

GOODLY WORDS

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

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GOODLY WORDS.

THE GUEST-CHAMBER.

THE guest-chamber was the place where the Lord entertained His disciples, where after keeping the feast of the passover for the last time, He instituted the supper. It is the *Lord's* supper, He is the *Host*, and we come in as the *invited guests*. It was a large, upper room, furnished. The disciples would find their way to it by following a man with a pitcher of water. It would illustrate the local assembly, such as the assembly of God at Corinth, or what would spiritually represent it. In the present day it would be impossible to find the local company in any place, on account of the broken and confused state of things. But it is possible to find what spiritually represents it, if there are a few saints in any given place who are walking and assembling together in the truth of the assembly, and in practical holiness.

The room was *large*, there was room for all, it did not represent a sectarian corner. Those walking in the light of the assembly would in their mind and affections embrace all saints as of the assembly of God, so that the door is open to them if they are prepared to acknowledge Christ as Lord and Head, and to conform to the law of the house.

Then it is an *upper* room, it is an elevated position above and apart from all that is going on in the world around, a place of happy seclusion where the Lord delights to be with His own. It is *furnished*, every-

thing is provided for the comfort of the Lord's guests. How good to know that there is such a spot where the Lord can be found with His own; where He entertains and ministers to them, for His love finds its outlet in serving. It reminds one of what He said to His disciples of the coming day, when He will make His servants sit down and come forth and serve them. (Luke 12. 37.) He will never cease to serve, because He will never cease to love.

Many a one has found his or her way to this sacred spot by following the man with a pitcher of water, that is, coming into touch with a living ministry which liberates and satisfies the soul. (John 7. 37, 38.) "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

What instruction there is for us in the death of Christ, and what a feast there is provided for us, a feast of love which we shall never exhaust. And He would say to us, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." All has been secured by His death, and He would have us enjoy fully the fruits He has secured for us. As we do so, our affections are quickened, and we are drawn after Him. We sit down under His shadow and His fruit is sweet to our taste. It is well pleasing to the Lord to find a company to whom He can come, as those responding to His invitation. He will come and manifest Himself to such. (John 14. 18, 28; 20. 19.)

What a wonderful place the guest-chamber is, what a privilege to be entertained by the Lord. It is all His own thought and providing. It is the next blessed place to the home He has provided for us in the Father's house.

F. H. B.

“WIDOWS INDEED.”

(1 TIM. 5. 3, 5.)

PROVISION is made in the house of God for every condition of need! It is said, “A father of the fatherless, a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.” (Psa. 68. 5.) He would therefore have His widows provided for, and in the house of God care is to be taken that God’s thought for such is recognised and responded to.

1 Timothy deals with cases of bodily need, and sets before us the moral condition that becomes such, and that is well-pleasing to God. Need can only exist while the Lord is absent, and is allowed that we might feel and prove the reality of His absence, and all that it means not only to the world but to His own. As missing Him, and mourning His absence, we should be found here in the true widow spirit, a spirit which comes distinctly before us in Luke’s gospel, where the truth of the house of God is presented to us.

First of all let us consider the widow of Nain (Luke 7. 11–15). She was in truth a widow indeed and desolate. Not only had she lost her husband, but her only son also, and hers was a case of desperate need. No doubt she sets before us the need of mankind as such, which can only be met by the Lord Himself as the vessel of God’s grace to men; and He is found ready and able to meet that need. In that dignity peculiar to Him, He comes and touches the bier, and they that bare him stood still. He then raises the young man from his state of death, and restores him to his mother. In the grace shewn to that widowed heart we learn that we are not only raised up, but “restored to our mother”—that is, put into connection with that

system of heavenly grace of which Luke speaks, and which is set forth in Jerusalem above, for "Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother." (Gal. 4. 26.)

Then the widow of 1 Timothy 5 was to put her trust in God. This is set before us in the widow of Luke 21. Having only two mites they are both devoted to the divine interests. No doubt she was given two for a divine testing. She might well have argued as to her devotedness had she given one to God's treasury and reserved one for her own needs, but no—both are devoted to God. Her all is committed to His interests here; the house of God must benefit by her all! How precious to God was that devotion of all her living; how He prized it! (Luke 21. 4.) She did indeed put her trust in God, and she would never be disappointed!

The last feature of the widow of 1 Timothy is "continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." This comes before us in Anna the prophetess. (Luke 2. 37.) Here we have the effect of grace in full measure. She had devoted herself to God and to His interests. Left long without earthly support, she committed herself to God, and was found as completely devoted to Him, awaiting the coming of that One for whom her heart longed. She knew also that company who had hopes akin to her own; she was in touch with the people and interests of God here. Dipping her foot in oil (Deut. 33. 24) she was sustained in spiritual power until the moment when all her hopes were fulfilled and her glad heart could speak of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

There remains but a reference to the widow of Luke 18. Though faith be tested in this moment, we can afford to wait, for God will surely avenge His

FOUR ANCHORS.

5

own elect, though He bear long with them. Testing days will soon be done, and we shall then see Him for whom we wait.

May we, as set in connection with this system of heavenly grace, know what it is, not only to hold all we possess in view of the divine interests, but to yield ourselves entirely to God, and to be here solely for His pleasure !

“ Lord Jesus, come !
Thine absence here we mourn ;
No joy we know apart from Thee,
No sorrow in Thy presence see ;
Come, Jesus, come ! ”

Wolverhampton.

H. E. S.

FOUR ANCHORS.

“ Fearing lest we should be cast on rocky places, casting *four* anchors out of the stern, they wished that day were come.” (Acts 27. 29.)

IN the voyage of life the possibility of spiritual shipwreck has to be seriously faced, for “ some have made shipwreck as to faith.” As the young commence the perilous part of their life, unskilled in navigation, inexperienced as to the perils ahead, and with small knowledge of the chart, they especially need to have strong anchors to keep their ship from drifting.

In the verse quoted the ship was driving before the storm and the four anchors were cast to prevent it from running upon the sunken rocks. The necessity for strong safeguards to prevent us being carried with the strong tides of evil cannot be overestimated.

This paper does not refer to the question of the

eternal security of a believer, for that depends on the finished work of Christ and of God's appreciation of it.

It is on the ground of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that God righteously justifies "him that believeth in Jesus." But in the path through this world, for the whole course of our lives here there are many perils, sunken rocks and cross currents which may cause the believer to slip into a God-dishonouring path, to lose his present joy, his part in the service of God, and become, as to life and testimony here, a shipwreck.

The first great safeguard is the

FEAR OF THE LORD,

preserving, as it does, from evil, for "in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence."

The unnamed man of God who was sent to Jeroboam was powerful as long as he acted in the fear of the Lord. Boldly he testified against the idolatry of the king, intreated the Lord for the restoration of the king's hand and positively refused the king's invitation, "Come home with me and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a present." But when overtaken by the old prophet who lied unto him he departed from the fear of the Lord which would have preserved him. He should have known that God cannot deny Himself, but he disobeyed and lost his life that very day. How important is the word, "Be thou in the fear of the Lord *all the day long*"!

Many a life-voyage that has started well has ended in spiritual shipwreck because this anchor—the fear of the Lord—has not been securely fixed.

May we give heed to the words:

FOUR ANCHORS.

7

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.”

“The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life.”

“The fear of the Lord tendeth to life.”

“The fear of the Lord prolongeth days.”

“The fear of the Lord is the discipline of wisdom.”

“My son, fear the Lord !”

* * * * *

The second anchor to hold the believer through life is

FAITH, AND A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

More than once the apostle refers to these in his Epistles to Timothy and exhorts him to “maintain faith and a good conscience,” which some having put away have made shipwreck as to faith. How often we need to pray, “Lord, increase our faith” ! To have the light of “things unseen” governing our affections, our life, and our service, is a great safeguard.

But faith must be coupled with a good conscience, for unjudged sin, secret habits which are displeasing to the Lord, or unrighteousness in any form, defile the conscience. The ship is then no longer held securely, and easily drifts with the current to disaster.

* * * * *

The next safeguard for the preservation of a life of testimony for God is

FIDELITY.

It was in the exhortation to slaves that this word is given, “shewing all good fidelity in all things, that they may adorn the teaching which is of our Saviour God *in all things.*”

Trustworthiness as the result of being in the school of grace, is an essential part of a Christian’s testimony,

and even in the restricted life of a slave it could be used to adorn the doctrine and bring glory to God. How much more, with all the liberty that is enjoyed in these days of privilege, is it necessary to be marked by true fidelity to God, to parents, to masters, to our brethren, and to men.

* * * * *

The fourth safeguard is found in the word, "they persevered in the teaching and fellowship of the apostle, in breaking of bread and prayers." Thus christian

FELLOWSHIP

is provided for our preservation as well as our joy. The knowledge of the doctrine, valuable as it is, will not preserve us, but the effect of practical fellowship with our fellow-believers, with whom we can walk in happy spiritual agreement, is a great anchor, for it involves sharing our joys and sorrows, sufferings and reproach, and enjoying the companionship of fellow-servants, fellow-soldiers and fellow-worshippers. It is in principle as though we lived in a walled city, protected from the evil without and enjoying the privileges with our fellow-citizens within.

As we desire to follow the Lord Jesus wholeheartedly and to live to God, so we should appreciate the privileges and obligations of this holy partnership, for we have been "called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus may we stand shoulder to shoulder, "firm in one spirit with one soul," and "having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing."

May we each be held firmly by these four great anchors, that our "whole spirit and soul and body

SAMUEL—HIS GROWTH IN THE HOUSE OF GOD. 9

be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

F. S. M.

SAMUEL—HIS GROWTH IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

No. 1.

(1 SAM. 2. 1, 7, 8, 11-19, 21, 35, 36; 3. 1-10, 19, 20.)

I THOUGHT that we might consider the growth and spiritual progress of the boy Samuel, who ultimately became a prophet of Jehovah. I believe his history represents the normal growth of a child brought up in “house” conditions.

Scripture gives the histories of many persons. It is of interest to note how far back the Spirit of God may go to develop the link required. In some cases the history begins and ends with the person concerned; in others, as in the case before us, the history begins with the mother; in Timothy’s case it goes back to the grandmother. Some children are accredited to the mother, some to the father; others, like Solomon, to both father and mother. Jabez (1 Chron. 4. 9) is accredited to his mother. His mother called his name Jabez, because she bore him with pain. Jabez himself then continues the history—history which is of interest to God—by calling on the God of Israel. It is not a lengthy prayer, but the desires expressed stand out in a chapter devoted to genealogies. I only mention this as confirming the line of things before us.

Samuel was the product of his mother’s exercises. His father has a very small part in the record. The desire, prayer, and exercise that led to his being lent

to the Lord all the days of his life were entirely hers. The life of Samuel is the fruit of the devotion of one who exults in Jehovah. In her prayer (chap. 2) she prophetically outlines the features of divine movements which were to mark the era being ushered in, and of which Samuel was to be the prophet. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes." Princes—nobles are in view, men of great distinction are about to be developed in God's ways; David, the man after God's own heart, is about to be ushered in—"Jehovah will give strength unto his king." To enter into the new era deliverance from the dunghill and spiritual elevation are necessary.

I should like now to draw attention to the context of these passages. Scripture gives an atmosphere and setting which cannot be disassociated from the main theme, and the setting enhances the beauty of the theme. Here the official priesthood is seen in terrible failure. There was no power for continuity, so God works in view of the future; along with a Moses, we find a Joshua—one bearing the present burden, the other in preparation to take it up. The sons of Eli were wicked, not only morally wicked, grossly wicked, but spiritually wicked in that they ignored the fat—that which was reserved for God. "The sin of the young men was very great before Jehovah, for men despised the offering of Jehovah." I wonder if we realise the seriousness of that situation, a situation so much to the enemy's liking that he has perpetuated it, and it marks the present day. God's portion, the fat, is taken by violence. The whole ordering of the priesthood was to the end that God might get His portion, as God said to Moses, "Take thee Aaron . . .

SAMUEL—HIS GROWTH IN THE HOUSE OF GOD. 11

that he may serve *me* as priest." The sons of Eli should have had the greatest appreciation for God's portion in the offerings. They were set apart to offer with holy hands that which was suitable for God's pleasure, and because they despised this, men abhorred the offerings of Jehovah. How often in this religiously dissolute day we hear sober, thinking men express contempt for the holy things of God, and all because the official priesthood has failed to maintain God's portion! It is only as God receives His portion that man's portion is preserved in freshness and vitality.

