail us, but confidence in the living God is our buckler and shield. The course of daily events show that no confidence can be placed in man. This being so, how necessary that we should hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end, that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming, and in the meanwhile our confidence may be such, that asking anything according to His will we may know that He heareth us. How comforting is the assurance of the beloved disciple, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then we *have* confidence toward God."

**ENDURANCE.** What an important quality this is in the light of our Lord's own words : "He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved." It is the journey and all that we have to encounter that tests us. Abraham after he had pa-

tiently endured obtained the promise. Whilst there are all around those who will not endure sound doctrine, our exercise should be that we should endure hardness as a good soldier, enduring afflictions, chastening, trial, temptation, considering Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we be weary and faint in our minds.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS.** The kingdoms of this world are ruled by expediency; the kingdom of the Son of man will be founded on righteousness. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and there is a time coming when a King shall reign in righteousness and princes rule in equity. Until that wonderful era dawns it is the privilege of every Christian to be shewing forth righteousness in the knowledge that the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous. May we then be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God, and remember the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace, and thus realise that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

**AFFECTION.** There is no home in the true sense of the word apart from affection, one of the marks of the last days being the absence of natural affection. With our minds centred on things above where Christ is we shall find that our affections are adjusted in every relationship in which we may be set down here. There is a sphere where divine affections can be known and enjoyed, and it is ours to know this reciprocity of love; as our Lord put it in John 14, "Because I live, ye shall live also. At that

day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." May the Holy Spirit lead us into the consciousness of this circle of living affections so that we may be able to come out here in the light and character of it.

J. R. T.

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### THE FATHER.

THE Father ! What in Thy blest name is stored !  
 What purposes divine ere time began !  
 Now by Thy Spirit is the vast explored,  
 Thy glory shining in the Son as Man !

Co-equal in the Godhead, one with Thee ;  
 All Thine was His, and His was Thine ;  
 Eternity unto eternity,  
 The Triune counsels everlasting shine !

Thy love and glory now are manifest,  
 Since into manhood lowly came the Son :  
 The Father's name and grace He has expressed,  
 The Father's work and pleasure He has done.

Yes, He alone the Father's love could tell ;  
 The Father's grace could livingly disclose ;  
 The Father's glory in Himself unveil ;  
 The Father's joy in all its deep repose.

The corn of wheat, the living, holy grain,  
 Unscathed by death could rise in joy for Thee,  
 That even for Thy heart might now remain,  
 The pleasure of Thy heart—Thy family.

In Him Thy name of Father showed Thy will ;  
 His name of Son did thus express Thy thought ;  
 And now what joy Thy gracious heart doth fill,  
 Like Him, Thy many sons to Thee are brought !

Joy e'er be Thine, blest Father, worship, praise ;  
 Thy sons, led by the Son, Thy name adore ;  
 Since He alone sustained Thy glorious ways,  
 To fill Thy house with sons for evermore !

L. O. L.

## THE TIME IS SHORT !

(ROM. 13. 7-14 ; 1 COR. 7. 29-31 ; 1 PETER 4. 1-8.)

I WANT to call my reader's attention, the Lord helping me, to the *shortness of time*. We need to be reminded of it, for "the end of all things is at hand." Do we take it to heart that it is high time we awoke out of sleep, "for the time is at hand" ? We shall never again have this privilege of delighting the heart of God whilst in flesh and blood. This condition will soon terminate for all eternity.

In this condition what depths we got into ; what sinners we were ! We have had to turn to God for salvation, and we have found it in Christ, and have received His Spirit. For what purpose ? To spend the rest of our time here for the will of God.

It is a great delight to God to see this change in human beings. Satan would never have caused men to crucify the Lord of glory had he known God was to bring about such a change of life whilst in the very condition of flesh and blood in which we sinned. We gave Him no place. But for the grace of God we should have sought our own will from first to last. God has taken us up in Christ through His infinite grace. Through His death atonement has been made, and He has been able to do wonderful things, and He has so wrought in human beings as to be able to trust them with the gift of His Spirit, to the end that they might live here a little longer in an entirely different way. So that instead of God finding continually nothing but what is repulsive to Him, He should now find tens of thousands of saints delighting in Himself—refusing the evil they once loved and living

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for the pleasure of God. I can understand God granting length of days to such.

How many old saints there are. God delights to prolong their days. Only last year one dear, faithful sister was called home aged nearly a hundred and five and another a hundred and seven. One can understand the delight it must have been to God to see these dear old saints supporting the interests of Christ, and then passing off the scene at a ripe old age.

You will never delight the heart of God again in the same condition in which you are now. You are pleasing Him now in the very body of flesh and blood in which you defiled yourself and sinned against Him. In that same body you have now the privilege of giving the greatest delight to God and manifesting that you are the very opposite to what you once were. We are left here for many other reasons no doubt. We have many lessons to learn whilst still in the condition of flesh and blood, first about ourselves and then about *Him*.

But do you not think we have a very great privilege? God's desire is that we might be here for His pleasure, and He has given us His holy Spirit to enable us to walk accordingly. One and another are being taken home, the places of the aged brethren are vacant, and soon our turn may come! Have you a watch? Every Christian should have one in a spiritual sense—some means of telling the time; if I have not there is something faulty. It is most important that each one of us should know the time! "It is high time to awake out of sleep," "for the time is at hand."

IT IS RIGHT UPON US.

We are about to be taken out of this scene of temptation and sin and ushered into eternity with Christ.

Do you not think it is sorrowful to find the time gone, and that we have given so little pleasure to the heart of Christ ? How far have we allowed old ways and former habits to govern us ? What is it that really occupies our thoughts night and day ? It is sad if, having made a good start, there is a poor finish. How many have made a good start in a race and ended lamentably. *It is the finish that tests.*

The Lord give us grace ! He is ever active towards us in grace, and we know it well. We should be constantly contemplating the glory of the Lord. He is keen on supporting us, and He acts for us providentially—putting temptations out of the way ; He is constantly warning us against going into temptation, and in all kinds of ways serving us. He desires that God should be able to look down with delight upon men in every country and find them doing His will every day and all the day. How good if He finds us taking no holidays, claiming no time for our own ways and our own will and pleasure. For all this there is any amount of grace to be found in the Lord.

Do you find, dear young people, that there is so much against you ? But God is for you. Are you learning to pray ? Surely you are, and He knows it. What a delight that is to God. He delights to find even boys and girls who learn to pray, who are watchful, who read the scriptures and are subject at home. He will certainly bless such.

It is a beautiful thought, a divinely given thought, that God wants us NOW to please Him. He wants to see the change NOW. He wants to find delight in this town and that town, in this home and that home. He would be honoured by all His own, and in all relationships of life. such as children and parents,

husband and wife, brother and sister, and our relations with our neighbours around us.

Truly the time is short. *I* have not much time, and, dear young friends, *you* have not. It does not seem very long since I was a boy. The time has gone too quickly. If I had listened more to God it would not have gone so quickly. I have allowed many things I ought not to have allowed, and have not taken full advantage of the time, and alas! the time has gone.

Let us take the question to heart, Can God look upon our lives with pleasure? Oh! for that touch of Christ which makes us beautiful in our daily walk. "Knowing the time" we shall surely wish to have everything right and properly adjusted. If I have tried my brethren, or wronged them, oh, for grace to judge it and to walk happily with them. All the grace you and I need is found in the living Head.

So may we watch the time and use it well, for  
"THE TIME IS SHORT!"

H. D' A. C.

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### "THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH," and How to Spend Them.

(9) FORSAKING AND FOLLOWING.

**T**HESSE two important principles, which are so necessary for every believer, may be described as the door *out* of all that is evil and the door *into* all that is pure and holy.

The first movement of an awakened conscience towards God is the acknowledgment of its sins and sinful state, but with the repentance, the necessity of

FORSAKING OUR SINS

must be recognised. How obnoxious to God must the



formal confession of sins be when there is a constant return to them. The word says, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and *forsaketh* them shall have mercy.” If there is true repentance, we shall learn to judge our sins, as having caused the sufferings and death of Jesus, and to hate them as God hates them. In these last days there are many turning away from God in apostasy after having the mental knowledge concerning Jesus, but no real living link of faith with Him. Of these the scripture says, “If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world . . . they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.”

With a true believer there will be the definite forsaking of the sins which before conversion had been pursued; for we can never forget that because of them Jesus was forsaken of God when He took the sinner’s place and was made sin at Calvary.

The prophet said, “Let the wicked *forsake his way*, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him.”

In the days of our youth this present evil world has peculiar attractiveness and interest in many forms to allure the heart from Christ and from the pure joy of God’s world. But the voice of wisdom is heard (Prov. 9) crying:

“ FORSAKE FOLLIES AND LIVE.”

The Lord Jesus Himself is Wisdom to us, and He speaks to our hearts to allure us from the folly of seeking pleasure and satisfaction from a world where everything is corrupt. The only safe course is to turn

our back definitely upon follies and to “enter not into the path of the wicked . . . avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.”

Moses was a young man when “by faith he FORSOOK Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.” Lot, on the contrary, did not forsake follies. He “pitched his tent toward Sodom,” with disastrous results.

The Lord Jesus, in His desire to set us free from this influence, “gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.”

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But if we forsake the path of evil, it is necessary that we should have a definite path in which to walk. Now the Lord Jesus has marked out such a path for those who love Him; for pure joy, holy interests and spiritual prosperity are only found by

#### FOLLOWING JESUS.

What is it to follow Him? It is to take our character from Him; to walk as He walked; to speak as He spoke; to act as He acted. We must ever acknowledge how infinitely lovely and perfect He was in word and deed. But though our measure may be small, it is open to every believer to follow Him, and be marked by His character.

“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should

#### FOLLOW HIS STEPS :

who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth : who, when he was reviled, reviled not again.”

Moreover, God has given us “the Spirit of Christ,” that by His power we may be followers of Christ.

It is recorded of two men who came under the influence of Jesus that they

FORSOOK ALL AND FOLLOWED HIM.

Another, named Levi, to whom Jesus said, “Follow ME!” “left all, rose up, and *followed him.*” The blind beggar, who received his sight as Jesus passed by him on His way to Calvary, “FOLLOWED JESUS in the way.” And so through the centuries millions have been attracted to Him.

This path involves reproach and rejection. When one came to Jesus saying, “Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest” (doubtless not understanding what was involved), Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” On the other hand, it is a path of great joy. No happier life can be found than that which is lived under the leading of the Lord Jesus, the heart engaged with Him, the hands used in His service, the feet hastening to bring the gospel to needy souls for His sake.

To follow “afar off” can only lead to failure, as Peter proved to his sorrow, but it was also to him that the Lord graciously gave the parting message,

“ FOLLOW THOU ME ” !

He will lead us through this corrupt world of iniquity in holy separation to Himself. He will lead us into heavenly joys which can be entered upon in company with those who “pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart.”

He does not call us into a path of irksome, legal bondage, but into a path of true liberty, of loving fellowship, and happy service.

May each of us be prepared to *forsake* all that would grieve the Lord Jesus, and *follow* Him with devoted affection, until He comes.

F. S. M.

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## SPIRITUAL EDUCATION.

(ACTS 18. 24-28 ; 19. 1-7.)

**W**HAT we read in Acts 18 accounts for the spiritual condition in which Paul found those twelve men at Ephesus, a condition which is very common, too, in these days amongst people. They have been baptised, they have believed something, but they have not believed that which would give them the Spirit, that which the Spirit of God can seal. Now the Spirit of God does not seal doubts and fears and misgivings ; He cannot put His seal upon that sort of thing and upon those who are in such a condition. I expect we have all passed through that condition some time or another. Oh, you say, there is a way through. Yes, there is a way through ; there is a royal road through, but you cannot get through by by-ways. And there are plenty of by-ways offered to people to-day ; quick ways of getting in, and roundabout ways of getting in ; any way but the right way. Satan does not mind what road you travel on if only you are not on the right road.