But God was about to step in. He had allowed the failure to mature, so that its terribleness should be exposed, but He always has the right and power to intervene, and He does. Judgment was about to fall and no sacrifice could set it aside. God had done with the whole system which robbed Him, and He was about "to raise up *for himself* a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and mind" (1 Sam. 2. 35), and every one that is left of Eli's house should come to crouch to him for a small piece of silver and for a cake of bread. Christ is thus in view as sustaining everything for God, and as having that which meets the need of all in Eli's house. The priesthood stood in relation to Aaron, but here the expression used is not "Aaron and his house," but "thy [Eli's] house." The grossness of the failure is not accredited to Aaron. The priestly office now is related to Christ. It is by His favour and under Him as great High Priest that we may eat the priestly bread.

Now with all this in view and in this atmosphere God introduces a little boy. My thought is to note the comments of the Holy Spirit on his growth. Growth

is delightful to God. All living things grow until maturity is reached. It is a serious thing if any one of us is found in a stunted state. We have to confess and deplore the slowness of our growth, but it is indeed a serious matter if there be no growth. Perhaps the slowness is because we are so seldom and so little under the influences of God's house. This boy Samuel lay in the temple of Jehovah where the ark of God was, and there God called to him. What a unique situation! The glory and strength of the Aaronic priesthood portrayed in an old man in great weakness with two wicked sons. What a picture of the intimacy and liberty connected with the new order of priesthood is here foreshadowed—a little boy lay in the temple where the ark of God was! Aaron had strict limitations put upon his entering the most holy place—once a year, and then only with blood, but this boy lay in rest in the place where Christ was typically set forth, not yet on his own exercises, but on his mother's, as it says: "Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah." It is not a picture of one being converted as the Thessalonians were converted—turned to God from idols—for Samuel had never known an idol. His mother had turned his face Godward from the moment her desire had been connected with God.

How powerful are the beneficent influences which are in the assembly, which are able to keep the young people for God, if only there is the mother element to bring them in. How often the young are discouraged by the correctional element seen in the father, where there has been no corresponding mother element to bring in the side of love and sympathy! When it does not so work, as is so often the case, the failure

is on our side, for God has provided all the influences under which the young men and women should grow up as delightful to Him.

A. E. M.

THE KINDNESS OF GOD.

(2 SAM. 9; 16. 1-4; 19. 24-30.)

ONE is impressed by the words of David as recorded in the scripture before us. How like the Lord is David here! that blessed One who has done so much for us, suffering and dying for us in order that He might disclose the Father's heart. The kindness of God! What thoughts it calls forth as for a moment we consider it. To whom was David's kindness shewn? Well might we stand amazed as we think of the object on whom this kindness was bestowed, kindness shewn to one who was a descendant of his bitterest enemy. What a picture of ourselves, who by the wondrous grace of God have been brought to know the blessed Lord. How well we remember the time when we too were afar off from God, hiding in fear. And what of you, dear reader, who, it may be, are in the same position even now, hiding from God? Listen to the voice of the One who gave up all, gave His life, One who in the agony of His soul cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Thus He suffered for you and for me, and now He says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." He is waiting to shew the kindness of God to every one who will close with His offer.

Mephibosheth means, Out of my mouth proceeds reproach, and is not that the character of every one of us? How often have we reproached Him who only

desired to shew the kindness of God to us, and proved His love by giving Himself. Mephibosheth dwelt in the land of Lo-debar (no pasture). How many of us know only too well what that means. The younger son in Luke 15 would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat. There is very good food for the worldling to be found around us, pleasures of every conceivable kind ; we do not envy them their pleasure. But such things will not satisfy sons. If the true David has called us, it is in order that we might be led out from the land of no pasture and sit at His table continually as one of the King's sons. Lamé on both feet we are, and if we try to walk alone we shall assuredly soon realise our lameness ; but seated at the King's table our lameness is not seen. He gives strength and hides our weakness. Saul stood head and shoulders above any other man, but the only kind of man that remains to be seen is lame on both feet. One whose legs are unequal, such we were as after the flesh, but brought to David's table by the true David we are now nourished as the King's sons, fed continually from the King's table.

But we must not expect an easy pathway, we shall not be left long without being tested. How many young believers are sore distressed when the test comes ! How many of us who have answered to the kindness of God, when the test came have failed because we had not fed continually at the King's table ? The testing time came for Mephibosheth. David has to flee from his own son. The test came from within, from the family circle ; it is perhaps from within that we are tested most. Absalom (father of peace) had won the hearts of a number of the people, and they went after him in their simplicity. When the test

comes it is the simple who are deceived by the one who says, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going." (Prov. 14. 15.)

The Lord would have us simple concerning evil, but wise concerning His things. It is only as we are nourished from the King's table that we are supported when the test comes.

We have noticed that the test comes from within. How often this is the case with us, the very point we thought we were strong on fails us and we are unable to go on. It may be we were leaning on some one else and that person is removed, or the Lord brings something in to test us to shew us that our only source of supply is to be found in Himself. But painful though the testing may be, it is as we stand the test we get the gain of it. We are brought into infinite blessing when we are brought to the Lord. But we are made to realise as we go on that there still are wonderful possibilities in store for us. Alas, too often we are content to settle down where we are! We are safe for heaven. But is that all His desire for us? Is that why He has shewn us such kindness? No! surely His desire is that we should know Him better, and so He allows the tests to come. These shew what we have been feeding on and whether we are well nourished.

David misunderstood Mephibosheth. We too may be misunderstood; no one was more misunderstood than the Lord. But He will never misunderstand us; we may do things in a left-handed way, but He reads the heart. We may at times be misunderstood by our fellow-Christians, but He who reads the heart does not make mistakes.

Then, too, the heart that feeds on Christ is able to let all go in order to have Him. Mephibosheth was not concerned about lands or anything of this world. We can afford loss in this world, as the apostle could say, "I count all things but loss that I may win Christ." Truly this is pleasing to the Lord and is the end for which He has taken us up. First He calls us in order to shew kindness to us, feeds us at His table, and if He allows us to be tested it is in order that He may become more precious to us and that we may learn to know Him as we could not do in any other way. If we answer to such tests He will support and nourish us with food from His own table and the result will be that we shall be prepared to suffer here for Him. He will be all in all to us and thus will His desire for us be fulfilled. May we each know what it is to receive our nourishment from the King's table, so that we shall be able to stand in an evil day, and having done all to stand!

F. W. D.

GLEANINGS.

BY S. J. B. C.

Never do we portray our own character more vividly than in the way we portray the character of another.

Christianity grants moments to *sorrow*, but it *dedicates* all our lives to *joy*.

The levity in private of some who minister mars much they advance in public.

EARTH-DWELLING AND TENT-DWELLING. 17

The servant of the Lord should be known by his *savour*, as well as by his *service*—the incense of the sanctuary.

“Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it”! Only do it and He will turn your water into wine.

Titus was to “affirm constantly” that we are *not* saved by good works, “*in order that*” (*iva*) good works might be maintained by us.

Keep not worldly company lest you increase the number.

EARTH-DWELLING AND TENT-DWELLING

THE difference between those who dwell in tents and those who are earth-dwellers is illustrated by Abraham and Lot. When Abram responded to the call of the *God of glory* he made a real move, and what afterwards marked him is indicated in Hebrews 11. 9, where we are told that “Abraham dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob.”

Of Lot it is said that he went with Abram, and although he was carried along for a while in the faith of another the time came when Lot was tested, and he makes a choice and chooses the well-watered plains of Jordan and dwells in the cities of the plain and thus became an earth-dweller, and when the judgment of God fell upon the wicked cities he was saved as by fire.

To-day there are those who link themselves outwardly with the people of God and are content to be carried to a certain point; they never make a move as the outcome of their own individual exercise. To such the test surely comes. Earthly gain and advantage is put before them and they are caught by it, and like Lot go down spiritually and are lost as to the present gain of the testimony; endeavouring to make the best of both worlds they find no pleasure in either.

On the other hand Abraham moves on with God, content with a tent and an altar, discovering that pathway which leads to the enjoyment of the friendship of God, the knowledge of the mind of God and the receiving of divine communications, for it was of Abraham, His friend, that God said, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?" A. L.

"THE TESTIMONY."

THE "testimony" is an expression which we very commonly use, but I doubt if many have a very definite idea of it. I will tell you the idea which it conveys to my mind. Testimony is that which God gives of what He is going to establish before He establishes it publicly. God does not give testimony of anything that He is not going to make public. The Spirit of God has come down to testify of Christ, but the point is that God is going to make Christ manifest.

I refer to two passages. Look at 1 Timothy 2. 6, "who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time," and chapter 6. 14, 15, "that thou keep

this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." The one shews that a time is appointed for the preaching, and the other that a time is appointed for the appearing. I want to make plain that testimony refers to something which is going to appear. Testimony loses its force and character if you do not connect it with that which God is going to display. What God is going to display is comprehended in one word, and that is CHRIST, His purpose in Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is going to put down every evil power, that is, to subdue all things that are contrary to God, and to bring to light His grace and His righteousness. God intends to have a universe which will be under the power and influence of His grace. It is His purpose to display Christ, and there will be a universe controlled in every part by the grace of God.

Now before Christ is displayed God gives testimony so that we may now be in the light of that which is to be displayed. The effect of this upon us will be to deliver us from the influence of all that is existing. What is existing is not according to God. Sin reigns by death; but God is going to make evident His purpose and grace in Christ Jesus before the world began. God will fill the universe with blessing.

Now there is another point in connection with this; we get the annulling of death and the bringing to light of life and incorruptibility. If God is to have a universe according to His purpose, the power of death must be annulled. Death has to be swallowed up in victory, and when the Lord appears life and incor-

ruptibility will be evident. Christ will be the fountain and source of life. As the sun is the fountain and source of light and life to this earth, so Christ will be as the Sun of righteousness. Creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, life and incorruptibility will come to pass, and death will be annulled.

F. E. R. (*Extracted.*)

THE NEW YEAR.

SAVIOUR, we enter the year
Breathing a prayer and a song :
Counting on Thee to be near,
Safely to lead us along.

Calmly we face the new road,
Under Thy sheltering care—
Fret not, nor, darkly forbode
Troubles we never may bear.

Simply we leave to Thy will
All its dim windings and length,
Confident Thou wilt be still
Daily our Refuge and Strength.

Free from misgiving and dread,
Veiled though the future may be,
Peacefully onward we tread,
Trustfully leaning on Thee.

Ere the year lengthens or goes,
Sweetly the home call of love
Earth's chequered journey may close—
Gather us round Thee above.

Beautiful Star of the Day !
Herald the flush of the dawn ;
Lord, stoop and catch us away—
Bring in that fair New Year morn.

S. J. B. C.

SAMUEL—HIS GROWTH IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

No. 2.

(1 SAM. 2. 1, 7, 8, 11-19, 21, 35, 36; 3. 1-10, 19, 20.)

THE first point to note in considering Samuel's growth is that he ministered to Jehovah in the presence of Eli the priest. How comely is this evidence of spiritual growth! The world looks for, and delights in, prodigies. Samuel is not that. To regard this history as altogether abnormal is to weaken the instruction and encouragement in it for us; he is the normal product of certain conditions. He ministers to Jehovah in the presence of Eli the priest. Eli's house is not yet set aside, although Eli himself was old and failing, for God does not set one thing aside until another is ready to take its place. The rising generation is not to be regarded as in a class apart. Samuel's experiences in ministry to Jehovah are gained in the presence of Eli the priest, even as the young now are to gain their experiences in the presence of those who may be near passing away and are priestly. It is as before them that experience is gained.

The next point to note is that "Samuel ministered before Jehovah, a boy girded with a linen ephod." He is developing exercises of his own, not now in the presence of Eli, but as having priestly instincts himself as suggested in the linen ephod. He is not yet on his own feet, as it were, but supported by his mother's exercises—by the coat which she brought to him from year to year. He is still a boy, not grown to manhood's

C

estate, not yet able to support the situation himself, but as profiting by the maternal care in the assembly, he is on the way to greater things. Samuel is being habituated to the ephod. Even a warrior, as David, at Ziklag, must learn to use the ephod. The ephod indicates the recognition of the priestly condition as being the only one having access to the mind of God. It excludes all fleshly workings. How comely to see a young man developing priestly instincts, discerning that the things of God cannot be sustained in fleshly energy! With some the danger is a clever mind, ability to remember and place things, but the ephod excludes all that.

The next point is that "the boy Samuel grew before Jehovah." This is a point of great importance. The brethren may note one as taking up greater activity, but the question arises, does what the brethren see represent what God sees? The flesh may make a great display and deceive the brethren and indeed deceive the person himself, but "Samuel grew before Jehovah," we read. Perhaps nothing tests our growth before Jehovah like private prayer. Long public prayers do not of necessity indicate true growth. The Pharisees, the farthest away from God, prayed publicly and long; but growth before Jehovah is suggested in an increasing desire to be alone in the presence of the Lord, with fresh and unwearied appreciation of having Himself to give expression to.

My next point is in verse 26, "The boy Samuel grew on and was in favour both with Jehovah and also with men." This is another clearly defined stage, and hardly requires comment, so definitely does the passage speak. Samuel is now in favour with Jehovah. What a thing to be coveted, to be pleasurable

SAMUEL—HIS GROWTH IN THE HOUSE OF GOD. 23

to God! It suggests Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, that He has found a dwelling there—not a coming and going—but a dwelling. This involves something being formed by the Spirit there in which God finds pleasure. Then too Samuel is seen here graced with the blessing of Asher, “Let him be acceptable to his brethren.” (Deut. 33. 24.) The brethren cannot but take account of one who is in the favour of Jehovah, and how acceptable it is to them.

But note he is still growing. There are still heights of further blessing in God’s thought for Samuel. He is to be confirmed (1 Sam. 3. 19, 20) as a prophet, as a servant of Jehovah, so that all should see that Jehovah was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground. Here we see, as it were, the finished product, a man whom God is with. We have already seen that Samuel was with God, now we see God with him. His words are now wholly related to the testimony, and none of them fall to the ground. It is this man, **this** typical product of “house conditions,” whom God gives to His people to help and support them in the days of king Saul. We should desire, and I trust we all do, to grow up to God’s great thought for us. The enemy would say that these blessed things are for another, that they are special, and he would suggest that this point of blessing is unreachable, but God **does** not speak thus. God’s purpose—the goal before us—is to be like Christ.

A. E. M.

“Like Him! oh grace supreme!

* * * *

Good to the feeblest heart;

That gives us now, as heavenly light,

What soon shall be our part.”

OVERCOMING.

(1) THE OVERCOMERS IN THE LAST DAYS.

IT cannot be denied that the characteristics of the last days are in evidence on every hand. The word of the Apostle Paul to Timothy that “in *the latter times* some shall depart from the faith” is fulfilled to-day. “The faith” is being openly denied and refuted by many who should be its exponents. The great wave of infidelity, the refusal to acknowledge the holy scriptures as the word of God; the advancement of errors which have been refuted for centuries, the denial of God and of the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ are most serious signs which weigh upon the hearts of all those who love Him and honour the Son who is over all, God blessed for evermore!

It is rightly felt that the prophetic word that “*in the last days* perilous times shall come” is actually fulfilled in the present condition of Christendom where there is the form of godliness but a denial of the power thereof! Unquestionably we see that according to the word of the Apostle Peter there are *in the last days* scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming?” for many publicly pour contempt upon and oppose the holy things of God. It must also be acknowledged that a great development of antichristian teaching and systems is taking place, answering to the word of the Apostle John, “*It is the last time*, even now there are many antichrists.”

Then, too, the words of the Lord from His glorified position to the seven churches have found their fulfilment, and we are clearly in the midst of the in-

OVERCOMING.

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difference described in the address to the assembly at Laodicea : “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” : terrible description of the last days in which we are found.

* * * * *

In the face of these solemn facts, every true and devoted believer in Jesus will inquire, “What is my position, and what attitude should I take, as surrounded by this rising tide of evil, which is waxing worse and worse as it draws nearer to the great final apostasy ?” Seeing that the Spirit of God has not indicated that there will be a complete or public return to the truth before the Lord comes for His own, it is clearly necessary that there should be overcomers in the midst of the evil, so that while the enemy is coming in like a flood, there may be those who rally around the standard which the Spirit of the Lord has lifted up against him. (Isa. 59. 19.)

The present confusion and departure from the truth have been foreseen by God, and provision has been made in the inspired writings to fortify and encourage the saints of God in this evil day. The Lord appeals for *overcomers*, for He looks for true affection to Himself and to the truth of God. His eye is upon those who desire to keep His word and not deny His name.

It is encouraging to consider that which abides untouched by all the error and departure, for nothing that is of or from God has broken down. To know God Himself, the unchangeable One, His beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and for ever, to have the Spirit of God, to cherish

the word of God with all its divine authority and authenticity, is to be equipped for overcoming.

In His last words to the assemblies the Lord says :
 “ He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne ; as *I also have overcome*, and have sat down with my Father in his throne.”

This is the great secret. The Lord presents Himself as the great Overcomer. He has endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself ; He has faced the temptations of Satan and defeated him. He has defeated death, triumphing over it by resurrection from among the dead. He has passed through the world and met all its force and subtlety, but could say, “ I have overcome the world.”

He has not left those whom He loves without resources. While face to face with all that marks these last days, the youngest and weakest believer has for his support,

the power of God,

the priesthood of Christ,

the presence of the Spirit of God,

all standing engaged to uphold and carry him through and enable him to “ withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” As scripture abounds with striking examples of overcomers in dark days, the attention of the young believer is called to the inspired record of men and women who came through victoriously.

May the Lord give each follower of Himself to be an overcomer in His name.

F. S. M.

THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY G. J. EARLE AT SUNDERLAND,
10/10/27.

(PHIL. 2; GEN. 2. 10-14; REV. 22. 1, 2, 16, 17.)

I DESIRE to speak to you on the "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" as seen in Philippians 2. We are living in a day when there is great light, but the question is, What use are we making of it? Does our conduct express it?

The Epistle to the Philippians, as we know, is the epistle of christian conduct—the conduct of one who has the privileges that you and I have. I do not know whether we have taken them up or not, but we *have* the privilege of entering into some of the deep things of God—especially in view of that which is brought before us in Ephesians.

Amongst the deep things is that the blessed God, of His own sovereign choice, gives you and me a position and a character before Him, nothing less than that we are before Him in Christ, for He has in His purpose chosen us in Christ before the ages of time: this is Ephesians.

In Philippians we get the conduct that flows out of character, out of the enjoyment of the knowledge of what we are before God. In the world men will not give you a character until after they have seen your conduct, but the blessed God, before ever time was, placed us before Him in Christ, and it is in all the blessedness of that character we are here to-day, or our profession is nought.

I desire to say a little on *the conduct*. If the character is in Christ you will find also the conduct must come

out of that blessed One too. What is in the forefront in Philippians 2 is the "mind of Christ." The "mind" here is I think the disposition of the Spirit that is in that blessed One—that "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." What glories meet in Christ! Oh, the lowliness, meekness, the gentleness and doing things without disputings. The apostle brings this before them, and is also in the good of it himself. "Blameless and harmless . . . without rebuke . . . holding forth the word of life"; it all flowed out from Christ; that flow is not stopped, and is not stopping.

The apostle brings before them that blessed One, and he can add to it what was true of himself. We want to be able to carry it on *in our manner of life*, not only in doctrine—the disposition to go down on all occasions. From the top He came, the very top, and went to the very bottom. Higher than any, deeper than any He has been. It was His voluntary disposition. He became a man and humbled Himself. It was the emptying Himself from God to man, and then as man humbled Himself and became *obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*.

You cannot go down from a dead level, there is no force in it, you must know what it is to come from the top and to have had a look in up there, and know what it is to be placed before the Father in Christ, to be able to come out here in all the lowliness and meekness of Christ, a disposition to go down. Out from that One shines all these qualities which we have read.

In verse 17 the apostle says, "But if also I am poured out as a libation on the sacrifice and ministration of your faith, I rejoice, and rejoice in common with you all." *There* was a man in the interests of Christ, delighting to really die for his brethren—

THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST. 29

there was a full supply of the Spirit of the One who did die.

We get something more in the next verse (18), "In like manner do ye also rejoice, and rejoice with me." The blessed Lord was all alone in carrying these qualities out—now we come to the Spirit's day, so that not only is the Spirit of Jesus Christ shed abroad in the heart of the apostle, but in the Philippians too.

The Holy Spirit has been given us of God, and the Spirit of God brings the nature of God ; we are brought thus to God in nature. The Spirit is in us too as the Spirit of Christ—that gives us His character. In our conduct amongst our brethren as well as elsewhere, we should come out here in the character of Jesus Christ. The character of Jesus Christ ! We see in the gospels what compassions He had on all who came to Him, and He gives them the credit from their side ; such is Jesus Christ, such now is His Spirit. He might have said to the woman, "It is virtue that has gone out of Me"—instead He says, "Thy faith hath saved thee."

The chapter goes on to speak of Timothy, a young man who was greatly attached to the Apostle Paul, and the apostle was greatly attached to him, he calls him his son. He could tell the Philippians how that this young man, in all the campaigns they had been in together, had served as a son with a father. He had not got any self-aggrandisement as young men often have—but being with and learning of the apostle, it was the apostle he wanted to bring to the front. How this sets forth the blessed Lord absolutely, in just those few words, "a son with a father." Whatever the Lord Jesus said and did here, it was the Father He was bringing out. And so Timothy had imbibed of the Spirit of Jesus Christ as he served in the gospel.

We have yet another example in Epaphroditus. Paul and Timothy were much in the forefront—more the Spirit of Jesus Christ in the public eye, but there is another way that the Spirit of Jesus Christ may come out, and we see it in this third example. Epaphroditus had been a brother who had taken the supply to the apostle that the Philippians had been rather slow in sending. The apostle gives him a good character—he puts letters after his name: “My brother and fellow-workman and fellow-soldier, your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.” He is taken ill on the way with his commission to the apostle, and was distressed, not because he was sick, but because the *Philippians had heard he was sick*. “For he was also sick close to death,” says the apostle, “but God had mercy on him, and not indeed on him alone, but also on me, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.” The apostle carried many sorrows. He sends Epaphroditus back to them after he had recovered that they might again rejoice—he wished to clear them from the heaviness the illness of Epaphroditus had caused them.

The Spirit of Jesus Christ in Epaphroditus did not come much before the public eye, but it was known to the apostle. “For the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life.”

I want to draw a parallel between what we read in Philippians and in Genesis and Revelation. We read in Genesis, “A river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.” A wonderful river—the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The head water of the river was once on earth, now a living Man at the right hand of God. Living water is flowing out from this

THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT OF JESUS CHRIST. 31

living Man. He has given us His Holy Spirit that, "out of our bellies should flow rivers of living water." In Genesis the water flowed out of the garden. Its first duty was to water the garden. Oh! to be in the condition of a watered garden—a supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ running unhinderedly amongst us.

After it had watered the garden it divided into four heads, Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates. Some remarks are made about the first river (Pison). The place where gold is, bdellium and the onyx stone—it speaks of those wonderful qualities. The bdellium, I understand, means a pearl, and the onyx stone was used on the shoulders and breastplate of the high priest. "The gold of that land is good." Pison means doubling; Gihon, impetuous grace; Hiddekel—sharp voice or sound; and Euphrates—good and abounding. The overflowing in grace, yet in truth, with a definite note about it, but good and abounding, they go out to the ends of the earth. The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ watering the garden first and then flowing out to the ends of the earth, but from only one source, remember. It is seen in Jesus Christ, in Paul, in Timothy, in Epaphroditus, but all from one source; the water at the end of those mighty rivers the same as at the source in the garden. There is not one bit for God but what is of Christ; not one drop from the source to the finish lost for God. Every drop is secured for Him. In the beginning of Acts we get the watered garden, and then the stream going forth to the ends of the earth. Ham (chap. 8), Shem (chap. 9), Japheth (chap. 10) and even Rome itself (chap. 28) being brought under its influence and blessing.