Now these men had got as far as they could with the teacher they had had, Apollos, before Priscilla and Aquila had to do with him and instructed him in the way of the Lord more perfectly. A very happy service that ; if you find a person that is not instructed in the way of the Lord as well as you are, if you are able to, it is very happy to help them as far as you

have gone yourself, without any pride as to what you have attained to. That is how it was with these men, they had gone as far as their teacher had gone.

Now the Lord takes care that they should go farther, and He does the same with us. There is not the smallest bit of work in the soul of any one of us that God does not mark, and He fosters it, He nourishes it, and cares for it until that soul arrives at the knowledge of Himself, and the knowledge of Christ as a living Man who has made God known. That is what He came for. Oh, you say, I thought He came to die. Yes, He did come to earth to die; we should never get anywhere else if He had not, except to a place that we all, even infidels, wish to avoid. But that was not all He came to do. He came to make God known in His life and in His death and in His resurrection—TO MAKE GOD KNOWN. Now these men only knew John's baptism, and Paul explained it to them—a wonderful man to explain it to them. He explained christian baptism in a way that very few Christians understand it today. He was not holding a baptism class when he wrote the sixth chapter of Romans; he is not speaking to men who were going to be baptised with the baptism of John, but to men who had been baptised with what we get the account of in Acts 19.

Now these people had not been baptised to Christ by christian baptism, but had been baptised to wait for Him: "That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." The order of those words is reversed, you notice, "that they should believe on . . . Christ Jesus." I do not know that John the Baptist ever taught that, but that is what Paul puts upon it; that they should believe on Christ Jesus. Now you say you have be-

lieved on the Saviour. I say, Thank God for that, I am very glad to hear it ; but have you believed on Christ Jesus ? Perhaps you have only believed on Jesus Christ. You want to go a step further, because He has gone very much more than a step further. He has gone from off this earth, and from off the cross, and out of the grave into the glory of God ; and you will not find Him anywhere else.

When we were children we used to sing a hymn about "the sweet story of old, when Jesus was here amongst men" ; how He took little children in His arms, and the verse ends, "I should like to have been with Him then." But you are in a much better place now ; He had not risen then and He had not gone to glory. We are in a much better place than being with Christ on earth. We may every one of us be as much with Christ in heaven as we like. I mean, not when we die and go there, but now. Perhaps you are only fifteen or twenty years old. Well, if the Lord does not come you may have a good many years in front of you, and you may live as much with Christ in spirit as you wish. Did He ever refuse any one His company ? Did He ever refuse to let any one stay in His presence ? Never. He wants you and He wants me.

What do you do with your spare time ? You have no doubt got to work, perhaps in an office, or in a workshop, or in the house, and work pretty hard, with your mind fully taken up with that. What do you do with your spare time ? Do you spend it with Him ? You know that question searches my conscience. There is a great deal of spare time when you cannot sit down and read. What can you do ? Well, your heart can turn to Christ. Your heart can

turn upwards. Moses in Exodus 33 and 34 had a long talk with the Lord, and what was the result? The skin of his face shone. Everybody else could see it, but he did not know it, nor was he occupied with his face shining, but with what had made his face shine—his converse with Jehovah. You know it would do all of us a great deal of good if we had more intercourse with Christ in glory; it would make our faces shine. What has the Spirit come here for? To take of His things and to shew them to us; to glorify Him. What does that mean? To make Him known. You have only got to know Him to know what a glorious Person He is.

“When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.” What is His name? Christ Jesus. “They were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.” That had been the gospel of their salvation. Paul knew all about it; he wrote to them afterwards, together with others in the same place, and we have it here in those few words. John the Baptist taught them to believe on Him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. I was a believer a number of years before I believed on Christ Jesus. What attracted me was that there was a brother came to the place where I lived and he seemed in every gospel preaching, in every address to the saints, always to say one thing, “There is a Man, a real living Man, in the glory of God.” You know that quite surprised me; I was surprised into believing on Him, into knowing Him, into making His acquaintance and getting to know Him; and it made all the difference. I was greatly troubled about sin in me and about sin around me, and what a power it and the flesh had, and I was trying and trying to get delivered from it.

It is not only deliverance people need, but they need One to deliver them. The Person to deliver you is Christ, a real living Man; never less than God, but a real living Man in glory. If you know Him you must know Him where He is. You cannot know a person where he is not; you cannot know a person where he has been. You may read about him where he has been, but you can only know a person where that person *is*. And my dear young fellow-believer, if you have never made His acquaintance yet, make it now. Conversion! Why to me it was better than conversion, and I can tell you I was happy enough when I was converted, as happy as the day is long, but I had not a bit of power to resist sin and temptations.

Well, when they heard this they were baptised to the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, they received the Holy Ghost. Why do you think he laid his hands upon them? He identified himself with the work of God in those people. He had given them the right One to believe on, and they had believed on Him, and they were baptised as a result of that. It is not an independent sort of work that God is carrying on in this world; He is forming all believers into one body. "By one Spirit are we all baptised into one body." Whatever you were before, naturally or socially, you are brought out of that and you are put into the body of Christ. Did you know it? No. Did I know it the moment I was put in? No.

In that remarkable verse in 1 Kings 6. 7, as to the stones of Solomon's temple, we read there was no noise about their being slipped into their place, because the work was all done before. So it is with you,



and so it was with me ; when through God's infinite grace I was put into the body of Christ, there was no noise about it at all. The body commenced to be formed at Pentecost, and consists at any present time of all Spirit-indwelt believers on the face of the earth. It is then very important to have the Spirit that you might belong to the body of Christ.

A man does not hate his own flesh. Any man is a lunatic who hates his own flesh. He nourishes it, and cherishes it, as Christ the church (or assembly). Beautiful little word, that word "cherish." It only occurs twice in the New Testament. It is such a specially sweet and nice word that God only makes use of it twice. It is taken from the action of a hen. You remember what the Lord said of Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." That is what the word is taken from. The hen calls in her chickens ; she warms them with her own body ; she defends them with her wings from anything that would hurt them ; and that is what Christ does to the assembly, to His body, the assembly.

Paul had caught the spirit of his Master. How tenderly he cared for those young converts at Thessalonica ; "as a nursing mother cherisheth her children," that is how he acted with them. I am afraid we often allow little chickens to stop out in the cold a good deal. When we once get them in we seem to think we need not trouble any more about them ; they are all inside. What are you inside for ? What am I inside for ? To care for and to help the young ones. If we have the spirit of the Master to care for and cherish one another, that is the spirit of Christ, it is a very blessed service. A sister can serve Him in that way beauti-

fully, in many instances far better than a brother. You may say, I am too young. Well, is not there some one younger than yourself, or about the same age? Try a little of the cherishing that Paul speaks of and you will find that you will get on yourself.

W. G. B.

### “AND PRAYERS.”

THE prayers of the assembly were governed in their outgoings by all the precious truth and fellowship and principles that came in with the apostles when empowered by the Holy Ghost to give utterance to what had been wrought in them. Prayers of this kind would have the interests of God and of Christ prominently in view. Thus, when the testimony was assailed, the assembly as one lifted up their voice, with the result that the place shook where they were assembled. (Acts 4. 31.)

Such prayers are distinct from individual need, but like those prayers prayed by the Lord Himself (Luke), and as indicated by Him for His disciples in the Gospel of John, would be for the glory of God, and the furtherance of divine work. (John 14. 13; 16. 26, 27, etc.) What unity of thought with heaven would such prayers evidence! a company on earth with the same desires as God and Christ, desires actuated by the Holy Ghost Himself in the securing of the divine will and pleasure. Such were, and are, the prayers connected with the breaking of bread.

The Lord Himself links up the prayer meeting with the presence of the Spirit of God here in the Spirit's day. (John 16. 23-26—“*ye shall ask.*”) The Apostle Paul, in the epistle where the fellowship and breaking

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of bread are mentioned, says, "I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray also with the understanding" (1 Cor. 14. 15); and in the epistle that shews the greatness of divine purpose, he bows his knee in prayer for that which he cannot impart himself. (Eph. 3. 14.) And, with all reverence, let us hear the Son address the Father (John 17) in view of all the Father's work accomplished, and the Father glorified on earth, and listen to the wondrous desires of His heart who had become flesh that every divine thought of the divine mind might be embodied, revealed, and perpetuated.

Thus all that the apostles taught, all they had fellowship in, and the testimony connected with the breaking of bread, was rightly promulgated and sustained in a spirit of prayer, begun by the Lord Himself and continued in His own by the power of the Holy Ghost. L. O. L.

**THE TABLE AND THE SHEWBREAD.**

JOTTINGS FROM A READING WITH S. J. B. C., KNOXVILLE,  
TENNESSEE, U.S.A.

(EXO. 25; LEV. 24.)

**T**HE table and the shewbread were inseparable, but distinct. In Exodus we have in detail the table; in Leviticus, the shewbread. The table is Christ personally, who supports for the eye of God that which is for the pleasure of God. The shewbread is what is on it. It is Christ characteristically in the saints before God in the light of His purpose (the candlestick). Whatever might have been the disruptions outside, the twelve loaves, representing the unity of the nation, remained intact inside. The loaves formed the *ambrosia*—"the bread of God." The gold

in "the pure table" hid the wood. All that is seen in Christ as man is the outshining of what God is.

The border was a double border. Fellowship must be doubly guarded. The Corinthians did not maintain the double border, hence their admittance of wrong *doctrine* and wrong *practice*. The "margin of a hand-breadth" might denote to us our responsibility in protecting the fellowship. The hand is, perhaps, the most responsible figure that could be used. The "four corners" might suggest the universality of divine fellowship. Responsibility may be local (a *hand-breadth*—only the breadth of a hand), but fellowship cannot be limited to any locality. The table of fellowship had four feet, which means for us: "fellowship with the Father," "fellowship with the Son," "fellowship of the Spirit," "fellowship one with another." The "rings" and the "staves" would remind us that wherever our pilgrim journeyings take us we must be true to the fellowship which as priests we enjoy in the sanctuary.

"The cups" and "the *goblets*" (the larger cups) and "the *bowls*," which would be larger still, and "the *dishes*," largest of all, seem to give the thought of *capacity*. Some of us express more of Christ, and have a larger apprehension than others, of what the saints are to God. But, whatever our measure, let us be "vessels unto honour," fit for the Master's use. The vessels on the table were made of pure gold. Only what has been divinely formed in us can be used by "the minister of the sanctuary," who divinely maintains what is for God there. (Heb. 8.)

"The fine wheaten flour" would be "the life of Jesus." But in order that it may be developed in us, there must be what answers to "the taking of the

loaves." Only the true Aaron can manipulate them, and so He passes us through exercises and testings. "Always bearing about in the body the dying [the *necrosis*] of Jesus." "Always"! What recollectiveness of spirit and continuity of character that means. But it must be if "the life also of Jesus [that beautiful life He would fain live over again in us] is to be manifested in our body." (2 Cor. 4. 10, 11.) What painful experiences in self-judgment we go through that the character of Christ may be formed in us. The "two rows" suggest giving and getting, or that reciprocity of heart and mind among the people of God so pleasing to Him.

In "the pure frankincense" we have the fragrance of the moral excellences of Jesus pervading the sanctuary, as resting upon the saints. The loaves were a "bread of remembrance . . . unto Jehovah." In the supper *we* are reminded of what Christ is to us. In the twelve loaves—reverently speaking—*God* is reminded of what Christ in us is to Him! Every week Aaron arranged, or set in order, fresh loaves before Jehovah. Week by week we ought to shew to God that we have a *fresh* impress of Christ. It shews a poverty-stricken and stale priestly state to be telling the same thing constantly in the same words when we worship. The "*order*" will be all right if we leave the arrangements in the hands of Him who is "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle." The true tabernacle system needs no human arrangements, such as a ritual, a rubric, a liturgy, or a written or an *unwritten* church service.