While travelling in Switzerland, and coming down the hills towards Geneva, I saw a mighty blue river

flowing swiftly along; by its side ran a small sluggish river, muddy and yellow. To all appearances they seemed to be in the same bed, but they were two distinct rivers. "Yet not I, but Christ." I trust it is thus in our souls!

We come now to the end of the book. (Revelation.) It is not the river of Eden now. God gathers up every drop of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. "And he shewed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, going out of the throne of God *and of the Lamb.*" (Rev. 22. 1.) We can stand and look at it with admiration now in display, but when it connects with it, "*and of the Lamb,*" what does it mean? It means all that God is as expressed in Christ—all that He is in the glory of His Person, not only up there, *but down here.* "Lamb" in scripture is a symbol of sorrow, suffering and sacrifice.

God gathers up every drop of the water in the river seen in the city, and it is seen proceeding out from the throne of God and of the *Lamb.* We are on the moment of translation. God is going to gather up every drop of the water, as it were—we are to be the bride, the *Lamb's wife*, the wife of the suffering One—the wife of the One who is the emblem of sacrifice. Our affections want stirring. We are going into an order of things for eternity, where the wife will have reciprocal affections for her husband. He came from the top and lived a voluntary life of suffering here. Oh! that we might know what it is to get the power from the Source, and in the power of the Holy Spirit in us, to continue that which comes from the Source.

In Revelation xxii. 16 it is, "I Jesus"—*the same to the end,* and the response, the watered garden,

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

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“The Spirit and the bride say, Come,” every one in the good of the Spirit, every drop gathering up now ; the work of the Holy Spirit perfected *in* us then, parallel to the work of Christ *for* us now.

“Let him that hears say, Come”—the plants in the garden—every individual—each one responding.

“Let him that is athirst come”—the depths overflowing outwardly.

“He that will, let him take the water of life freely”—going out universally. The end in view with God is that the tabernacle of God should be with men.

We have so much light all over the country, much precious ministry, but, beloved friends, what are we doing with it ? What about our conduct ? If we know what it is to go *in*, if that is true, the conduct will correspond.

May the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ be more seen in us, for His name's sake.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

THESSE words of Jesus in John 5. 39 have a special voice to us to-day. The reading of the Bible is sadly neglected, not only by those who make no profession of godliness, but by those who do. My desire is to appeal specially to the young to read for themselves the precious word of God and to search the scriptures. Untold hidden wealth will be revealed to the diligent and prayerful searcher. It is so easy to think that family reading, where it is held, or meetings, are quite sufficient. But we must get our own portion from the Lord, and that daily, if we are to be kept in a healthy and vigorous condition spiritually. Even the reading of good books will not make up for our

own diligent study of the word. It is said of the Bereans in Acts 17. 10 that they "searched the scriptures *daily*." You may find it is difficult sometimes to find an opportunity, but it is not the quantity you read that tells; it may be just a few verses that you can meditate upon during the day that will unfold some fresh glories of Christ that you have never seen before.

It is a very good plan, especially for children, to commit a portion of scripture to memory each day. These passages will serve you in good stead when you grow up and are privileged to serve the Lord, if He tarries. If the mind is well stored with scripture, it is like a well-stocked garden. There are tremendous possibilities under the hand of the Spirit of God to use what you know in a variety of ways. How often we have found a passage of scripture has been flashed into our memory at a needed moment, perhaps to refute an unbeliever, or to rebuke a scoffer, or to comfort a sorrowing one. But the Spirit does not recall passages to us we have never read. The Lord Jesus told His disciples that the Spirit would bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever He had said to them. They would be reminded of what they had heard. So we can read or hear things that seem to go from our minds until some critical moment, when they come before us in freshness and power. It is said of Timothy in 2 Timothy 3. 15, "that from a child thou hast *known* the holy scriptures." He not only read them, but *knew* them. He had been a diligent and careful reader. What a storehouse he had to draw upon in his service for the Lord.

I have met quite a number of Christians who have never read their Bible through, that is, in the order

in which it has been given us. It is clear that the hand of God has been over even the arrangement of the books of the Bible. Hence to get an outline of truth as Timothy was enjoined we need to read in order. There is a danger sometimes of reading in a haphazard way without any definite profit. Of course we may often open our Bibles when in distress or need and find just the word for the moment. But in our daily portion it is important to have some idea of the design and method of the word. (See Luke 1. 3.) We cannot read the opening chapters of Genesis and compare them with the closing chapters of Revelation without noticing the wonderful unity of the scriptures. They are woven together like a delicate texture and to remove one thread would spoil the whole. Again, if we read from Genesis to Nehemiah, we have a full account of God's dealings in historical order. Then again, in the New Testament, the gospels, Acts and epistles give us divine order on the historical side. The fact too of Romans being at the beginning of the epistles seems to be divinely ordered, for we cannot understand the others if we do not know Romans. These are only a few instances of divine order.

There is another very important reason for us all to be well versed in scripture, and that is, we are in the very last days when evil men and false teachers abound, who, alas, are often better informed in the letter of the scriptures than we are. I do not, of course, say they use them rightly, or even quote them correctly. All the more reason for us to be careful as to this. It is very humiliating, one feels, if we are confronted with a quotation from scripture that we did not know was there. Satan is not backward in quoting scripture, as we know he did to the Lord Himself.

His instruments, too, are very apt at this. In fact, some of the most blasphemous doctrine is being broadcasted all over the world under the guise of explanation of various passages of scripture. Then let us all, dear readers, especially those who are young, give heed to the words of our Lord Jesus at the head of this paper: "Search the scriptures," for, He adds, "they testify of me." We shall find truly how full and wondrous they are. *All* is divinely inspired. They have a variety of uses: for doctrine, reproof, correction, or instruction, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished.

Just a word in conclusion. Let us ever bear in mind that although the Bible contains history, it cannot be read just like an ordinary book, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. It is only under the guidance and help of the Spirit that we can *understand* the word. Hence the question in Acts 8. 30 is important, "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

W. J. W.

PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

(Psa. 122.)

THIS psalm presents a wonderful view of things. It begins with an individual with his heart set towards the house of God. It is one who has had soul history. In Psalm 120 we find him in great distress, feeling the power of evil around him, longing for peace, but surrounded by those who are for war. Then in the next psalm he speaks of getting help from Jehovah, and goes on to prove His preserving power from the evil. In this psalm (122) he says, "I was

glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Now he has companions: "*Our* feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." And as we stand within those gates what a wonderful order of things is seen: "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up," each coming from their own territory, each with their own peculiar touch, yet one glorious whole. The tribes of Israel suggest a people in relation to the purpose of God. They are called here "the tribes of JAH" (New Trans.), that is, God in the absolute supremacy of His own glorious Being, but it is to the name of JEHOVAH that they give thanks—the One whose faithfulness they had proved, who had redeemed them out of the hand of the enemy, who had borne with them in grace and been their strength in scenes of weakness. The God of *grace* had brought them to know Himself as the God of *glory*.

And now we see, as we stand within the gates of Jerusalem, the tribes going up in glorious completeness, in perfect moral suitability to Him whose great and glorious name they bear. The sight of it sets the soul longing in that direction: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." It is beautiful to see how the Apostle Paul is on this line; his prayers surely having the peace of Jerusalem in view. This is the line of true prosperity, for it is connected with that which is established to abide for ever. True peace is to be found only within the walls of Jerusalem; no disturbing element can gain entrance there; those mighty bulwarks are proof against any invader. It is only where peace is enjoyed that there can be true prosperity. Prosperity is connected with the palaces, where one finds all the glorious

features of Christ, all that God delights in, in Him, and all displayed to our enraptured eyes, for our delight also. What eternal wealth is found here, and how glorious is our title to it.

“God’s righteousness with glory bright,
Which with its radiance fills that sphere,
E’en Christ, of God the power and light,
Our title is that light to share.”

The Lord would have us to know increasingly what it is to enter upon these things *now*. The Holy Spirit is here to lead us into positive acquaintance with the sphere that Christ fills and to love all that belongs to Him. The Psalmist says of Jerusalem, “They shall prosper that love thee,” and the apostle, with the light of the day of glory filling his heart, says, “unto all them that love his appearing.” What an end for prayer—the *peace of Jerusalem*; and what a motive—for *my brethren and companions’ sakes*. The motive that governs the heart in this connection is love to all the saints.

“Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.” The desire for the saints is in relation to all the blessedness of the house of God. What glorious possibilities are opened up on this line! This is peace and prosperity indeed, and the Lord would have us to discover it increasingly. May it be so, for His name’s sake. C. D—N.

Winnipeg.

What have we ventured on the bare word of God?
Can you give half-a-dozen scriptures you have risked
anything upon? S. J. B. C.

THE SCRIPTURES.

CHRISTIANS find great delight in tracing in all the scriptures the things concerning the One who is their all. He who uttered His last word in the Apocalypse, "Surely I come quickly!" is found in Genesis. He is the Creator; He is the seed of the woman; His death and man's perfect acceptance in Him is pointed to in the clothing of Adam and Eve, in the offering of the firstling of Abel's flock and of the fat thereof, and in the sweet savour of Noah's sacrifice. The purpose of God in Christ and the church is set forth in Adam's deep slumber and the creation of Eve. The solemn journey of father and son to mount Moriah, where God "would provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" has its tale to tell to opened ears; while the history of Joseph speaks of the rejection by His brethren, of His glory all unknown to them, and of the final manifestation of the Christ to Israel, to their astonishment but permanent blessing. The present heavenly character of our Lord is foreshadowed in Isaac, who is in figure the risen man. The entrance of sin, the conflict of good with evil and its issue; the world, too, its origin, its character and its doom—all these things and much more are plainly set forth in the first book of the Bible. The approach of God in grace to man in the person of His well-beloved Son, and the sufferings of Christ upon the cross, meeting all the requirements of God's holy nature, form the great subject of the gospels. Then in the Acts, after the glorifying of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Ghost, a tide of life and blessing is brought into a perishing world, God's glory being established in the heavens in the Man who came to do His will upon the cross. . . . The infinite value of the precious

blood of Christ, the fulfilment of all the types of the Old Testament, shewing that this one glorious Person is the key to the Old Testament scriptures; the bringing in of life, joy and peace, where death, sorrow and trouble had their sway, the bright prospect of the reign of Him in whom the Father's good pleasure was always found—all these stupendous truths make up one glorious whole in scripture.

E. L. B.

Extracted.

“ WE DO NOT WELL.”

“ We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace . . . now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.” (2 Kings 7. 9.)

“ WE do not well ”; thus mused the leprous four,
 Who tasted now a welcome, bounteous store;
 Inside the city, famine, death, and fear,
 While safety, food in plenty, lay so near.

“ We do not well ”—good news had they to tell,
 Mercy had come—God had done all things well,
 They tasted joy, relief and kindness great,
 Others must share it, e'er it be too late.

“ We do not well ”—Oh, can it, can it be,
 I've tasted of God's grace, so full, so free,
 Mercy has reached me, nigh the brink of woe.
 Am I ashamed to tell the sinner so?

“ We do not well ”—God's heart is open wide,
 Love for the vilest case is not denied,
 He is in earnest, knows its worth—one soul,
 Gave His dear Son, to make the sinner whole.

“ We do not well ”—time's course is nearly run,
 Eternity looms near—have you begun
 To tell the blessed news to all around,
 The worthy, precious Saviour you have found?

“ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.” (Rom. 1. 16.)

W. F.

THE WAVE BREAST.

NOTES OF A GOSPEL ADDRESS BY J. T.

(LEV. 8. 29 ; JOHN 13. 23 ; LUKE 18. 13 ; 23. 48.)

YOU will observe that the word "breast" is found in each of these four scriptures. In the first two, the breast of Christ is presented, and in the others, the breasts of men like ourselves. It may be interesting and instructive if I call your attention to the distinction between the idea of the bosom and of the breast. In the original they are different words, conveying different meanings ; while in English they are regarded as synonyms. The bosom refers to receptive love which makes room for its object. The breast has an allusion to that part of the body which contains the organ of the higher affections. It denotes firmness.

There is a place in the bosom of the Father for Jesus. As a Man, He was, so to speak, received into it. That He was always there personally I need not say ; but as a Man He found a place there. He qualified here in His walk and ways under the eye of God to become an object, as Man, of divine affections. Hence as He was baptised, the heavens were opened and it is said, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight." In connection with this it is said, "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." It is not said that He was in the breast, but in the bosom—the place of receptive affection. There was, as it were, room for Him there ; and the word is in the present tense : "which *is* in the bosom of the Father." Jesus is there now. He remains there ; as there He declared God.

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But scripture also speaks of the bosom of Jesus. It is written, "One of his disciples in the bosom of Jesus." (John 13. 23, New Trans.) I need not remind you that there is room there for other disciples. But one is spoken of. This disciple, John, was in the bosom of Jesus. He found what was there, the love of Jesus. As the only begotten Son is in the bosom of the Father, and from there He declares the Father; so John, as in the bosom of Jesus, gives an account of the declaration. It is John who writes these things for the benefit of others. It is he who writes about the place that Jesus has in the bosom of the Father. It is he who records the words of Jesus, "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." So that the one who is in the bosom of the Father reveals God, and the one who pre-eminently speaks of that revelation is he who is in the bosom of Jesus. On account of this, we have the wonderful Gospel of John. There is no other like it. There we find, "God so loved." As in the bosom of Jesus, John learned love. He wrote, "Hereby we have known love." Do we all know love? The Spirit of God takes up the man who knows love, who, as it were, is in the bosom of Jesus, to write about love. Therefore John was able to say, "Hereby we have known love." He also said, "And we have seen, and testify, that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world." John witnesses to this, for he knew what was in the bosom of Jesus. In the manner in which he knew it, John testified to it. He said, "We . . . testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

Speaking of the breast, we see the firmness and

reliableness of divine love. That firmness is involved in the word "breast"; you may easily verify by an examination of that part of the body. So that when we come to the verse which I read in John 13, you find the word "lying," or "resting" as it were. This implies that there is stability there. There was firmness. Let me invite you to-night, beloved friends, to rest on that breast by faith. You can trust the love of Christ. Its firmness was attested when He underwent the judgment of God. He "endured the cross." *Endured* it! He did it in love. The Apostle Paul said, "He loved me and gave himself for me." And in another place he said, "The love of Christ constraineth us." From this you see how Paul understood it, how he estimated it, and how firm and effective it was in his soul, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Let me present this love to you. You have now the opportunity of trusting it for your eternal welfare.

In Leviticus, you will observe that the breast of the ram of consecration is waved by Moses. It is a type of the love of Christ, "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God." If the light of Christ giving Himself for you enters your soul, it will deliver you. You will not remain in this present evil world. Salvation means that you are to be taken out of it. As Israel of old was taken out of Egypt, so the gospel received in a believer's soul separates him from this world.

In this chapter (Lev. 8) the blood of the offering

was to be placed on the right ear of Aaron and of his sons; upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet. They were to be laid hold of in their *understandings*, in their *work*, and in their *walk*. They were to be thus consecrated to God. Let no one who is a Christian assume that he can enjoy forgiveness and the blessings of the gospel and continue in this present evil world; he cannot. I do not say, if you have once believed and have received a knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, that you will be lost. But I do say that you cannot enjoy now the blessings of the gospel if you have associations with the world.

The ear refers to the organ of intelligence. By it I take in things spoken. This world is speaking many things, but God is also speaking. He speaks to us by His Spirit by means of His servants and the scriptures, and the ear is able to take in what He speaks. You refuse what is not of God and let in the truth. But the blood was also put on the thumb. The thumb is the most powerful finger on my hand. It represents my ability to work, to accomplish things. What am I doing as a Christian? Is my ability separated, consecrated to Christ? The blood on the toes refers to my walk. Where do my footsteps lead to? We read of the "steps" of Jesus. Where did they lead to? They led to the cross. It is true that He was put to death, but He said He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again. John the Baptist looked on Jesus as He walked. Mary, seeing that His feet were leading Him to Calvary that He might give His life for us, *anointed* them. This act presents the idea of consecration—in her mind those feet were devoted to the will of God.

It is said : " And Moses took the breast, and waved it for a wave offering before the Lord : for of the ram of consecration it was Moses' part." It is a type of the Lord. It was to be waved by Moses. This points to the breast of Christ as it is before God. Think of what God has in the breast of Christ ! Think of how His heart beats for God ! He remained firm in His devotedness, even to death. He never swerved for a moment from the will of God.

In connection with this Jesus bore the weight of divine wrath in His own body. In His own body on the tree He bore our sins. As the ark borne by the priests stood firm in the midst of Jordan, that all Israel might pass over on dry ground, so Jesus firmly stood in the judgment of God, so that we should not come into it. He did it through love. John leaning on His bosom realised the power of that love which led Jesus to lay down His life for us. I invite you to-night to lean on it. I invite you to think of what was done for you. He gave Himself. Every requirement of your soul has been met. If it is a question of forgiveness of sins, He has settled it, for He gave Himself. There is no greater sacrifice. He met the divine claim by laying down His life.

In Luke 18 we have the breast of a poor sinner. You remember the well-known passage, " Two men went down to pray, one a Pharisee." He prayed in himself. He did not smite his breast. He was satisfied with himself, for it never occurred to him that within that breast of his there was an evil, corrupt spring. It never occurred to him that within that breast there was a heart " deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." He probably thought so of others. This Pharisee was blind in his self-righteousness. Like him,

there are thousands who are living in darkness with respect to their sinful condition and the claims of God. But here is another man, the publican (you are, no doubt, well acquainted with the story). He does not lift up his eyes to heaven, for he has a deep sense of his guilt. Therefore he smote upon his breast, for that is where the trouble lay ; but he did not stop there ; he said, " God be merciful to me a sinner."

Only God has the remedy for such a heart, and is able to deal with the disease which works within it. He meets it in mercy, " by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3. 5-7.) He purifies the heart by faith and sprinkles it from an evil conscience by the blood of Christ. The publican said, " God be merciful to me a sinner." Are you prepared to do this to-night ? Renounce your claim to a standing before God through your works, and acknowledge that you are "*the sinner*" (New Trans.) as the publican did. He was insignificant in his own sight. The words, " God be merciful to me the sinner," drew forth the approval of Jesus ; for He said, " That man returned to his house justified rather than the other."

Would you like to hear these words said of you ? They are written for your benefit. On account of them you are able to see how a person, who smote upon his breast and called upon the mercy of God, found justification. It was through what the breast of Christ provided—His precious blood. I beseech you to smite upon your breast, to acknowledge that from there every evil comes. If you call upon the mercy of God in such a contrite state, you shall be saved. " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

In Luke 23. 48 we read, "And all the people that came together to that sight." What was it? The crucifixion of Christ. This was the most wonderful sight which the world has seen or will ever see. They came together to that sight which transcends all others both in time and in eternity, the sight of Jesus hanging upon a gibbet. Dwell upon it a little! The people "smote their breasts"; but it adds, "and returned." As, alas! many have done since, they returned. Where did they return to? They returned to Jerusalem, each to his home, wherever that may have been. I can see them treading back upon the dusty road which leads to the city.

You say, These people are in earnest. Yes; they have come under the influence of that sight for a *moment*. They beat upon their breasts, and turn their backs on Jesus crucified. They are going into the city of Jerusalem. But what about that Man who hangs upon the tree? What is it to them? They turned away from the cross into the city. Jesus had been condemned there. Terrible things were about to befall that city, as the Lord had just announced. In a similar manner, you have listened to the gospel. You may beat upon your breasts on account of the solemnity of the gospel. But you return, you go out of this room into your houses; and by to-morrow you may forget all that you heard. I beseech you not to trust in the *passing* effect of the gospel. Turn to God while opportunity is offered you. Lay hold on mercy as this man in chapter 18 did. Follow the example of the thief. While one of the malefactors who were crucified ridiculed the Lord, the other said, "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss."

This thief grasped the opportunity offered in mercy. He said, "*Lord*, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The Lord answered him immediately, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

The Lord had said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." The centurion who saw what was done said, "Certainly this was a righteous man." Then the crowd of which we have spoken is presented. You will never get saved in crowds as such. We are saved as individuals, as Peter said at Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you." This crowd beat upon their breasts and returned. But others are also shewn to us. Besides the centurion, who glorified God, there were those who followed the Lord from Galilee, standing afar off and beholding these things. These were among saved ones. Then there is Joseph, who comes boldly and begs for the body of Jesus. He took it down, wrapped it in linen and laid it in a sepulchre, wherein never man before was laid. Joseph was a believer. It is your opportunity to be with *this* company. Come forward now, repent and believe the gospel. As we have seen, an example is presented to you in the publican who smote his breast saying, "God be merciful to me the sinner." Follow his example and God will justify you.

"Jesus, Lord of glory,
As we breast the tide,
Whisper Thou the story
Of the other side!"

OVERCOMING.

(2) ABRAM ; THE OVERCOMER BY FAITH.

IT is always stimulating and helpful when facing temptation and experiencing the pressure of the tide of evil to consider those who have been similarly tested and have overcome. The word of God abounds with encouraging instances of men who have been victorious, while at the same time it discloses the secret of their triumph.

Abram was such an overcomer that he stands at the head of the long line of men of faith who "by faith overcame kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped lions' mouths, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, made the armies of strangers give way." After obeying the word of God to him, "Get thee out of thy country," Abram was called to pursue the path of faith. Soon a test arose when there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot.

In the dignity of faith Abram proves himself an overcomer, and gains the

VICTORY OVER SELFISHNESS

by giving Lot the choice of the land, though Abram, as the elder, clearly had that right. Lot chose the well-watered plain of Jordan, and pitched his tent towards Sodom—that city of "great sinners before the Lord." Lot was governed by the sight of his eyes and did not ask counsel of the Lord. The sad result was that he was soon in difficulties, for he was taken captive by the confederate kings.

Abram—the man of faith—had to go to the rescue

of Lot—the man of sight ! There is striking evidence of the great influence exercised by a spiritual man over other lives in the fact that Abram had three hundred and eighteen trained servants, born in his own house, ready at this critical moment to come forward to fight for the deliverance of that weak brother. God answered their faith and courage and the weak brother was delivered. But Abram having secured a great victory over the *power* of the enemy, doubtless thrilled with the joy of having secured his brother's liberty, is in danger of the *wiles* of the enemy, for what Satan cannot obtain by *violence* he will endeavour to secure by *corruption*. We should ever be on our guard when through grace we have gained a victory, for then the subtle attack of the foe is most likely to be successful, as appealing to the pride of the heart.

God had, however, graciously anticipated this fresh test to which His servant would be subjected, for at this interesting juncture in his path, there appeared to him the mysterious stranger, Melchizedek, priest of the most high God—who is also called king of Salem, King of peace, and of whom it is said, “ without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life ; but made like unto the Son of God ” ; a personage who would suggest to us the Lord Jesus Christ, our great high Priest.

Melchizedek brought forth “ bread and wine.” This is the earliest indication of the two elements of the Lord's supper, and thus would bring before our hearts the present activities of the priestly grace of Christ in renewing our affections by maintaining the sweetness and simplicity of the remembrance of

Himself in death with those memorials before us. What power for overcoming there would be if our love for Him was strengthened and deepened!

Impressed with the dignity and greatness of this person, Abram gives him tithes of all. He acknowledged that as priest of the most high God he was entitled to the pre-eminence. This surely is one of the great secrets of overcoming; the recognition of the rights of Christ for the wholehearted acknowledgment of Christ's claims is the first great step towards victory.

If we claim all that we have and are for ourselves, we are sure to be overcome by the enemy. In giving tithes to Melchizedek, Abram owned that he had claims over him. Can we each say, "Lord, I am Thine, Thy claims I own"? All that we have we owe to God—our life, our health, our opportunities; indeed "it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." We have nothing that we have not received as the expression of God's goodness to us, for "in him we live, and move, and have our being." If He were to withdraw His good hand, we should be gone in a moment, for we owe even our life to Him. Let us then acknowledge the rights of Christ as Creator and as Redeemer, and thus pay "tithes of all" to Him.

Now Abram goes forth and is met by the king of Sodom, who says, "Give me the souls, and take the property for thyself," thus seeking by subtle flattery to patronise the man of faith. It was as though he said, "You are a great man, Abram, and I should like to give you something to signalise your triumph." Does it not remind us of the first mention of Satan in scripture, "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field." The devil knows how to tempt

us with his flattery. How men of the world will compliment the people of God to secure them for worldly objects. Let us beware of the patronage of this present evil world, for it is a dangerous snare.