"And it shall be Aaron's and his sons; and they shall eat it in a holy place." (New Trans.) The manna is eaten by the "common people"; is eaten by *all*

and in *any* place ; but the shewbread can only be eaten “in a clean place,” and eaten when we are in priestly garments, which means in a priestly condition. The manna supports us in our everyday *walk*, but the shewbread forms and fosters what is *priestly* in us—priestly activities, priestly taste and appetite, priestly affections and priestly intelligence and intimacy.

We cannot discharge our Levitical service rightly unless as priests we feed upon the shewbread. What is Levitical in us must be controlled by what is priestly. If I see a little bit of Christ in my brother, I enjoy that. I feed upon what is God’s pleasure, and that provokes in me what is Levitical—“love and good works.” There is something deep and sublime in what answers to the type which we cannot explain, but which we can enjoy.

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### “DOST THOU BELIEVE ON THE SON OF GOD?”

**T**HIS question raises an inquiry as to a very important aspect of the gospel that we do well to consider more. In Romans 1. 3 the gospel is spoken of as “God’s glad tidings . . . concerning his Son ” ; and again in Galatians 1. 16 the Apostle Paul says, “God . . . was pleased to reveal his Son in me, that I may announce *him* as glad tidings.” This is not the aspect of the gospel as meeting our need as a sinner, but God securing His own pleasure in men. He has found one blessed Person, His own beloved Son in manhood, in whom is all His delight, and now He wants you and me to find our delight and pleasure in Him too. His word is, “Hear him.”

There appear to be three things that mark every

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one naturally as the result of sin : (1) A bad conscience, (2) a rebellious will, (3) a dissatisfied heart. All are met by the gospel as presenting the Person of Christ as set forth in Romans 1. 3, 4. For it says there, “concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” As Jesus Christ He is the One who has been here for the will of God, and has met the claims of God. Believing this gives us freedom from an evil conscience ; we are free from all charge of sin. As “our Lord ” He subdues our wills, and as “His Son” He satisfies our hearts. It is the latter presentation that this paper is concerned about. We are often much more influenced by the need of men in the way of relief, both in receiving and preaching the gospel, than the way God would secure their hearts, filled and satisfied with His own Son. It is faith in the Son of God that lifts us entirely out of this world in mind and heart. As it says in 1 John 5. 5, “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? ”

Why is it that so many Christians are still living in the course of this world, some making no secret of it whatever ? To look at them there is absolutely no difference in their conduct, pursuits and dress ; and others, who whilst taking a *position* in association with other Christians in *outward* separation, are not themselves separate in mind and heart, and hence bring weakness, and even a deadening influence, amongst the people of God. It is like the one in 2 Kings 4. 39 who shred into the pottage wild gourds among the sons of the prophets, and might have caused the death of some if it had not been discovered. When God intervened for the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, Pharaoh made four con-

cessions to keep the people under his control. But no, they must leave his land *entirely*. Have you left the world, dear reader ?

But what is going to deliver the hearts of believers, if so many are still engrossed by the world's allurements ? I believe it is the glory of the Son of God, as presented in the gospel at the outset. Paul shews the way it affected him in Galatians 2. 20 : "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." He was held by the glory of that Person who spoke to him on the road to Damascus. He preached Him as the Son of God soon afterwards. We are often so self-centred that we are only concerned about getting relief from the consequences of our sins, and this aspect of the gospel is all we have considered. But one would earnestly seek to draw attention to the preaching of the Son of God, for if a divine Person in manhood is engaging our hearts, we shall be delivered from self and all that any other man can present as well. For after all, the world-system is only the product of the poor puny mind of man, seeking satisfaction away from God.

So again one would raise the question asked by the Lord Himself in John 9. 35, which is intensely personal in the New Translation : "Thou, dost *thou* believe on the Son of God ?" May you be able to answer, "Lord, I believe," and *you* will surely do Him homage.

W. J. W.



## THE BIBLE.—ISAIAH.

WITH the Book of Isaiah we enter upon a most interesting and important section of scripture, namely, the *prophets*. Prophets come before us in periods of decline, failure and departure. They appeal to the conscience of God's people; and, while they exhibit the patience of God, they also predict His judgment upon what has failed, and bring before the heart Christ and His day as the glorious and only hope for faith. Christ is the Centre for all prophecy.

There are two classes of prophets: (1) those who prophesied while Israel was owned as the people of Jehovah, that is, before the captivity, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah; and (2) those who prophesied after Jerusalem had been destroyed and Israel was called "Lo-ammi" (see Hosea 1. 9), such as Daniel. Ezekiel has a unique place, bringing before us the reluctant departure of Jehovah's glory and the removal of His throne from Jerusalem, telling us also of their return. Amongst the latter class are those who wrote in relation to the return of the remnant of the Jews after the captivity.

Prophetic scriptures bring before us two enemies of God's people: (1) the *Assyrian*, whose hostility shewed itself, and whose power oppressed Israel while they were owned of God as His people; and (2) *Babylon*, whose power destroyed Jerusalem and took God's people captive. Another enemy (though a professed friend) acts in conjunction with this latter

power, that is, in its last phase, and is called "the king" (Dan. 11. 36), or "false prophet" (Rev. 19. 20), the second "Beast" of Revelation 13. He is an internal foe—the most awful of all.

*Isaiah* brings the whole scope of prophecy before us with especial reference to the period during which Israel is owned as God's people, and hence the Assyrian is the enemy. The main divisions of the book are as follows: Chapters 1–12; 13–27; 28–35; 36–39; 40–48; 49–57; 58–66. Chapters 1–12 may be further divided; chapters 1–4 giving a kind of preface, and pronouncing the judgment of God on the general state of the people, foretelling blessing in connection with Christ—the Branch (chap. 4. 2), who is the only hope of those "escaped of Israel." Chapter 5 shews the judgment of God as based upon Israel's failure to answer to what God had done for them. In chapter 6 they are judged in the light of the presence of Jehovah, who is holy. Uzziah's leprous state and death would aptly set forth their moral condition and its end. But in this chapter the effect of the altar is seen, and there is a "tenth" part left—a remnant for God. Chapters 7 and 8 introduce Christ.

It is important to note these two chapters, for while the prophecy should have encouraged faith in the days of Ahaz, it chiefly refers to the "end," as all prophecy does. The king of Israel had allied himself with the king of Syria in enmity against Ahaz, king of Judah. Instead of being encouraged by the word of God and trusting Him, Ahaz pretended to great piety (chap. 7. 12), but all the while was going to Assyria for help. (2 Chron. 28. 16.) He also sacrificed to the gods of Damascus and erected an altar in

the temple like one he had seen there. These circumstances afford an illustration of what will exist in the last days. The mass of God's professed people will be allied together in unholy bonds and idolatry against that which bears His name. In contrast to this God gives a sign and refers to the birth of Christ—Immanuel. (See Matt. 1. 23.) This is faith's resource. God's judgment comes on unbelief (whatever their alliances) by this mighty enemy, the Assyrian. At the cry of faith (ver. 8) Jesus comes ; and although all man's plans are overthrown by this overflowing scourge, in the end Immanuel delivers the godly who have trusted Him. (See also chap. 28. 14–22.) The instruction for that day, as for this, is that we should "not walk in the way of this people." (Chap. 8. 11.) The "law and testimony" must be our guide. Verse 18 is quoted in Hebrews 2. The "disciples" are those who are Christ's while the mass reject them.

Christ being introduced there is no limit to the blessing. Chapter 9. 3 should read, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, hast increased its joy." (The "not" should be omitted.) Chapter 9. 8 links on with chapter 5. 25. (Note expression "His hand is stretched out still"—chaps. 5. 25 ; 9. 12, 17, 21 ; 10. 4.) Chapter 10 shews that the "Assyrian," the rod of God's anger, will eventually come under judgment (chap. 10. 24) and the "remnant" be saved. (Chap. 10. 20, 21.) The names of the prophet's two children are full of interest. Chapters 11 and 12 describe the full blessing at the end.

This first section (chaps. 1–12) thus brings before us : (1) The judgment of the people first on the ground of their moral state, then through lack of answer to what God had done, and lastly in the light of His

glory. (Chaps. 1-6.) (2) The introduction of Christ—Immanuel—and a remnant in contrast to the unholy alliances of unbelief. (Chap. 7.) (3) God's execution of judgment upon all such evil and all human confederacies. (Chap. 8.) And lastly (4) the blessing brought in by the judgment of all enemies and the presence of Jesus here—the Rod out of the stem of Jesse and the Branch out of his roots. (Chaps. 10-12.)

M. W. B.

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**“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,”**  
**and How to Spend Them.**

(10) PUBLISHING.

**T**O *publish* God's glad tidings, which is “to make known to mankind what before was secret and unknown,” is surely a worthy occupation for every one who loves God and would promote His interests. The Psalmist wrote, “The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that *published it.*” It is the secret desire of every heart which has been moved by divine love to be one of that company.

There are vast fields of opportunity open before those who are ready to say, “Here am I; send me.” In every town and village there are thirsty, longing souls, anxious to be right with God, some of whom may have been waiting for years to hear the simple gospel of pardon and peace through the blood of Jesus.

Young men are needed who, with full hearts, and equipped by the Lord, will tell these souls the old, old story of Jesus and His love and publish in the ears of men, women and children the glad tidings of

the grace of God. There is ever a ready ear with the children, even when the older ones are indifferent, for the unprejudiced mind of the child receives the word with simplicity.

Young women, too, are needed, moved by the love of Christ to publish these glad tidings of peace to the sick and dying, to minister comfort to the bereaved and cheer to the aged.

It is necessary that the word should be published

PLAINLY.

In the account of a great open-air gathering in Ezra's day, it records that "they read in the book of the law of God *distinctly*, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Even in the past dispensation God said, "Write all the words of this law *very plainly*," while the Apostle Paul said, "We use great *plainness* of speech," and he also urged the necessity of using "words easy to be understood."

Nothing can surpass the beautiful and simple language of the Bible. The more we know it and feel its power the better shall we be able to publish it in its unadulterated purity and plainness.

"Make the message clear and plain,  
Christ receiveth sinful men."

We do not need to be advanced in years to publish God's glorious gospel. The little captive maid who waited on Naaman's wife was only a child, but she was in possession of the secret which would meet Naaman's greatest need and recover him of his leprosy. She *published* it plainly and simply out of a sympathetic and forgiving heart, with the result that he was cleansed.

How essential, too, it is that such glad tidings of God should be published

## POWERFULLY,

ever remembering that "power belongeth unto God." We have no might, so if there are results it is because the excellency of the power is of God and not of us. At his first preaching of the gospel to a Gentile company, Peter said, "The word which God sent . . . which was *published* . . . how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with *power*."

All the power of God is behind the gospel ; even as the power of the king was behind the message that went forth in the days of Esther, when the "commandment . . . was *published* unto all people . . . the posts . . . went out, being hastened and pressed by the king's commandments."

The man who was liberated by Jesus from the power of Satan, and was found, sitting and clothed and in his right mind, prayed Him that he might be with Him. "Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith to him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." And he departed and began to PUBLISH how great things Jesus had done for him and all men did marvel. This great privilege of publishing *for* Him is open to all of us while we wait to be *with* Him. Personal testimony in the circle where we are known is a real test, but it has great power and yields much blessing.

The full thought of publishing, however, is that the word should be known

## PUBLICLY,

for the gospel is a divine proclamation to all men,

announced by the words "Be it known," and "God now commandeth *all men everywhere to repent.*" The divine instructions are :

"Go OUT quickly into the streets and lanes,"

"Go OUT into the highways and hedges,"

"Go YE into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,"

"Go HOME to thy friends."