The elevation of soul that marks Abram as he replies to the king of Sodom is very fine, proving that he had secured a

VICTORY OVER PRIDE.

Fortified by the priestly ministrations of Melchizedek he said, "I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." With his eye upon God he can afford to refuse the world's patronage and be independent of its overtures. This is overcoming indeed, for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, our faith." We are not dependent upon this world for our joys, nor would we seek fame among those who have defamed the Son of God.

What power there was in the testimony of a man who, because he knew God, would not receive a shoe-latchet lest he should become ensnared! He gains a

VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

There is power to-day in the word and life of those who are maintained in this dignity and joy, who are able to demonstrate that they are the possessors of a purer, holier joy in separation from the world than the worldling can ever be with all "the pleasures of sin for a season."

While Lot eventually lost all that Sodom had

“APPLES OF GOLD IN BASKETS OF SILVER.” 53

bestowed upon him, Abram received divine recompense for his fidelity, for “After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, FEAR NOT, ABRAM: I AM THY SHIELD, AND THY EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD.”

May this promise encourage us to overcome by faith!

F. S. M.

“APPLES OF GOLD IN BASKETS OF SILVER.”

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver.” (Prov. 25. 11, New Trans., see Notes.)

FITLY spoken means seasonably or suitably ministered. But for this those who minister must in themselves be morally in accord with their ministry. The apples of gold must be in baskets of silver. Thus and thus only is the ministry enhanced by the vessels which contain it. The golden apples are plucked from the apple tree, when in rapture we sit down under His shadow and His fruit is sweet to our taste. There the ministry is enjoyed and assimilated by the ministers, and the baskets of silver are formed and filled for ministering to others. Gold is resplendent. All true ministry must be resplendent with the character of God in Christ. The gold will always outshine the silver. The ministry *must* outshine the ministers. Yet the silver appraises the gold—its beauty and value. Silver means the rights of God in redemption. There is no silver in the heavenly city, for all in it own those rights; and thus God has no need to assert them. The baskets of silver, so to speak, become baskets of gold. The ministry that goes out from that city goes out from those who are in every respect conformed

to it! But now the ministers are not so. Yet the baskets should be baskets of silver, recognising the rights of God over them, whether it be ministering to the church or in the gospel. Whatever be the capacity of the baskets—that is to say, the measure of those who minister—and whatever be the quality and quantity of the ministry, yet the apples of gold (citrons) should always be served in baskets of silver!

From an address at Leeds, Yorks.

S. J. B. C.

THE PROPHETS.—No. 17.

DANIEL.

THE suffering and patience of the prophets, to which reference is made in the Epistle of James (chap. 5. 10), were seen in a special way in Daniel. The purpose of this paper is not to refer to the dispensational side of the Book of Daniel, but rather to treat of the suffering and patience that marked Daniel as continuing the prophetic testimony.

Daniel means “God is judge,” and he answers to his name in his movements, for he never vindicates himself, but leaves his cause in the hand of God. He is assured that, in spite of external appearances, “the heavens do rule,” and so he awaits God’s time and is content to bow to His ways. Though found in captivity he does not murmur, but waits upon God for guidance. His way was often difficult and beset by many trials, but he shines forth as a man devoted to God. Little is known of his early history. Doubtless he was of noble birth; and he had remarkable qualities—no blemish, well favoured, skilful in all wisdom,

understanding science, and had ability to stand in the king's palace.

Tender and sensitive as a man here in relation to the interests of God, he was, nevertheless, bold and courageous where God's name was dishonoured. The intent of the king of Babylon was to teach him the learning and language of the Chaldeans, but Daniel's education was directed from heaven. God gave the four youths (Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah) "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." (Chap. 1. 17.) The effect of all this was seen when king Nebuchadnezzar inquired of them, for "in all matters of wisdom and understanding he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm."

In our own day the world makes its bid for the people of God, and especially for their children, and would educate the latter in view of adorning its system. Present-day education has in it many a snare for the young, and what is called "higher education" is seething with infidelity and subtly-worded theories which are subversive of Christianity. The line of safety for the young is to commit themselves definitely to the Lord and His interests. Daniel was marked by purpose of heart, and this ensured his preservation. His example might well be imitated. He "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank." Then, having purposed in his heart, he made a request of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. He left nothing to chance, neither did he wait to see how his circumstances turned out ere he made his choice. He vowed first and then God

granted him favour and mercy before the prince of the eunuchs. He pleads for a trial of ten days on pulse and water, a wonderful evidence of his separation from the world and its inflating food and wine of excitement. He has a judgment as to all that the world can offer him, and he does not withhold even from the prince of the eunuchs his considered judgment. Thus he indicates to him that to receive of the king's luxuries would involve defilement for one who was here for God and His interests.

As proved for ten days the countenance of Daniel and the three other faithful youths appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the youths that ate of the king's delicate food, and as Babylon's choicest things were refused by God's faithful ones He rewards them with wisdom which excelled all others tenfold.

What an object lesson for the younger generation of to-day to make their choice and to follow in the path of separation from the world. Surrender may appear hard and the means of sustenance meagre, but all who are faithful receive a hundredfold now and shall inherit everlasting life. The compensation is great *now!* "And Daniel continued unto the first year of king Cyrus." (Chap. 1. 21.) How significant this is! When Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and other great ones have passed into obscurity, Daniel remains as sustained by God, and the last word in the prophecy is spoken to Daniel, and a promise is made to him as to his part in the future glory.

In Chapter 2 the wisdom and the spirit of Daniel are to be noted. He answers the king's captain with counsel and prudence; then he requests the king to give him time, assured as he is of the interpretation

of the king's dream being entrusted to him. Finally he seeks the prayers and fellowship of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, and as the secret is revealed to Daniel he blesses God ere he goes to interpret the dream.

In all these changing scenes he reflects in speech and bearing his calm confidence in and dependence upon God. There is no inflation with him, but he ascribes all the wisdom to God, as he says, "and as for me, this secret is revealed to me, not by any wisdom that I have more than any living, but to the intent that the interpretation should be made known to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart." (Chap. 2. 30.)

Daniel is now honoured by the king. He had waited God's time, and his path to promotion and honour lay through suffering and reproach. As a *youth* he made his choice, and now as a *man* he is entrusted with glory and honour. As having been faithful to God in obscurity, he can now count upon divine support in the place of publicity. His continuance in the path of dependence upon God, whoever the monarch might be whom he served on earth, was an outstanding feature of this man of God. J. H. T.

(To be continued.)

LAMENTATIONS.

IN the Book of Lamentations we have expressed the feelings of a heart which possessed sensibilities that felt things as they affected God and at the same time retained the deepest affection for God's people—a heart also that had a sweet and true sense of com-

plete identification with those people. These three qualities were possessed by Jeremiah, and are clearly seen in the book before us. A question naturally arises in our minds as to the source of these combined exercises; where did they come from? We are told in 1 Peter 1. 11 that it was the Spirit of Christ which was in these holy men of old that testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ. Hence another fact forces itself upon our notice, namely, that the feelings expressed were in character those of Christ; often, it is true, accompanied by the personal feelings of the prophet himself as we well know that these feelings in our own hearts are accompanied by much that is only of ourselves. Nevertheless Christ's feelings were there and we find them expressed by the Holy Spirit through these Old Testament worthies.

The chapters of Lamentations need but to be read to bring before us these combined and holy movements of the heart. Would that we all had similar feelings as to God's people to-day—the church.

Chapter 1 opens with a pathetic ejaculation as to Jerusalem's fearful fall. Her sin, her idolatrous corruption, her sad and bitter loneliness, as well as the prosperity of her adversaries are feelingly mourned. Her beauty had departed, and sorrow and tears are her portion in the place of her previous joy. In verse 12 the prophet takes up all as his own, and in so doing expresses what was in an infinitely deeper way true of Christ, save that in His case the sins were ours, though He took them as His own.

In a solemn way this will again be true of Israel in the future. How the Lord must have felt their refusing Him, knowing that He was the only One who could truly comfort them. (Ver. 17.) In verse

18 to end we find the prophet voicing a true confession, which will mark the remnant of Israel in the end.

In chapter 2 Jerusalem's condition of ruin is traced to the Lord. It is quite an advance in our exercise of soul when we recognise that our pressure comes from *God*. How the prophet feels it all. (Ver. 11 onward.) He is distressed also that false reasons had been given for their condition, instead of a faithful statement of the real cause. (Ver. 14.)

Chapter 3 brings before us the feelings and sufferings of Christ in a very wonderful way. *He* more than any was the MAN who had "seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." Note how all is taken as from God. Whatever the instrument, it is what *God* has done. Since Christ suffered atoningly, what Israel will pass through under God's government becomes chastisement to them and ends in blessing. God will not cast off for ever. Hence there is the searching and trying of the ways and a turning to God.

Jeremiah's own experience when he was cast into the dungeon affords an illustration of the deep experience of suffering that Christ had peculiarly, and that the remnant will yet have from the false nation. There is a principle of importance here, which we should notice: Jeremiah experiences the comfort of God's "Fear not," while *in* the low dungeon before he is taken *out* of it.

The description in chapter 4 of Israel's condition could almost be used as to the state of the church—the gold (setting forth what is divine) become dim—the Nazarites (suggesting distinctive separation) blacker than coal and unknown—prophets and priests as blind men—a state of division through God's governmental anger. But all is used of God to provoke a true turning

of heart to Him. "Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us . . . our fathers have sinned . . . the crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!" (Chap. 5.)

Thanks be to God! He will bring this about; and as there was a lowly remnant who spake often one to another when Jesus came and to whom He came in the day of Luke 1 and 2, so there will again be a godly remnant of Israel awaiting Him on His return. And morally, let us remember, it may be so with us to-day. May we take our place in the common ruin and shame of the church and confessing our sin await our Lord's return.

M. W. B.

"MY EXCEEDING JOY."

(PSA. 43. 4.)

FROM David's harp there floated round,
 In music soft and sweet and clear,
 A note love still delights to sound,
 Which tells the Source of all true cheer;
 O God, my lips, my life employ
 To tell this good without alloy—
 That Thou art "my exceeding joy."

The sunlight of Thy love has poured
 Into a heart Thy love has won;
 Revealed in Jesus Christ the Lord,
 I joy in Thee through Thy dear Son,
 In vain the world seeks to decoy—
 I yield for Thee each earthly toy,
 Whilst Thou art "my exceeding joy."

O joy of joys! What can excel—
 Yea, what can be compared with such?
 What creature-sorrow can expel
 A joy affliction cannot touch?
 O God, my God, naught can destroy
 A gladness which can never cloy:
 That Thou art "my exceeding joy."

S. J. B. C.

OUR JOY IN HEAVEN.

(LUKE 9. 28-36.)

LET us look a little at this scripture, as shewing what our joy in the glory will consist of. We have the warrant of 2 Peter 1. 16 for saying that the scene represents to us the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what we wait for. Our souls are not in a healthy state unless we are waiting for God's Son from heaven. The church is not regulated in its hopes by the word and Spirit of God unless it is looking for Him as Saviour from heaven. (Phil. 3.) And this passage, as disclosing to us specially what will be our portion when He comes, is important to us in this respect, so let us consider what light is here afforded on the nature of that joy which we shall inherit at and from the coming of the Lord.

“And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.” It was when Jesus was in the acknowledgment of dependence —“as he prayed”—that this change took place. This, then, is the first thing we have here—a change such as will pass upon the living saints when Jesus comes.

“And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias.” They were with Him. And this will be our joy; we shall be with Jesus. In 1 Thessalonians 4, after stating the order in which

E

the resurrection of the sleeping, and the change of the living, saints will take place, and that we shall both be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, all that the apostle says as to what shall ensue is "and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

But in this passage there is not only the being with Christ, but there is also familiar intercourse with Him. "There talked with him two men." It is not that He talked with them, though this was no doubt true; but this might have been, and they be at a distance. But when we read they talked with Him, we get the idea of the most free and familiar intercourse. Peter and the others knew what it was to have such intercourse with Jesus in humiliation; and what joy must it have been to have the proof that such intercourse with Him would be enjoyed in glory!

And then it is said by Luke that "they appeared in glory." But this is secondary to what we have been considering. We are told that they were with Him and then that they appeared in glory. They share in the same glory as that in which He was manifested. And so as to us. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them."