The four leprous men at the gate of Samaria, in the days of Elisha the prophet, felt the necessity of publishing the glad tidings, for when they had found abundance of food they said, "We do not well : this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace." So they published the good news and the city was saved. We are living in a day of good tidings of great joy, and *we* do not well if *we* hold our peace.

But if the publishing is to be effective it must be carried out

#### PRAYERFULLY.

The anointed Preacher—our Lord Jesus—was repeatedly found in prayer. What an example for us ! He was the fulfilment of the prophetic word, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that *publisheth* peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that *publisheth* salvation."

We may well take upon our lips the petition of the Psalmist, "that I may *publish* with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works," and say as Moses did, "I will *publish* the name of the Lord : ascribe ye greatness unto our God."

F. S. M.

## SPIRITUAL EDUCATION.

No. 2.

(GAL. 3. 6-14.)

**A** FURTHER stage of our spiritual education is in the reception of the Spirit. The verses at the head of this paper shew what the end of the gospel is ; and what is that ? “That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” That is not some promise of the Spirit as coming, but the promised Spirit by faith. You cannot get Him by works ; you get Him by faith, by believing the testimony. Those men at Ephesus spoken of in Acts 19, what did they believe ? This testimony of Paul about Christ Jesus. When Peter preached at Cæsarea to Cornelius and his company, the Spirit fell on them as he began to speak. He spoke, they believed, and the Spirit sealed their faith. How beautifully simple ! The way God speaks in scripture sometimes is very remarkable.

For instance, when speaking about Abraham and his faith being accounted to him for righteousness, and saying that they which are of faith—that is, that believed the testimony—the same are the children of Abraham, “and the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Speaking of scripture as though it were a person is striking : “the scripture foreseeing.” That was the One who indited the scripture, the Holy Spirit, “foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Not the Jewish nation only, but all the nations shall be blessed.



Do you know who your father is ? Are you a believer ? Abraham is your father then. Do you know who your mother is ? You say, No, I know God as my Father, but I had not thought of my mother. Jerusalem is your mother. Jerusalem above, that you get at the end of Galatians 4. "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all"; the Gentiles as well as the Jews who believe. Jerusalem which is above is your mother. What does that mean ? It means Christ, for it says at the beginning of the next chapter, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," and it says of Jerusalem's children, that they are free born. So I take it that Jerusalem which is above is Christ. It is a wondrous system of glory that all subsists at this present time in Christ, and that will develop out of Him, so that glory and the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. So I take it that Jerusalem that is above is Christ. There is your father, if you are a believer, and there is your mother ; and if you are not a believer, they are waiting to father and mother you. Abraham shall be your father, that is, you are of faith and born from above, as we sing :

" Called from above and heavenly men by birth,  
Who were but once the citizens of earth."

I have not time to go through it all, but it says in verse 14, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Well now, the apostle had not done with those twelve men, he had only begun with them in the account we get in Acts 19. If you turn to Ephesians 1. 13 you hear something further about them and the others

who were at Ephesus. It says, "In whom ye also trusted"—there had been those who had trusted before those that we read of in Acts 19—"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." I have tried to shew what that was; the "in whom" is in Christ. What Christ? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Ver. 3.) They were blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. So then Christ must be there. It is not Christ on the cross, nor even Christ in resurrection on the earth, which they believed in, but a risen and glorified Christ who had died. "In whom also, having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Have you been sealed? Have you received the Holy Spirit since you have believed? It is good to challenge ourselves about these things. Do not take anything for granted in regard to yourself spiritually. As you take each step get to know it and to have scripture ground for saying it.

I referred to the end of Galatians 4 just now, I will now touch on the beginning of it. "Because ye are sons"—not to make you so, for we are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, we read in Galatians—"Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son." It does not say the Holy Spirit (He is the Holy Spirit), but the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit in that character. Think of it, "the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God," in that way. Oh, how blessed! This world crucified and cast Him out because He said He was the Son of God; but the

Spirit of God's Son in our hearts gives us the sense that we are God's children. And it is no parrot action when we speak to our Father, but is the child's cry ; it is the appeal of affection to the parent. The first One who used it was God's Son Himself in Gethsemane's garden, in that supreme moment of His life ; in that agony when He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground ; when all that He was to pass through came before Him there : the forsaking of God ; the enduring of sin ; the being made sin ; the judgment of God upon Him for our sins ; He said, "Abba, Father." And that very cry—not another, but the very same one—is put into our heart and mind, dear fellow-believer, by the Spirit of God's Son. He appealed there to all His Father's affection for Him, that that cup might pass from Him, "Yet not my will but thine be done," He said. Yes, had not He been ready and willing to carry out all the will of God, where would blessing have been for you ? Where would salvation have been for me, or any of us ? "Not my will, but thine be done." Was it that cry that is put into our hearts ? Yes, that very cry and no other. Well, if you are able to say that, you have scriptural proof that you have the Spirit.

About a year ago, with a friend of mine, I was in Helsingfors, the capital of Finland, and there was a poor woman there whose acquaintance we made, a Russian refugee, who fled out of Russia to escape starvation (and she looked as though she was suffering from the effects of all she had passed through), and I asked her this question, "Have you received the Holy Spirit ?" and that woman did not stop long, but said, "Yes, I know God as my Father." I said,

“When you speak to Him thus in your prayers, have you the sense in your soul that you are His child? You know the scripture says, ‘The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God.’” What do you think she said? “Yes, I have.” That was an answer. She had not had a thousandth part of the teaching that you and I have had, but God had done His own work in her soul, and given her to know Him as her Father, and she had good solid ground for saying so; scripture proved it. Do not be satisfied with anything else, you might be deceiving yourself; it might be some other spirit, or it might be some fancy on your part.

I spoke to another woman after that; she had been a very religious woman for many years, and I asked her, “How do you speak to God when you pray?” She said, “Oh, I have been used to calling Him Father all my life.” Perhaps so, but have you the sense of being His child? It is not a mere word put into our lips. It is the first word a child says. They would not say “Papa” if they were not taught it by their mother, they would have said, “Abba.” It is the most elementary sound in the human language, Ab-ba. God puts that into our hearts. On a babe’s part it is the recognition of parental love and care, and on our part it is the same thing; when it is the Spirit’s cry it is the recognition of our Father’s love, the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit given to us.

There is another scriptural proof of having the Spirit and of His wondrous care of every one of us. I tell you I would not exchange being in the family of God that I am in, with an emperor or a king on this earth, whoever he might be. That would only last for a few

poor years and be a heavy weight on my shoulders all the time very likely ; but the other is going to last for eternity. Where are you and I going to when Christ comes for us ? We are all going into our Father's house. Christ taking His place there as Man has made a place for us there. It is the most beautiful promise perhaps in scripture, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also." He is coming because He wants us, because He has set His love upon us, and nothing satisfies love but the presence of its object ; and nothing will fully satisfy the love of Christ until He has us with Himself in the Father's house. True love cannot brook distance.

W. G. B.

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## A WORD TO PARENTS.

(MARK 11. 1-7.)

ONE feels the Lord would encourage us as parents in the bringing up of our children for Himself, realising in some measure how good the Lord has been to us in giving into our keeping children to train for Him. We gladly turn to Him for wisdom and guidance to fulfil our responsibility. It may be we did not realise all it meant at first, but we accepted it from His blessed hands. We accepted death for them at their baptism in figure, we received them back, as it were, on the other side of death, but as our children grew up we found what is suggested in the colt, that which would need to be restrained, and we felt, if we had not done so before, the responsibility placed upon us. It may be there was the hankering after the

things of the world ; much grace would be needed to deal with each natural tendency as it shewed itself.

The verses referred to would suggest that the colt is now at a fit age to be ridden. In other words, our children having come to the age of responsibility, the question arises, Who are they to be for ? It is very suggestive that the colt is found tied by the door without in a place where two ways met. What have we felt as we saw our children starting out in life, young, full of natural energy, at the door, as it were. They have been held by the restraining power of love, tied by a parent's prayers, hedged around by the influence of a christian home, but there is that in them naturally which would tend to break away. They have been brought up under christian influence, now two roads are open before them. It says the two roads met ; we are not told how far apart they were at the end. One was the wrong road, the other right. If we have been faithful to our trust, we have sought to make the Lord's things attractive to them. It may be we have been hindered by circumstances from bringing them into touch with the Lord's people as much as we would desire, still, there has been the watching over them. Now, as it were, they are brought to the door, we cannot take them any farther.

Who of us that have been in this position but have felt how cast upon the Lord we were ? We saw the young life given us by God to bring up for Him just starting out. One feels what a great responsibility it is. We are desirous of doing our best for them ; we are confronted with the danger of putting material things first. How we need the Lord's guidance in order that we do not make a mistake, and while

rightly desiring the best for them, put them in a place of worldly advancement, and by so doing take them out of the way. It is just here perhaps where we may be tempted to loose the colt, instead of waiting for the Lord. If we have brought them to the door, let us see to it that they are not loosed by us. We bring them to the door, the Lord will send for them all right. He knew where to find the colt. If we bring our children up for Him, he will see to it that they are brought to Himself. The Lord says to His disciples, Go to a certain place, and you will find a colt tied. What a moment when we see the ones the Lord has given us moving toward Himself. It may be the Lord has kept us waiting, but He knew all the time where the colt was, and in His own time He sends for it.

The Lord's word to His disciples was that they should say the Lord had need of him. When they arrived they found the colt tied as He had told them. But the Lord takes account of our exercises and expects us to see that the colt is not loosed to any but Himself. The colt is there for the Lord and He only had the right to it.

I think it suggests that we keep watch over our children in order to see they do not get carried away by false doctrine. How many false doctrines there are, and how subtle are Satan's devices by which he bids for those young souls as they step out on the threshold of life. How many voices call them in the wrong direction, but the words of the disciples, "The Lord hath need of him" is enough. The One who redeemed it has called it. How gladly do we give our children to Him when He calls. How it rejoices our hearts to hear it said, "The Lord hath need of him."

He alone is the One who can subdue the unbroken colt, He alone can ride such an one, and He alone is the worthy One. What a reward for the watchful care and anxious moments to see our children claimed by the One to whom they rightly belong! F. W. D.

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### NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

(PSA. 72; 127; 1 CHRON. 22. 6; JONAH 1. 2-6; 5. 15-17;  
MATT. 16. 4.)

**T**HERE is a wonderful word in Psalm 127 which is one of the songs of degrees: "For so he giveth his beloved sleep." I would like to say a little as to the way that is brought in, and I trust the Lord may bring before us what He would have to say in regard to this.

It is very significant that this psalm is a song of degrees for Solomon. It is very interesting to read what is said about Solomon in scripture. Solomon is a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ. He sets forth in a greater measure than any one the Person of the Son. It was in regard of Solomon that it was said, "He shall be my son, and I will be his Father." We know when the Spirit of God said that He was not only speaking of Solomon, but He was speaking of Christ as the Son of God. That shews what a great type Solomon is.

We often find that when God brings out something very great with regard to Christ that the man God takes up is in his own course disappointing. It is not surprising that God should put these two things together: a complete disappointment in man after the flesh, and the greatness of Christ. That is the way



God is teaching every one of us. We need not wonder at being disappointed in man after the flesh. I have often thought of the words of a beloved servant of the Lord, who was much used to help His people. He said at the end of his course that he little realised he would be such a failure when he started as a Christian. But he said no one need be disappointed at such an experience, because what God has to teach us is about Christ and His glory. So it is not surprising that Solomon as a man in his own course should be disappointing, and yet that he should at the same time set forth perhaps the greatest glories of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to put it to our hearts as to whether we have come to what David came to in Psalm 72, which is a psalm for Solomon: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." I would like to challenge our hearts as to whether we have come to that. I do not think for a moment it means that we do not pray any more. I do not think it was so with David, but it brings out the greatness of Christ—what Solomon really sets forth. God would bring us to find satisfaction in Christ, and in that way to find all need come to an end and to be at rest. God would have every one of us come to that. He would not have us cease to pray, but He would bring us in heart to such an appreciation and enjoyment of Christ that supplication would come to an end, and then we should be occupied with Christ and His glory, and God's delight in Him.