But there is another thing still. We are not only told that they were with Him, that they talked with Him, and appeared in glory with Him, but we are also privileged to know the subject of their conversation. They "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." It was the cross which was the theme of their conversation in the glory—the sufferings of Christ which He had to accomplish at Jerusalem. And surely this will be our joy throughout eternity, when in glory with Christ—to dwell

OUR JOY IN HEAVEN.

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upon this theme, His decease accomplished at Jerusalem.

We next read that Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep. It shews us what the flesh is in the presence of the glory of God. Peter made a great mistake ; but I pass on.

“ While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them : and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son : hear him.” Peter tells us this voice came from the excellent glory. “ For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Now Peter and the others had entered into the cloud ; and thus we get the wonderful fact that in the glory, from which the voice comes, saints are privileged to stand, and there, in that glory, share the delight of the Father in His beloved Son.

“ And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.” The vision all gone—the cloud, the voice, the glory, Moses and Elias ; but Jesus was left, and they were left to go on their way with Jesus, knowing Him now in the light of those scenes of glory which they had beheld. And this is the use to us of those vivid apprehensions of spiritual things which we may sometimes realise. It is not that we can be always enjoying them and nothing else. But when for the season they have passed away, like this vision on the holy mount, they leave us alone with Jesus, to pursue the path of our pilgrimage with Him in spirit now, and with Him in the light and power of that deepened acquaintance with Him, and fellowship of the Father’s

joy in Him, that we have got on the mount ; and thus to wait for the moment of His return, when all this and more than our hearts can think of, shall be fulfilled to us for ever.

J. N. D.

Extracted.

OVERCOMING.

(3) THE VICTORIES OF DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN.

THERE are few themes more inspiring to those who love our Lord Jesus Christ than the record of David's mighty men. They lived in a day of great difficulty, for Saul's kingdom was waxing weaker and weaker. Though the enemies of Israel were extremely active, Saul was devoting his attention to pursuing David, God's anointed king, "as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains." The men of Saul were sadly proving the truth of Samuel's warning that their king would take their sons and appoint them for himself ; that he would take their goodliest young men and put them to his work, and that they should cry out in that day.

Though David was burdened and harassed by king Saul, the tidings of his great victory over Goliath had spread through the land, while his attractiveness as he went out and came in before the people had caused "all Israel and Judah to love David." So it came to pass that "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him ; and he became captain over them."

Their first act towards David was to

SURRENDER TO HIM.

OVERCOMING.

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They definitely broke away from Saul and his kingdom and came to David, God's anointed, though he was despised and rejected. They owned him as their lord and came under his authority. He took control of them and under his influence they were transformed from distressed debtors, full of discontent, to brave, free, mighty men of valour who took character from David their captain.

They accepted his reproach, they shared his exile, and they were prepared to

SUFFER WITH HIM

as Saul hunted David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats, for "they went whithersoever they could go."

There was no sacrifice too great for them to make for David, they were ready to do his bidding, to

SERVE HIM,

to go at his command, and even to put their lives in jeopardy for his sake.

One exploit which will never lose its lustre, for it told how much they loved him, was that of the three mighty men who brake through the host of the Philistines, drew water out of the well of Bethlehem and brought it to David. It was enough to them that he longed for it and they were prepared to lay down their lives to gratify that desire.

When necessity arose they could

STAND FOR HIM

as the exploit of Shammah witnessed. The Philistines were gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentiles, but Shammah stood in the midst of the ground and defended it. He

slew the Philistines, and the Lord wrought a great victory.

Another of David's men, Benaiah, triumphed over two lion-like men of Moab, slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day, and also slew an Egyptian, thus typically overcoming the flesh, the devil and the world. No wonder David set Benaiah in his council, and subsequently when Solomon was crowned he was one of the three honoured men who were entrusted to bring the king to the place of anointing.

The presence of the enemy was to them an occasion to prove their devotion to their master and to overcome for his sake. One by one the foes fell before David and his mighty men, until at last there was "neither adversary nor evil occurrent." We in our day are left in this world in the midst of the Lord's enemies to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. It involves spiritual manliness to stand against the foe, but "God hath given us the spirit of power [courage], and love, and of wise discretion."

Through the whole of David's life these mighty men delighted to

FOLLOW HIM,

through evil report and good report, so at the end of his reign there were found those who had proved faithful from the moment when they came to him in the cave. They are described as "the mighty men whom David had who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom." The great secret of all their devotedness, their sacrifice and service was that they loved him. Love is the greatest power in the universe, and this is clearly seen in the great results achieved by David's men as they were impelled by their true and loyal affection for him.

THE COVENANT OF LIFE AND PEACE.

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The great consummation of the hopes of David's mighty men was reached on that great day when in their appreciation of him they united to

CROWN HIM,

when "all these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king." Such is the character of overcoming that is the product of the influence of a person great enough to control the life and affections of those who are attached to him.

May the glory and beauty of our Lord Jesus Christ and the power of His great love so control our lives and affections that we may be found among His "mighty men," overcoming in His name until His crowning day.

F. S. M.

THE COVENANT OF LIFE AND PEACE.

(PSA. 23 ; MAL. 2. 1-7 ; MARK 11. 33 ; 12. 41-44.)

IN Malachi we have brought before us a covenant of a peculiar character—of life and peace; a covenant that we could neither purchase nor attain to, so God gives it. Life and peace are two great needs of the present day in a world of death and strife. A life that flows from the risen Lord is connected with the tree of life that is in the paradise of God. It is life that has set us in movement—movement is the evidence of life. We may have life without peace, but the life the Lord gives is associated with peace. The Lord Jesus made peace by the blood of His cross and thus after strife brought peace to us.

We read of Levi that he did turn many away from iniquity, he had the enjoyment of life and peace all

his days. The love that is behind the life given is the love of God, "I have loved you, saith the Lord." The sense of this will make us a useful and usable vessel, and how blessed it is to be useful to the Lord. Levi kept himself very near the Lord; this is the secret of usefulness and joyfulness, a life hidden from every eye save the one in the enjoyment of it. Enoch and Abraham are examples. Of Enoch we read that he walked with God and of Abraham that he walked before the Lord. The Lord gives us more than the covenant—He gives the spirit of what is contained in it—life and peace. John 17 helps us, "These things I speak in the world, that they might have *my* joy fulfilled in *themselves*." Have we reached this wondrous secret, has it fired our souls? This is the result of the *given* life and peace. The Lord speaks to priests, to those who were near Him in priestly service; so it is with us. In Malachi's day there was no one much that cared for the Lord, but there *were* just a few and their names were in a book of remembrance. Not only were their names recorded, but their lives were taken account of. The Lord is a listener to those that speak of Him. To-day we get a peculiar application of all this in 1 Peter 4. 17, "judgment must begin from the house of God." We are going to judge the world and to judge angels—it will be sound judgment. At the present moment we have a wise discernment of every event and it issues from the house of God.

Mark 11 and 12. The Lord's visit to the temple in Mark is important, for what He did then He is doing *now*. In verse 11 we are told that He went into the temple and looked round about upon all things. Everything was seen, nothing was said and He retired.

In this way He gave them space to repent regarding what He saw there. On the morrow *He acts* in casting out what was offensive, recalling the words that had been said concerning the temple, "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." In verse 27 the Lord is found *walking* in the temple and can meet every question raised in opposition to Himself and to His authority. In chapter 12 it is the triumph of the Lord. He had looked round, He had acted and had silenced the opposers and now He is found teaching in the temple. At the end of the chapter one woman arrested Christ. He sat down in order to observe what people were doing in relation to the treasury of God. The treasury of God is the maintenance of the testimony of Christ in this world—the centre of His interests. The woman in casting in her two mites touched the heart of Christ. He called His disciples, for He wanted them to know all about it, He had found one in the temple who had cheered His heart. My only object in drawing attention to this incident is that we might learn the heart of Christ and what would give Him pleasure in our day.

Psalm 23. This is very individual and raises the question, Shall this language characterise you and me? The first three verses are the heart's appreciation of what the Shepherd has done. Have we an appreciation of the Shepherd character of the Lord? I like to talk to my brethren as to the way the Lord has led me. In verse 4 it is not speaking to my brethren but to the Lord. We speak to the Lord and say, Thy rod of authority is covering me with its protection and Thy staff supports me. There is no comfort like this. Verse 5 is like Mark 11, where they could not

get rid of the blessed Lord or of His disciples. What is it the Lord in His wonderful grace does for us individually? In the presence of those who challenged Him in the temple He, in the presence of their enemies, spread a table before His own and anointed their heads and their cup runs over. Then verse 6—this is very good! What is following us? The psalm carries us through the wilderness into that which is eternal—the house of the Lord. We shall never enter the house unless we cross its threshold and we do that *now*. The intimacy I may enjoy with the Lord down here is beyond all praise.

The Lord's voice is a quiet, gentle one, not in the thunder, or the lightning or the earthquake. Have we responded? Have we destroyed our boats? "If they had been mindful of that country from whence they came, they might have had an opportunity to have returned." This is the twenty-third psalm. The boats are burned.

E. P.

THE PROPHETS.—No. 18.

DANIEL (*continued*).

THE wisdom and spirit of Daniel are worthy of note. He stands before Nebuchadnezzar to interpret the king's dream, but feels acutely the solemn message he has to deliver. He is conscious of having wisdom from God, but he manifests extreme sensitiveness in his diffidence to unfold the interpretation because of its meaning for the king. "Daniel . . . was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My

lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies." (Dan. 4. 19.)

Yet Daniel faithfully utters the solemn sentence of God's governmental dealings with the king—a message that demanded the greatest courage, seeing Daniel was a subject, and even a captive, of the king unto whom he was now giving the sentence of God. There is, however, a note of tender appeal to the king, "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." (Ver. 27.) How worthily the patience and sufferings of the prophets were maintained in Daniel, and how faithfully the prophetic testimony was proclaimed by him. A man of God speaks the word fearlessly and faithfully, yet is ever marked by compassionate feeling towards men as desiring their blessing.

In chapter 5 another phase of Daniel's history is brought before us, and we see how differently he acts towards Belshazzar. He is now dealing with one who had dared to profane the holy vessels and with one upon whose ears the solemn warning to Nebuchadnezzar had fallen without rebuke. The prophet is therefore unsparing in his stern denunciation of this profane king.

Daniel was probably living in retirement during the reign of Belshazzar, as he appears to be unknown by the king. But as brought before him, and as unmoved by the king's words as to his wisdom, though all were true, he says boldly, "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation." (Chap. 5. 17.) Daniel then

speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's discipline whereby he was brought into subjection, and he lays bare the impiety of Belshazzar as one who knew all this but humbled not his heart. Nebuchadnezzar's sin was pride—the pride of life. Belshazzar's sin was lust—the lust of the flesh. Daniel brings the divine indictment against him soberly and righteously, but holds out no ray of hope for the impious king. How small earth's greatest men appear in the light of verse 23, "the God in whose hand *thy breath is*." All men are dependent upon God, even for the air which they breathe, yet how callous and indifferent many are to the claims of the blessed God.

The changing moods and scenes through which the prophet passes prove how completely he was with God in secret. Sensitive, and diffident to pronounce judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar, yet dignified and powerful in rebuking when necessary, he now interprets fearlessly to Belshazzar the awful writing which spelt his doom. No mention is made of Daniel's feelings now, there is no note of tender appeal, no ray of light to pierce the gloom which enshrouded Belshazzar's mind and conscience. Daniel is with God in the solemn judgment which was imperative. Belshazzar's kingdom was numbered and finished. He himself was weighed in the balances and found wanting. His kingdom was divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Daniel refuses to lessen the power of the word of God by any addition of his own, but delivers his message simply and with dignity. He could well have said, as another had said earlier, "I have a message from God unto thee." There is no record that Belshazzar's heart was reached, nor any suggestion of repentance, but the word was evidently in

power. Daniel's authority and wisdom left their mark upon the king, for at Belshazzar's command he is now honoured and made the third ruler in the kingdom.

What an outstanding figure the man of God is in any day. Lowly, gracious and compassionate in beseeching men, sensitive, humbled and tearful in the presence of sorrow and breakdown, yet calm, dignified and unspoilt in a position of special prominence before men. What is the secret of this power and wisdom with which the man of God is equipped to face any emergency and circumstance? On God's side it is sovereignty in choosing and fitting a vessel for His own service and use. On man's side the recognition of his dependence upon God and the constant need of the sense of divine approval.