In Psalm 72 it says in regard to Solomon that "prayer also shall be made for him continually." Do you pray in that way? Do not be satisfied only with praying about your daily wants or your present

troubles : “Prayer also shall be made for him continually.” I believe the meaning of that is that God would have us to find our satisfaction in Christ. Are you not surprised to find sometimes the way you are led in prayer ? You find that God takes you away from your little troubles and begins to occupy you with greater things. Your troubles are important, but God would not have you stop there, and the Holy Spirit would not have you stop there ; God would have you to pray in connection with Christ. Solomon sets forth the One in whom God had found His rest and satisfaction, the One that God had spoken of to David ; a man of rest, One in whose days God would give peace and quietness, the One who would be able to build God’s house.

How wonderful to think of Christ as God’s rest. That is the rest that God is calling us to. It is not just a question of being tired and having rest. We sometimes misquote scripture to suit our own ideas. I have noticed with myself when I have misquoted scripture it has been to suit my own ideas, though God is very merciful, and He may help us by a misquoted scripture. How often the end of Matthew 11 is misquoted in this way : “Come unto me, all ye that are *weary* and are heavy laden.” It is quite true that God does call people who are weary to come to Him, but in this scripture it is “all ye that *labour*.” Why are they labouring ? Because there is something that is unfinished ; they have not come to Christ as God’s rest. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He gives the rest of God. The first thought of rest in scripture is in connection with God ; He rested on the seventh day. And we are told later on that God rested on the

seventh day and was refreshed. That is what God is calling us to.

“Prayer also shall be made for him continually.” Do not hinder that prayer. Do not stop at your own need, troubles, and weariness of body. Persevere, and God will shew you that there is something far more important than your own troubles, and that He would have you enter into His rest. That is something supremely wonderful. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” There is a good time coming for you, and God would have it begin now, “for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

It is a great relief to be displaced; do not shrink from it. All the ways of God in the assembly are to that end. Do not be dismayed if you are displaced in a spiritual way by some one greater spiritually than yourself. God would teach you in it that coming day of glory when you will be intensely happy to be displaced for ever; when the crown given to you will be cast before the throne, and all your delight will be in Christ. The great lesson to be learnt in God’s assembly is displacement: “In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” How wonderful to see one another in Christ. If there is something of Christ in my brother, *that* displaces me, I am to be thankful for it. We see David brought to that in some measure.

C. M.

*(To be continued.)*

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## “TURN YOUR FACE TO THE LIGHT.”

A DEPRESSED and weary woman when everything seemed dark cried, “Everything is dark—dark”! “Why don’t you turn your face to the light, auntie dear,” said her little niece.

Sweet child! Precious lesson. “They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.” (Psa. 34.)

S. J. B. C.

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## THE LORD’S SUPPER.

(LUKE 22. 19; CANT. 5. 1.)

SWEET feast of love divine!  
'Tis grace that makes us free  
To feed upon this bread and wine,  
In memory, Lord, of Thee.

Here every welcome guest  
Waits, Lord, from Thee to learn  
The secrets of Thy Father’s breast,  
And all Thy grace discern.

Here peace displaces strife,  
And faith delights to prove  
The sweetness of the bread of life,  
The fulness of Thy love.

Oh! if this glimpse of love  
Is so divinely sweet,  
What will it be, O Lord, above,  
Thy gladd’ning smile to meet!

To see Thee face to face,  
Thy perfect likeness wear,  
And all Thy ways of wondrous grace  
Through endless years declare.

*From Hymns by* SIR E. DENNY.

## RECOVERY.

**A**LTHOUGH Luke 15 may have been spoken and written about as much or more than any other portion of the scriptures, God continues to use it in blessing in a wonderful way, so that there is encouragement in again turning to it. The chapter brings before us so blessedly the activity of divine Persons and how all their thoughts and activities were—nay, are—set upon the accomplishment of “one thing”—the recovery of man for God and for His pleasure.

It is well for us to note the order—divine order—of the chapter. The basis of all is Christ’s work—the Shepherd; then the Spirit’s work in finding the silver; these two must be known *before* the heart of the Father can be known.

### THE LOST SHEEP.

If we face the question honestly, we must acknowledge that man is a wanderer from God, “all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.” Turning back to Genesis 4. 16, what do we read? “Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod.” The land of Nod means the land of wandering. How descriptive this is of man’s state, away from God, wandering in darkness and sin. The Psalmist in Psalm 119 says, “I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant.” This is just what God in the Person of Christ, the good Shepherd, has done. How sweetly the Lord puts it in our chapter, “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose *one* of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and

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go after that which is lost, until he find it ? ” The unwearied search of the Shepherd for the *one* sheep that was lost, the continuance of the search *until* He had found it speaks so plainly of the love of Christ for the wanderer and how He had but one thing before Him—the recovery of that which was lost and which was precious to Him.

The search, the going after, necessitated Him going into death in order to recover the lost one. As He Himself said in John 10, “I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” So He recovers—and then, “When he hath found it, he layeth it on his own shoulders, rejoicing.” What wonderful grace and love. Have we given the heart of Christ to rejoice over our recovery, or are we still going astray, still wanderers, still turning to our own way ? How verse 6 should make its appeal to our hearts, “and when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me ; for I have found my sheep which was lost.”

Following the picture of the recovery of the sheep which was lost, Luke 15. 8–10 speaks of

#### THE LOST PIECE OF MONEY,

and the woman searching for it until she finds it. This is unquestionably a picture of man, precious to God but lost, and the Holy Spirit in holy diligence bringing to light, recovering that which was lost.

Man is lost and is without the consciousness of his lost estate, and the present activities of the Holy Spirit are ceaselessly devoted to one thing—the recovery for God of that which is precious to Him. The way this works is that He, the Holy Spirit, brings

to pass in us the consciousness that we are lost, and the dust of unbelief, of indifference and of forgetfulness of God is swept away. And what is brought to light? a piece of silver. Bright as it came from the mint? No. The superscription plainly shewing? No. So tarnished and rubbed that it is difficult to discover either image or likeness, nevertheless *silver*.

Having found the lost piece of silver, the woman, like the man, calls together the friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost." Divine Persons desire that others shall share their joy of recovery, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one* sinner that repenteth." Heaven is found in sympathetic movement with the blessed results of the work of Christ and the activities of the Holy Spirit. As we see what God is doing in the recovery for Himself of *one* lost sinner are our hearts moved with holy joy? How great the grace that now has called us, sharers of His joy to be.

J. R. T.

## THE BIBLE—ISAIAH. No. 2.

(CHAPS. 13-27.)

THE second section of the Book of Isaiah includes chapters 13-27, and brings before us the judgment of various nations which stood in relation to Israel, and the deliverance of Israel in blessing under the reign of Christ. There are four parts to this section, (1) 13 and 14. 28, (2) 14. 29-18, (3) 19-24, (4) 25-27.

(1) *Babylon* is first dealt with, and is viewed as the centre and corrupting element of the world's system. (Chap. 13. 11.) The last phase of this power which

began in Babylon will be the Beast of Revelation 13. 1-10 and Daniel 7. 23. (See Dan. 2. 37-44.) The dragon, or "Lucifer," will be especially identified with this power. (Chap. 14. 2; Rev. 12. 3; 13. 2-4.) Babylon was the power that took Israel captive. Hence, as Isaiah especially dwells upon the period previous to the captivity and after it is over, only the destruction of this power is spoken of. Daniel speaks of its features and duration as well as Israel's condition under it. The restoration of Israel and Babylon's destruction go together. (Chap. 14. 1.) The chapter looks on to the end for its complete fulfilment. This is seen in the fact that the Assyrian is referred to after Babylon's destruction. Historically it was before, prophetically it will be judged after Babylon. The Beast is judged and the remnant delivered; then all Israel is restored and after this the Assyrian comes up and its power is broken. (See Isa. 8. 7, 8; 10. 12-23; 14. 24; Dan. 8. 23-26; Micah 5. 5, 6.)

(2) Chapters 14. 29-18 present the judgment of other nations. Each presents a feature of the world as Babylon gives the corrupting idolatrous element and its centre. *Philistia* suggests the professing religious element, the enemy *inside*. *Moab* is that which is marked by pride and is related to God's people by natural ties. God exhorts Moab to harbour His outcasts. (See also 1 Sam. 22. 3.) Provided what is natural is subservient, it may remain. If Moab rebel, his pride must be brought low. Hence, "Send ye the lamb." (See 2 Kings 3. 4.) *Damascus* suggests religious opposition by imitation. Damascus was allied to the apostate section of God's professed people. (See chap. 7. 2; 15. 8; 2 Kings 5. 12; 16. 10-16.)



Israel's state being referred to in chapter 17 gives rise to chapter 18, which foretells their restoration by some unnamed power. They are apparently reinstated in their land and things begin to look well, when suddenly all is desolated (vers. 5, 6), God looking on, as it were, without interposing on their behalf. (Ver. 4.) In the end, however, they are recovered for God.

(3) In this section, chapters 19–24, Israel's deliverance is not largely dwelt upon. It describes a desolation which God allows to come upon the nations and His professed people and their ruler. Shebna is a type of Antichrist, Eliakim of Christ.

*Egypt* presents the world as the place of natural wisdom and resource. When morally recovered, it will be owned. (Chap. 19. 23.) Then Babylon, "the desert of the sea,"\* falls by a power from the south. (Dan. 11. 40.) Dumah and Arabia, the lawless wanderings of man; then God's professed people and their ruler; Tyre, the glory of man (chap. 23. 9), and the whole earth (chap. 24.) with spiritual beings too. (Ver. 21.) And Jehovah shall reign on mount Zion. It is judgment clearing the way for Jesus' reign on earth.

(4) The last part of this section (chaps. 25–27), in the form of a song or celebration, prophetically describes the blessed result of all. In times of trouble God had been a refuge (chap. 25. 4), and now all is blessing. The veil upon the nations is removed; death is swallowed up in victory (ver. 8); the righteous

\* Is the term employed because the prophecy refers to a future form and expression of Babylonish power—then desolate among the Gentiles? The capture of Babylon during Belshazzar's reign historically served as an illustration of this.

nation enters God's city (chap. 26. 2; see also Psa. 118); Satan's power is removed (chap. 27. 1), and God's elect gathered one by one. (See also Matt. 24. 31.) In these three chapters the prophet voices the feelings of the remnant, and there are many precious expressions of confidence in Jehovah—the Rock of ages. (Chap. 26. 3, 16, etc.) They once had passed through times of pressure. What pressure indeed! But many a soul in that day will be kept in perfect peace through having his mind stayed on God. *God* will have been their trust. Need it be less so with us? Is not that same God *our Father*? What sweet confidence this should give! And having "the same spirit of faith" we also can take up such language and say: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

M. W. B.

### THE MAN WHO DIED FOR ME.

WHAT will it be to dwell with Him,  
 The Man who died for me,  
 To gaze upon those piercèd hands  
 Throughout eternity,  
 That head with mocking crown adorned,  
 When on the shameful tree,  
 That blessed form that prostrate knelt,  
 In fearful agony?

The sorrow past, Thou'lt joy to have  
 Thy loved ones at Thy side,  
 The blood-bought church, Thy heart's delight,  
 Thy fair and ransomed bride,  
 Then, then my joy will be complete,  
 For aye with Thee to be,  
 Like Thee before the Father's face,  
 The Man who died for me.

M. S. S.

## **“THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,” and How to Spend Them.**

### 11. HEARING.

“TAKE heed what ye hear” was an exhortation which Jesus gave to His disciples, but which is of the greatest importance to-day. There are many voices in the world, which is a great Babel of tongues—and we are influenced greatly by that which we hear.

The first attack of the serpent in the garden of Eden was made through the hearing when he suggested, “Yea, hath God said?” This evil influence was brought to bear upon the mind of God’s creature through the ear, and it has been continued to this present moment. The world, with Satan as its god, is still busily engaged in securing the ears of men, that their minds may be alienated from God.

But God has not given man up. He has ever sought to secure man’s ear in grace, and His living voice is still being heard in the souls of men, while He has already regained the ear of millions of redeemed people for Himself. The Lord Jesus, who is the antitype of the Hebrew servant of Exodus 21, went to the doorpost, and His ear was “bored through with an awl.” It was the expression of His devotion, for He had plainly said, “I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free.” It was

#### THE PIERCED EAR

that was a mark of perpetual reproach, for it signified that the servant was a bondman for ever. How greatly that love to God and to us, which led the Lord Jesus to go even to death, has drawn our hearts out to Himself in responsive affection. It is open to us to fulfil one aspect of the Hebrew servant, for in

Deuteronomy 15 the language used—"If he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee ; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee"—can be applied to those who would follow the Lord Jesus.

In the beautiful types of Leviticus 8, the thought is introduced of

#### THE CONSECRATED EAR.

The sons of Aaron, typifying the present saints of God—the priestly family—had the blood of the ram of consecration applied to their right ear. This signified that their whole intelligent being was consecrated to God, and that all that was not consistent with their holy calling was to be excluded. We do well to cherish the thought that by the death of Christ we have been consecrated to God, and on account of this should refuse to lend our ear to what would defile, remembering that it must pass into our mind by the ear which has been sprinkled with the blood of the ram of consecration. How sad when believers voluntarily listen to unholy and unsuitable communications and are defiled thereby !

It is of deep moment that after the blood was applied, the sons of Aaron were anointed with the holy oil, prefiguring the sanctifying of the believer by the Holy Spirit of God. Each has now

#### THE ANOINTED EAR,

ready to appreciate all the holy things of God ; the voice of God, the voice of the good Shepherd, the voice of the Spirit are heard and responded to by those whose ears are thus anointed. There is a definite avenue for the entrance of every divine and holy communication in all its purity and blessedness.

In the divine wisdom of the Creator we have not the power to close our ears voluntarily to sound as we are able to close our eyes ; so that it is necessary to withdraw from evil surroundings and thus refrain from hearing that which is injurious. We need to be true to the anointing !

Receptiveness is another important feature of the believer's hearing, for he has

#### THE OPENED EAR.

One of the first acts of the Lord Jesus in resurrection was to enable His disciples to appreciate His teaching, for "then opened he their understanding." This has been beautifully exemplified in Jesus Himself as a lowly, dependent Man here, for of Him the prophet Isaiah wrote, "The Lord, Jehovah, hath given me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth *mine ear to hear* as the instructed. The Lord Jehovah hath *opened mine ear*, and I was not rebellious." (Chap. 50. 4, 5.) It would be well with us if our ears were opened thus, and our waking moments were spent in listening to the voice of our God. Then *we* should be instructed and know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

In these last days of departure and declension the Lord is making His own appeal to the ear. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking ; if any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with me." It is the desire of Christ to secure

#### THE ATTENTIVE EAR

amidst all the indifference that marks the professing

church. He values the opened door and the awakened ear that will attend to His voice. Seven times in the addresses to the seven churches He says, "He that hath an *ear*, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

Let us then refuse to lend our ears to the defiling voices of this present evil world, that we may attend diligently to His voice of holy love. F. S. M.

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### THE PROPHETS.—No. 8.

#### ISAIAH.

THE patience and sufferings of a prophet ever stand in relation to distance and departure from God, whether in an individual or in a nation. The function of a prophet is therefore of a twofold character, for he has not only to expose the condition of those to whom he is sent, but also to reveal the mind of God.

We may see from the holy scriptures how the prophets of old maintained, under God's hand, this even balance. They had to expose sin and to search the conscience, and this involved suffering for them, for such exposure is never pleasing to a spiritual man, who would first feel in his own spirit the sin of others. But the prophets also brought light from God as to what was suitable to Him—that which He desired as a present enjoyment for those served by prophecy, and which He would doubtless bring in at some future time for His own pleasure. In order to expose what is not according to God there must be power, and to bring in the mind of God involves the enjoyment of communion with God. A prophet's capacity for suffering is thus developed!

The prophet Nathan fastened David's guilt upon him—"Thou art the man"; but when David repented, Nathan could declare the mind of God to him, saying, "Jehovah has also put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." (2 Sam. 12. 13.) Isaiah is an inspiring example for us in this connection. Who amongst the prophets felt as he the sorrowful departure and shame of God's people, yet as knowing the sublimity of God's purpose for them he refuses to indulge sorrow, though ever feeling it. So Isaiah "sings in" an era of holy mirth consequent on God having His place with His people again in His own time. This singing runs through the prophetic word, as may be seen from chapter 7, 9, 11, 32, 35, 40, 42, 49, 52-55, 60-62, amongst others. Isaiah rises in spirit above the failure to bring before the people God's purposes and His ways of grace.

But secret soul-history and experience with God must ever precede outward testimony. To be *for* God involves having been *with* God, and to learn our own worthlessness in the presence of God is our first lesson. Thus alone are we educated to share the feelings and compassions of God in a day of general departure from the truth. Unless we learn our own hearts in the presence of God we shall not discern, nor maintain, the fine balance between the righteous indignation which rightly feels the departure, and that soul communion which delights in and gives expression to the purpose of God. In this the prophets, for the most part, excelled, and Isaiah is a notable example. He is direct and incisive in his rebukes (chap. 1. 4-17), pleading and solicitous as offering blessing (vers. 18, 19), joyous and ecstatic as singing of God's ways. (Vers. 24-27.) These three features

mark the whole prophecy. The intent of the prophet's heart, as divinely wrought upon, is to bespeak the spirit of conciliation which marks the Godhead. Isaiah's heart is enlarged, his view extensive and his sympathies real. And his first consideration is always for God! As in sympathy with God's speaking he would claim heaven and earth to hear it. "Hear ye, heavens, and give ear, thou earth! for Jehovah hath spoken." He then proceeds to speak of Jehovah's tender parental feelings and also exposes the state of Israel. "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in him." (Ver. 6.) Isaiah himself had to learn his own state and also to judge his association with the sinful nation. Later he can say, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for what account is to be made of him?" (Chap. 2. 22.)

But after rebuke comes pleading—a well-known and beautiful expression of divine yearnings. "Come now, let us reason together, saith Jehovah. . . . If ye be willing and hearken, ye shall eat the good of the land." Isaiah is receiving the word of Jehovah and faithfully speaking it. Then in chapter 6 he passes through an experience calculated to fit him for further service as he sees his own unfitness in the presence of the glory of the Lord. The secret of Isaiah's power in prophetic service lay in this, that the honour and glory of every other man paled into insignificance alongside that of Christ. Isaiah spake "*because* he saw his glory." (John 12. 41, New Trans.)

He had learned, according to the word of Jehovah, that the first man afforded no pleasure to God (chaps. 1-5), but in chapter 6 the lesson comes home to himself. This important vision was given to him "in the



year that king Uzziah died." This seems to have peculiar significance, for Uzziah was, up to a certain point, one of the greatest of the kings, "He did what was right in the sight of Jehovah, and in the days that he sought Jehovah, God made him to prosper." "And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he became strong." (2 Chron. 26.) He was not only a skilful warrior, but he also had cattle and he loved husbandry. Such a king would secure a large place in the minds of his subjects, but his inflation brought about his downfall, and he was smitten with leprosy till the day of his death. But Isaiah sees another King, "the King in his beauty." "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne." It is *Adonai* whom he sees, "lordship in blessing," not merely One in authority. At such a vision Isaiah is filled with a sense of shame at his own unworthiness. He now judges himself, "Woe is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips." He can then judge *others*, "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." It is impossible to judge others rightly until we have judged ourselves. One who is self-judged can judge his associations and his associates. As a consequence Isaiah is cleansed, the seraphim and the live coal from off the altar being used for cleansing and also to impress Isaiah with the holiness befitting God's house and service. Isaiah is learning his greatest lesson here, one which will qualify him for his prophetic service. Then as hearing the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send?" Isaiah has an answer, "Here am I, *send* me."

He is now prepared to adorn the word. The sufferings and patience of a prophet are to be in evidence. The emphasis is on the word "send" rather than

“me” (see footnote, New Trans.), suggesting that Isaiah realised the greatness of the errand and the word rather than that of the vessel to be used. So it is with all who are truly in the “service”; such a spirit not only tending to self-effacement, but adorning the word they are privileged to carry. J. H. T.

(*To be continued.*)

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### NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

(PSA. 72 ; 127 ; 1 CHRON. 22. 6 ; JONAH 1. 2-6 ; 1. 15-17 ;  
MATT. 16. 4.)

THE songs of degrees are very wonderful ; they give us the idea of an upward way. Psalm 127 is a song of degrees for Solomon, and we get that wonderful word there, “So he giveth his beloved sleep.” First of all it speaks of what God does : “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it : except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows : for so he giveth his beloved sleep.” First of all there is God’s side, what God does. But God would not have you stop there. God must do the building ; God must keep the city. Unless God has His place, you will not learn the other side. But when you come to the other side, you have “*His beloved*”—He giveth His beloved sleep. That speaks of rest given to His beloved ; it speaks of everything accomplished and God’s heart satisfied with Christ. What a wonderful thing sleep is in that sense.

The first thought of rest, as I said, is in connection with God. But when God created a man He said,

“It is not good that the man should be alone.” God would make a help meet for him. How did He make that help meet for him? He might have come in in His power, but that would not have set forth the thoughts of His wisdom. He took up the man, and “caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept.”

I have often thought of how the Holy Spirit draws our attention to that wonderful moment: “and he slept.” Do you know anything about that moment? I know it applies literally to the time when Jesus lay in the grave, but it applies morally to the present time. Jesus is no longer here and God is building something infinitely greater than He built at the beginning. At the present time God is building the assembly. Jesus has gone into death, and He is now the living One at the right hand of God. How does God build now? He builds through the death of Christ. Everything that Christ can appreciate in the assembly as His bride comes through His death, all else will pass away. What have we got out of the death of Jesus? It is a serious question. You may say you have much light. That will pass away. You say you have faith. Thank God for that! but faith is just the way to blessing. God would not have you stop there. Faith and hope cease; what remains? Love. You can only get love according to God through the death of Jesus. When God speaks of love, He points us to death. Death is the great exhibition of love. “Love is strong as death.” “He gives his beloved sleep.”

We find that David commits to Solomon what he has gathered together in his sorrow. How touching! Think of the sorrows of Christ here; think of all

He passed through. There is material in it all. As He passed out of this scene, there was blessed, holy material prepared in His sorrow. In regard to ourselves, God would turn all our sorrow and disappointment to blessing by turning us to Christ. That is the burden of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that we might turn to Christ who ever lives to make intercession for us. That is not only to lift us out of our sorrows, but that we might enter into God's rest; that is what God has for us.

I want to refer a moment to the Book of Jonah. God has called us in connection with the glory of Christ, and that means suffering, humiliation, and no recognition in this life. Jonah was not prepared for that, and not one of us is by nature. If God is going to bless us, it means severe discipline. Jonah is brought to it; he finds a ship, pays his fare and flees from the presence of Jehovah. But God follows him. We read, "But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." Then there is something very wonderful said about Jonah. "The mariners were afraid . . . but Jonah . . . was fast asleep." It is very beautiful that in spite of his failure, he was fast asleep. That is what God does for His own; He brings them to rest. Jonah had lessons to learn, but there he is, in the place where the lessons have to be learned, in the hands of the blessed God. What wonderful things God did with him. Jonah was able to tell the men what to do with him. He gets such light from God, that he tells them to cast him overboard. He is completely cast upon the mercy and power of God. Then there was a calm. He was a sign to those men, and he becomes a sign to the Ninevites.

The Lord when asked for a sign said, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonah." God would not recognise the flesh at all. Jesus has died; He has gone into death for all. Think of this troubled world—the sea would set that forth—the great wind and the tempest. How wonderful that Jesus has died. What is the result? A great calm. It is the accepted time and the day of salvation. But if we are to get the blessing we must go that way and learn that lesson. The wicked and adulterous generation must be shut up to that.

If the sign of the prophet Jonah is accepted, what does it lead us to? It leads us to God's rest in Christ. The Lord puts the two together in another place: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." (Matt. 12. 41.) Repentance is a wonderful thing; we all have to learn it. The Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah. Jonah speaks of the Lord's death. Now there is a great calm through His death. But the Lord goes on to say, "The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." Have you come to Him? Have you taken a journey? The queen of the south took a long journey. How we need the energy of faith, and to be moved in divine love to respond to what God has for us in Christ—the greater than Solomon is here, the One who is God's rest.

C. M.

## “BEYOND JORDAN.”

(JOHN 10. 40-42.)

IT is precious indeed to have heard of Jesus, but how infinitely more blessed to reach the spot where He is to be found, and *there* to learn that “all things that John spake of this man were true”; to get confirmation *in His own blessed presence* of all that we had ever heard about Him, and not only that, but to find Him *infinitely more* than we had ever heard. Here is One that exceeds by far the best report that ever reached our ears about Him.

John had said many wonderful things about Jesus, but in the chapters that follow chapter 10 we find Him leading His disciples into regions that John the Baptist knew nothing of. We get a wonderful indication of this in the first chapter. In verse 35 we read, “John *stood*, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he *walked*, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Master, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day.” *John stood*—he could take his disciples no farther; *Jesus walked*—He is moving on to that scene and to that day which are *eternal*. John could only testify as to His coming into this world, but He, the blessed Son of God, would lead our hearts out of the world. Thus He would take us *with Him* into the Father’s world, as the answer to our going out *to Him* “beyond Jordan.”

C. D—N.

*Winnipeg.*

## THE DIMENSIONS OF THE GOSPEL.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3. 16.)

**T**HOUGH this is perhaps one of the best known and most used verses in the whole Bible, many who can quote it correctly have never received the blessed news it contains into their hearts and so, of course, have never seen what we desire, with God's help, to bring to notice, praying that God may be pleased to fasten it by His Spirit's power not only in their memory but in their hearts.

This wonderful verse may be spoken about in various ways, but what we desire to point out in the present instance is that it contains the height, depth, breadth, and length of the gospel. God is the height from whence the gospel comes, it emanates from His own great heart of love. The gift of his only begotten Son to death, and that the death of the cross, is the depth of the gospel. No less a gift would have fully expressed the love of His heart, and no greater gift could He have given to win our wayward hearts. “Who-soever” is the breadth of the gospel ; no one is outside that all-embracing word. May the reader of these lines not shut himself out of it, as he will have no one but himself to blame throughout eternity if he does so. God has given the treasure of His heart for your salvation, and sent the good news for your acceptance. His was a finished work, absolutely nothing left for you to do but to take it and thank Him for it throughout eternity.

“Everlasting life” is the length of the gospel. The one who believes will not only “never perish,” but has the present knowledge of God as his Father,

of Christ as his Saviour for time and eternity, the enjoyment of divine changeless love by the Spirit's power for ever and ever. Surely such infinite blessing is worth making your own, as it is offered freely without money and without price to every man, woman, and child under heaven simply for the taking.

“ God loved the world of sinners lost,  
 And ruined by the fall,  
 Salvation full at highest cost,  
 He offers free to all.”

T. F. C.

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## LISTENING.

(ROM. 8. 22, 23.)

AN ear I lend to the voices of the deep,  
 In language ever varied, yet the same :  
 The chorus of the trebles  
     as they play among the pebbles ;  
 Or the basses' rumble  
     as they tumble in their sleep.

And with these harmonies in concord sweet contend  
 The furtive music of the feather'd choir ;  
 The cadence of the breezes,  
     in note that ever pleases,  
 As through leafy treasures tender measures  
     swell and blend.

And listening, listening still, a thousand sounds I hear,  
 But each its own peculiar tongue employs :  
 A vast orchestra throbbing—  
     a minor echo sobbing ;  
 The whole creation sighing—  
     and every heart replying !  
 Yet—yet do I perceive a note triumphant, clear,  
 AS FAITH beholds,  
     what GRACE unfolds,  
                     and SCHEMES DIVINE appear !

*At Sheringham, September, 1926.*

W. L. (*Derby*).



## RECOVERY.

**F**ROM verse 11 of Luke 15 we have the recovery  
of

### THE LOST SON.

How many hearts have been moved and how many consciences have been reached by that which these verses bring before us. It is all so livingly presented that we are compelled to recognise that *we* are that lost son, that *we* have departed into a far country, that *we* have wasted our substance, that *we* have come to want, that *we* have become the sport and the plaything of Satan, and consequently have touched the depths of degradation and shame.

Although in one respect the sheep, the piece of silver and the younger son were all alike in being lost, with the prodigal son there is the knowledge of his state brought home to him so that there is that said of the prodigal that is not, could not, be said of the sheep or of the piece of silver—"when he came to himself." Conscience was at work bringing into strong relief the fulness to be found in his father's household and his own abject need. Have we travelled this road? These are the first footsteps of recovery to God.

Then he says what neither the sheep or the piece of silver could say, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned." It is all out now, a full confession of sinnership and unworthiness, and what immediately comes to light upon his arising is that the father was on the look out for this movement on the part of his lost son, and at

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once all the desires of his heart find their expression in the haste of his movements. He saw him, he was moved with compassion, he ran, he fell upon his neck, he covered him with kisses.

Dear reader, how is it with you? Has your lost estate been brought home to heart and conscience? If so, have you said, "I will arise," and is it further true of you, "and he arose"? If so, in the earliest stages of your movement the eye of God has marked it, and His heart has been stirred with such compassions as only He can shew, and He has moved with divine haste towards you in order to take you to His heart, and in the embrace of His love to give you to know it by covering you with kisses. Who can fathom the joy of such a moment when for the first time the *blessedness* of the knowledge of the love of the Father dawns upon the soul.

The father then turns to his servants, for he has those who are in fullest sympathy with all his movements of grace and love. He says, "bring forth the *best robe*." God's thought for us is the best. And what is that? CHRIST. The ring would be a mark of favour, and the shoes would suggest that he would have a standing in all the dignity of sonship. Recovery is an occasion for rejoicing; the father says, "Let us eat, and be merry." "And they began to be merry." Are we amongst the "they"? Are we found amongst those who rejoice with God over the recovery of the lost?

With the elder brother will was at work, and he would not go in, although he drew near to the house and heard the music and dancing. How touching is the father's "It was meet." The rejoicing is justified, and the father has his own part and portion in the

joy over the recovery of the one who was dead, but was alive again, and was lost, but who had been found, *never to be lost again.* J. R. T.

## THE PROPHETS.—No. 9.

ISAIAH. (*Continued.*)

AS being thus equipped, Isaiah moves forward in his service, carrying it on amidst hostile elements and powers. The wickedness of king Ahaz would be keenly felt by Isaiah, whose spirit had become sensitive by his experience in chapter 6.

But God gives a striking witness in sending Isaiah with his son, Shear-jashub, to meet Ahaz. Isaiah had not only the *word* of the Lord, but also a witness in his son of what would occur in the ways of God, for Shear-jashub means "A remnant shall return."

Thus, in the offspring of the prophet himself, a warning note would be raised against all who had turned aside, and a note of encouragement would reach the godly, exercised ones.

Then, too, this son would be a comfort to his father the prophet as moving with him in relation to his exercises and sufferings. In chapter 8 another son is born, and his name was called Maher-shalal-hash-baz, indicating that he also was to be a witness in the prophetic testimony. It is to be noted also that Isaiah's wife is called a *prophetess*, he himself naming her such. From these intimations it would appear that the whole household of Isaiah was linked up with the suffering testimony of that day, and how strengthening would be the light of chapter 7. 14-16.

It is only as knowing and cherishing the mind of

God that the path of patience and suffering can be trodden, so as having the revelation of the incoming of Christ, Isaiah treads the path of separation fearlessly. "Jehovah . . . instructed me not to walk in the way of this people." (Chap. 8. 11.)

Then, as a consequence, the prophet becomes acquainted with the path of rejection, tasted to the full by the Lord Himself in His day. (Vers. 12-18.) But he can say, "I will wait for Jehovah, who hideth his face . . . and I will look for him." Then as one who is with God he can warn those who are in danger: "To the law and the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, for them there is no day-break." (Ver. 20.) A solemn word this, which would be keenly felt in the prophet's own spirit, for he who would rightly enter into the sorrows of others must first feel the sorrow as with God.

In chapter 9 there is a change and Isaiah sings in the coming of Christ, his heart aglow with the glad tidings: "Unto *us* a child is born, unto *us* a son is given . . . and his name *is* called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace." So we see that a prophet's pathway is not all sorrow, for the mind of God as made known to Isaiah induces a holy joy and mirth.

How varied are his experiences, on the one hand holy exultings, and on the other intense sorrow. Truly it could be said of Isaiah that "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy." (Prov. 14. 10.) To rightly understand the patience and sufferings of Isaiah, we have to read 2 Kings 14-20, and also 2 Chronicles 26-32, with his prophecy. He prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Who could

describe the mingled feelings of the prophet as he witnessed the rise and fall of Uzziah, the industry and victories and right ways of Jotham, the foul wickedness of Ahaz (read 2 Kings 16), and the revival under Hezekiah's good reign, and later his decline? It is in such experiences of joy and sorrow that the man of God is tested, and Isaiah proved his nearness to God by his assiduity in his prophetic mission. His prophecy has the widest outlook of all the prophets. In the first part it is linked up with Matthew, later on with Mark, and again later with Luke. Much has been written and spoken of his wonderful prophecy, but our desire is to note the suffering and patience of the prophets. (James 5. 10.)

In chapter 10 the prophet announces the good tidings that "the remnant shall return." We have already noted that this was the meaning of Shear-jashub, the prophet's elder son. Isaiah had thus not only the *word* of Jehovah but a living reminder of it in his son. Chapters 12 and 13 describe the blessedness of the remnant. But from this song of peace Isaiah is again called upon to utter woe, and he takes up the burden of Babylon. How completely he was committed to divine Persons and to divine interests! His full surrender in chapter 6. 8 is often reflected in these and succeeding chapters.

In chapter 14 Ahaz dies, and henceforth Isaiah's ministry would be carried on during the reign of Hezekiah.

The prophet now takes a wide survey, seeing the judgment of God on Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia and Egypt. But it is in no formal way that he announces judgment. He himself feels the shame that is about to come upon others, for he walks naked and bare-

foot three years, a form of intense suffering that Isaiah did not shrink from, but accepted as part of his commission. How easily and coldly *we* may speak of judgment without descending in divine compassion to those we address. We know that "judgment is God's strange work," and we are to hate the sin that occasions it. How finely these divine sensibilities were developed with Paul, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5. 11), and alongside of this he could say, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all, that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor. 9. 22.) It is thus we become approachable to men, so that we might induce them to flee from the wrath to come.

Isaiah's three years of suffering ought to affect our hearts. The increasing dishonour to the name of the Lord, the rapid spread of infidelity, the ripening apostasy, if rightly felt by us would constitute a challenge to our hearts and would lead to a fresh committal to the Lord in a path of unswerving fidelity to Himself and His precious interests.

J. H. T.

(*To be continued.*)

## **"THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH,"** **and How to Spend Them.**

### 12. OBEYING.

**I**T would be impossible to over-estimate the importance of the divine principle of *obedience*, for the glory of God and the present happiness of the children of God are both connected with it.

It is encouraging to consider that *love is the spring of obedience*. We are not brought under the law of Moses, with all its demands and legal bondage; but as those that love God we desire to be "children of obedience" for His present pleasure.

Obedience involves subjecting one will to another. When God created man in innocence He imposed one command, for it was due to the Creator God that His creature should be obedient to Him. But man disobeyed that command, and through his disobedience suffered the terrible consequences: distance, darkness and death.

God could not withdraw His right to demand the obedience of man, but He has found a solution of the great question by sending His own Son into the world. Now it can be said, "as indeed by the disobedience of the one man [Adam] the many have been constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one [Christ] the many will be constituted righteous." Thus we owe our every blessing to the work of Christ when He became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Moreover, in His spotless life of perfect obedience to the will of God He has left us an example that we should "follow his steps," and thus live for the glory and pleasure of God.

It is recorded of Jesus that at twelve years of age He went down with His parents and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. The importance of

#### OBEYING PARENTS

was thus set forth in Him in His boyhood. Never was there a day when the exhortation was needed more than to-day, "Children, obey your parents in

all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." This is the secret of a truly happy childhood, for a disobedient child cannot be happy.

In a well ordered home where the children are affectionately and cheerfully obedient to their parents, there is joy, for the Lord's approval is enjoyed there, but sorrow and strife must fill the house where parental authority is ignored. One of the saddest features of these last days is disobedience to parents.

#### OBEYING MASTERS.

When the time arrives to start out in life, the same important principle is necessary, for the injunction is, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ."

How contrary this is to the spirit of the world to-day, yet it affords the opportunity to servants to render a living testimony as the confessed followers of Christ, and they are thus able to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

#### OBEYING IN THOUGHT.

Obedience of thought as well as in actions is necessary; as the apostle wrote, "the arms of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful according to God to the overthrow of strongholds; overthrowing reasonings and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ."

How triumphant is the power of God when the mind of a believer is thus brought into obedience. Evil thoughts will be judged, the devil and his evil suggestions resisted, and "the peace of God, which surpasses



every understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts by Christ Jesus."

Now the believer is free to consider

#### OBEYING THE LORD,

having confessed His name. The Lord Jesus said, "Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Obedience to the Lord is the evidence of love to Him, for He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." It is a truly happy pathway that is ordered by the Lord, where subjection and obedience are observed. In the day of His glory every one will obey Him, for He is Lord of all, but to-day His followers are obedient and delight to do His bidding.

This is the secret of all success in the Lord's service. We are not to be governed by what we may regard as usefulness, but ever remember that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

The Apostle Peter writes: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in

#### OBEYING THE TRUTH

through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." This is in accord with the word of the Apostle John, "We keep his commandments, and practise the things which are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another."

May we each prove the joy and prosperity which are secured by obedience.

F. S. M.

## SPIRITUAL THINGS.

**I**T is of the greatest importance for us, who are brought to know God in this dispensation, to understand its true character. One very great difference from other dispensations is that the Holy Spirit is dwelling on the earth in the saints of God, and therefore gives character to everything connected with them as of God. 1 Corinthians 2 deals fully with this point, shewing that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, but on the other hand that all the mind of God, even the deep things are revealed to us by the Spirit. It speaks in verse 9 of things that eye has not seen, nor ear heard and which have not entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things that God has prepared for them that love him. This at once opens up to us wonderful possibilities. Just as Abraham's servant had at his disposal all the great wealth of his master to attract the heart of Rebekah, so the Holy Spirit will unfold to us, as we are prepared for them, spiritual things, rich and wondrous.

The Apostle Paul in verse 13 of this chapter (1 Cor. 2) speaks of communicating spiritual things by spiritual means. (New Trans.) There are several scriptures that unfold these things in detail. The first we might refer to is Ephesians 1. 3.

### *Spiritual blessings.*

Our blessings as Christians are spiritual and heavenly. Those of Israel were material and earthly. We do not get a more prosperous business and a better house, or even a healthier body because we are converted.

Sometimes the reverse is the case, and this is as discipline for our spiritual gain. For what is spiritual is eternal, whereas temporal things must pass away. God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. All that boundless love could give has been freely bestowed and all is in Christ Jesus. Nothing can be lost there, nor even marred in any way. We are linked by the Holy Spirit with this blessed Person, who is victorious over every enemy, and has established in unassailable conditions all that was in the heart of God before time was. These wondrous things are for our *present* enjoyment, for it says, "Who *hath* blessed us." We appropriate them by faith and enjoy them by the Holy Spirit. Then we find that

*Spiritual understanding*

is necessary, for we cannot take in divine things through our brains. Natural culture will not help us here. And so the Apostle Paul prays in Colossians 1. 9 that the saints might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Our minds must be enlightened by the Spirit. How many believers there are who seem to be quite ignorant of what is their proper portion as in Christ. They may even read the scriptures in a historical way, without seeing that all is really theirs. There is no excuse for ignorance. Divine resources are open to us.

Perhaps we lack diligence in seeking daily to read the scriptures in dependence upon the Lord to get something for our meditation. For it is in meditation that the Holy Spirit would open our understanding. The Psalmist prayed, "That which I see not, teach thou me." We need building up in our souls, and for this there are

*Spiritual meat and drink.*

These are referred to in 1 Corinthians 10. 3, 4, and are the Spirit's comment on the manna and the smitten rock from which the water flowed. Israel had the material things. We get the gain of the spiritual teaching from them, Christ in humiliation here, for the contemplation of our hearts, so that the flesh is reduced in us, and we become like the manna, small and round; and then, too, as the smitten One in death that the living water might be available for us. One would raise the question with every reader, What are you feeding on, and what is the source of your refreshment? It is no wonder many Christians do not grow when they devour, even eagerly, the trashy novels of the world, and seek for refreshment at the broken cisterns which can hold no water. God has fully provided for our nourishment and refreshment, even as He did with Israel. Yet He had to say of them, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." (Jer. 2. 13.) If we are thus held and maintained by the Lord we are open for

*Spiritual manifestations.*

We are made conscious of direct impressions of spiritual things for our own enjoyment, and also to impart for the good of others. These manifestations, according to 1 Corinthians 12, are seen especially when the saints are convened, and are a very distinct evidence of—the presence and working of the Holy Spirit amongst the saints. Would we not all covet to be thus under the hand of the Spirit; to be sensi-

tive to His voice and leading, and able to receive original impressions in freshness and power.

Another very important truth is seen in 1 Peter 2. 5; a

*Spiritual house.*

This is composed of living stones; every believer who has tasted that the Lord is gracious and come to Christ as the living stone; rejected by men, but chosen of God and precious. Alas, many have before them, in spite of such a scripture as this, a *material* building which they call the house of God and they speak of going to a *place* of worship. "God . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands." (Acts 17. 24, 25.) How simple is the word that we are considering in 1 Peter 2: "Ye . . . are being built up a spiritual house." And also in this house are offered not *material* sacrifices, but

*Spiritual sacrifices,*

acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2. 5.) Material sacrifices served as types in the Old Testament and were very varied and of different values, shewing that there is room for all of us to bring something to God. Even two pigeons were accepted from an Israelite, or some fine flour. These spiritual sacrifices are referred to in Hebrews 13. 15 as the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. We may perhaps feel how little we know and how feebly we can express ourselves, but let us *offer* it. If it is from the heart, our own appreciation of Christ, it is *very* precious to God. We must not try to copy some one who is more advanced, or feel we must keep quiet because we cannot give

thanks like him. We can say, Amen, to others' offerings, but let us see to it that we have our own. Many are much more concerned about service to men than this blessed, priestly service to God. May we be moved more on this line. Then, too, there are

*Spiritual songs.*

These in Ephesians 5. 19 are the outcome of being filled with the Spirit and also definite experience with God. For psalms are mentioned first, then hymns, which seem to set the saints together in united response and spiritual overflow in praise, and thanksgiving follow. There is nothing said about music or choirs anywhere in regard to christian worship. Those who have adopted these things always refer to the Old Testament for scriptural support. But here again we see the *contrast* between what Israel had and what marks this dispensation. The emphasis in this passage in Ephesians is on *singing* with the *heart*. And in Hebrews 13. 15, "The fruit of your *lips*."

*Spiritual persons.*

These are referred to in several scriptures. The outcome of what we have been considering would be that there are those among us governed and controlled by the Spirit, the flesh judged and disallowed, and such living, walking and thinking in the Spirit. Divine sensibilities would be formed and intelligence in the mind of God. We are very thankful there are such, but it is open to all of us, for it is really normal Christianity. "Ye that are spiritual" is mentioned in Galatians 6. 1 as a rebuke, because the majority there were under bondage to legal principles, making something of the flesh. Again in 1 Corinthians 3. 1, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiri-

**JERUSALEM'S BEAUTIFUL SITUATION. 235**

tual, but as unto carnal [or fleshly], even as unto babes in Christ." This, too, is a rebuke to the Corinthians. How good the word is in Romans 8. 6, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." May we know it more.

One more mention of spiritual things is in 1 Corinthians 15. 44: a

*Spiritual body.*

However much we may progress in divine things and be governed by what is spiritual, we must feel often how we are hampered and even hindered by these natural bodies. Adapted indeed for earth and material things they can be greatly used for God's glory if, according to Romans 12. 1, they are presented to Him. But God's end is to give us a spiritual body in which there will be no infirmity or any limitations. 1 Corinthians 15. 44 shews how this will be accomplished. The last touch of the Lord's spiritual work for us will be to give each a spiritual body, to share with Him for ever what we are learning now in contrary surroundings.

May the Lord give us to prayerfully consider this series of spiritual things, to the end that there might be more for Himself now, and more joy, too, in our own souls.

W. J. W.

**JERUSALEM'S BEAUTIFUL SITUATION.**

(PSA. 48. 2.)

**S**CRIPTURE abundantly justifies us in taking Jerusalem as a figure of the heavenly city, new Jerusalem. (Rev. 21; Gal. 4. 26; Heb. 12. 22.) "Beautiful for situation . . . is mount Zion"; on the

east is the Jordan, speaking of death ; on the south Egypt, speaking of judgment ; on the west the sea, unrest and separation ; and as to the north, Jeremiah 1. 14 says, "Evil comes from thence." The heavenly Jerusalem will undoubtedly be beyond death, judgment, unrest, separation and evil of every kind. The nearer environments of the city suggest exactly the same thing. The Lord passed over Kedron on the east shortly before His death (John 18) ; on the south the valley of Hinnom is a figure of judgment ; the valley of Gihon on the west suggests unrest and separation (1 Kings 1. 49 ; 2 Chron. 33. 14) ; whilst Calvary, where all the evil was dealt with, was actually on the north, the antitype of the burnt offering (Lev. 1. 11), which was killed on the north side of the altar.

Isaiah 30. 33 speaks of Tophet, which was in the valley of Hinnom on the south of Jerusalem, as a figure of eternal punishment ; who Hinnom was is unknown, but the meaning of his name, "There they are," is most striking if compared with Revelation 20. 10. In the New Testament the Greek word *Gehenna*, rightly translated "hell," literally means the "valley of Hinnom," confirming what has been previously said about it.

T. F. C.