Daniel stands forth as God's man in a day of difficulty, and he graces every situation with "the wisdom which is from above." The features of this wisdom were seen in this "man, greatly beloved," "pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." (James 3. 17.) Such was Daniel the man of God.

There are yet other phases of his activities that we may be privileged to write of in a concluding paper.

J. H. T.

FOUR COMPANIES.

(MATT. 27. 36, 39, 47, 55.)

IN the verses quoted we have brought before us four companies; four would remind us of that which is universal, and this is no exception, for we must each one find our place in one of these companies.

In verse 36 of the first we read :

“ And sitting down they watched him there.”

What a scene ! Three crosses, all occupied, two by malefactors who, as one of them confessed, were suffering justly, receiving the due reward of their deeds. The central cross had written over it, “ This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Can it be ! Just think for a moment of who He was. Jesus, the Creator and Upholder of the universe ; the One of whom the angel of the Lord had said, “ Thou shalt call his name Jesus ; for he shall save his people from their sins ” ; Jesus, the One of whom it is said, “ He went about doing good ” ; Jesus, who read those wonderful words recorded in Luke 4. 18, 19 and could say, “ This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears,” and they “ wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.” Now see Him suffering on Calvary’s cross. Well may we ask ourselves, Oh, why was He there as the bearer of sin ? He had been betrayed into the hands of sinful men, Pilate had scourged Him, and the soldiers had plaited a crown of thorns and put it about His head and did spit upon Him and mocked Him, and then having nailed those hands (which had brought comfort to many a suffering one) to that cruel cross, we read that, “ Sitting down they watched him there.” Reader, are you found in this company ? Sitting down denotes ease. When we have finished our daily toil and we are at leisure, where do we sit down ? Can we, do we sit with the bitter enemies of Christ. Is it possible that any one of us can sit down in such company and calmly view a scene like this unmoved ? If so, remember that the day is fast approaching when this same Jesus is coming again,

coming "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are surrounded on every hand with the enemies of Jesus. Are you one of *such* a company ?

The second company is found in verse 39 ; of them it is said :

" And they that passed by."

How many there are who would perhaps shrink from being numbered with the enemies of Christ and yet may be found with this company. They wag their heads, they are indifferent to what is going on. " Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? " Are we mere passers-by ? Can you, dear unsaved reader, just give a passing glance at this wondrously solemn scene at Calvary and go on your way unmoved ? If so, beware lest you awaken too late to the realisation that the stream of indifference will carry you into the ocean of despair. Perhaps some may say, I am not amongst that company, I am not indifferent ; I often think about these things and wonder when the end will be and what will take place next. Then you must belong to the third company of verse 47 ;

" Some of them that stood there."

They had heard Jesus cry with a loud voice, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? " and they just watched and waited to see whether Elias would come to save Him. How dreadful ! How many there are to be found on every hand who are so taken up with events which may or may not take place, and lose sight of the wonderful work accomplished on the cross of Calvary, when Jesus was forsaken by God

so that you and I might be brought to God, for He gave Himself the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God. May we never stand unmoved at the sight of Calvary.

The last company is found in verse 55 :

“ And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him.”

Think of the joy it must have been to the Lord in His last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem to be followed by a company of whom it could be said, “they ministered unto him.” In how many ways had they been privileged to minister to Him. Only a few days before one had anointed His feet with the precious ointment, and now see that devoted band of followers beholding afar off. What thoughts would be passing through their minds, what sorrow would fill their hearts, and yet with joy and sorrow mingling they contemplated their suffering Lord. He had served them and had loved them, and now their love for Him had drawn them together to that solemn, heart-searching scene.

Has your heart and mine been touched and won by such love as this? What an opportunity is ours in this the day of His rejection to be found in the company of the followers and lovers of Christ, and to be identified with those whose joy and delight it is to minister unto Him.

Again may I ask are you found in the Company of the enemies of Christ, or in the Company of those indifferent to Christ, or in the Company of those waiting upon events and not for Christ, or amongst the

THE QUESTION OF PRIORITY.

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Company of those who are ministering to His heart's
joy ?

“ Choose ye this day.”

J. F.

THE QUESTION OF PRIORITY.

DURING the Great War the things required to maintain the large army in the field were innumerable ; the men and the materials available in the country were hardly enough to produce them all. It therefore became an urgent necessity to secure that, among the many things that were desirable, preference should be given to those which were most vital to the prosecution of the war, and for this purpose a curious decision was arrived at : the Government appointed a special officer called the Director of Priority, whose sole duty was to consider which of the thousands of orders received—for food, clothing, blankets, building materials, horses, ammunition, etc., etc.—were most immediately necessary, and which could be postponed, or even dispensed with altogether, without endangering the great object in view, namely, the successful ending of the war.

To many demands presented to him, the Director of Priority would have to say, “ Yes, all very desirable, but *will these help to win the war, or will something else help more ?* ”

* * * * *

“ The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” (Luke 16. 8.) They know how to choose the means necessary to achieve

the object they have set before them, and leave the rest.

Should we not be wiser if we recognised this question of "priority" as a matter of vital concern to us? The modern world in which we live offers a great variety of interests and attractions, many of them quite legitimate in themselves, but if we respond to them indiscriminately without the selective control of a "Director of Priority," our lives will be void of any clear goal or unity of purpose; they will lose themselves in the sands; we shall just "please ourselves," and be sterile.

Our Lord was emphatic on the point: "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." (Matt. 6. 33.) Most of us desire right things, but we desire them so feebly that we allow secondary things to prevail with us over primary; the pleasures, or perhaps the duties of this life have more power with us than following the Lord. "And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me *first* to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." (Luke 9. 59, 60.)

We desire the right things, the things of God, but a right desire in itself may not lead us anywhere. Does our right desire lead to action, or is it lost in feeble excuses?

It was one great condemnation of the Pharisees, that they failed to put the first things first. They were very zealous for the law, especially for those fringes of it which they had themselves elaborated, but they had "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith"—more vital things, which really made a greater demand on them. "Cleanse

thou *first* that which is within." Do not, however, stop there: "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." (Matt. 23. 23-26.)

Martha was full of duties, "careful and troubled about *many things*," but she had not yet learnt that "one thing is needful"; that the multiplicity of demands that life makes on us will lead to unfruitfulness unless a controlling and simplifying and unifying power is introduced, to select and to direct. Mary chose "that good part"; she listened to the voice of Jesus. (Luke 10. 38-42.)

It is not that God would have us narrow or cramped or illiberal; He "giveth us richly all things to enjoy"; but He would have us freely choose the (morally) greater and *sacrifice* the less; for sacrifice is of the very essence of Christianity.

The only One into whose hands we can safely put ourselves in this matter of "priority" is the One who is appointed Head over all things; if we take any other than His direction, we shall find in the end that we have failed to put things in their right order; that we have too freely given our time and thought to things which have not advanced the kingdom of God or our own true welfare.

We hug the things of which we think our life consists, forgetting that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." We fear to lose any part of our lives, not having learnt that "whosoever shall desire to save his life shall lose it," and that as One, and only One, has authority to add, "whosoever shall lose his life *for my sake*, he shall save it," such a life will never lose itself in the sands! (Luke 9. 24, New Trans.)

The Macedonian brethren, in the midst of afflic-

tion and poverty, joyfully contributed of their means to their still poorer brethren of Judæa, but they “*first* gave their own selves to the Lord.” (2 Cor. 8. 1-5.)

Let us also learn to *put the first things first*.

J. B. C.

CONFESSING HIS NAME.

YOU have confessed *His* name—the name of Jesus,
The One who died for you on Calvary’s tree :
Now as your Lord and Master you would own Him ?
Hark to His voice—His word is, *Follow Me*.

You have confessed His name, whom man refuses,
Once cast away as worthless here on earth ;
But faith beholds Him crowned with brightest glory,
Chosen of God, blest name of peerless worth.

What joy that you can say, “ He is *my* Saviour ” ;
Joy to your heart to tell Him—Thou art mine.
But greater still His own heart’s joy in heaven,
That you can say to Him—Lord, I am Thine.

To give Him joy, *keep on* His name confessing,
Mayhap ’twill reach another troubled soul.
All power’s connected with the name of Jesus,
Sustaining saints and making sinners whole.

The path your feet have entered now lies upward,
Jesus in glory is your goal above ;
Grace for the path supplied you by the Spirit,
Until you’re brought to His blest home of love.

This world is bidding still for your allegiance
To its false system that rejects your Lord.
“ Pleasures of sin ”—they only last a season,
But “ part with Him ” *eternal* joys afford.

This world is passing, soon will its sun be *setting*,
And all its store and fashion pass away.
Your eyes have opened on the Sun that’s *rising*—
JESUS ! transcendent Light of eternal day. C. D—N.

These lines were written after a gospel preaching, at the close of which several young people gave themselves to the Lord, confessing His name.

THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF THE BLESSED GOD.

THE glory of God is the outshining of all that He is in His attributes and nature. The attributes of God are those qualities which invariably attach to Him, and are exhibited in all that He does. We may speak of His majesty, power, wisdom, righteousness, faithfulness, mercy, grace, goodness, etc.

In nature He is love. In the cross all His attributes have been conciliated with His nature, have been shewn to be in harmony with His nature. All that He does manifests His glory in some degree.

Creation displayed something of His glory, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." What may be known of God by the heathen is manifested in the things which He has made, even His eternal power and divinity. (Rom. 1. 20.) The law and His government in Israel displayed His righteousness and faithfulness. But God could not be fully revealed till Christ came. In the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ God has fully manifested His glory.

There are two ways in which the glory of God is manifested, namely, in the overcoming of evil and in the establishment of His sovereign will in spite of everything which can oppose, every enemy. These two things are seen in the death, resurrection and exaltation of Christ as man to glory. At the cross Satan marshalled all his forces to destroy the Prince of life and to frustrate the will of God. Everything for God and man depended upon the issue of this great conflict. For the moment the enemy seemed to

have triumphed. But on the third day God entered the scene and manifested His glory; Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. The victory was complete, sin, death and Satan were annulled for ever. The triumph of God is our salvation. The full effects of this victory are not yet fully seen, but Christ is at the right hand of God. The Spirit has come down, heaven is opened, and a scene filled with the glory is revealed to faith. Stephen looking into the opened heavens saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Paul speaks of His gospel as "the gospel of the glory of Christ." In glorifying Christ as man, God has established and manifested His purpose in regard to men. Thus in Christ we see how God's will has triumphed over every hostile force, so that God is now free to work out everything according to the counsel of His will. This gives us our present and eternal place before God in Christ. This was what was announced in Paul's gospel. (Eph. 1.) He could speak of the saints of this day as the product of God's work, being to the praise of His glory. We see then how God has manifested His glory in Christ, so that if it be not yet manifested on earth, it is in heaven.

What a relief it is to look away from all the evil and confusion on the earth and to behold the glory of the Lord in heaven. What is already seen in heaven is about to be manifested on earth, as God said to Moses, "As I live, saith Jehovah, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory." We are "awaiting the blessed hope and *appearing* of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." When it appears it will, on the one hand, consume all that is antagonistic, all that opposes the will of God, and on the other

hand establish the kingdom of God, so that His will shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven. It will be the bringing in of a new world, where lawlessness and the work of Satan will disappear. Then will be the reign of righteousness and peace. Then the knowledge of the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Thus we see that the salvation and blessing of men is wrapped up with the glory of God, and at the same time the glory of the Son of man, for all has been secured by His death and work. We can understand therefore that the testimony of the glory of God is glad tidings, and that in the highest sense. The day is coming when the whole creation will respond to the glory of God. (Psa. 22. 22-31; Rev. 5. 8-14.)

We may well rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

F. H. B.

THE PROPHETS.—No. 19.

DANIEL (*continued*).

IN the ordering of God Daniel is once more brought into publicity (chap. 6), and the king thought to appoint him over the whole realm. His promotion was because "an excellent spirit" was found in him. "The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord," and here Daniel's spirit is recognised and testimony is borne to it. But though Daniel came under the favour of the king he was the object of intense hatred on the part of the presidents and the princes over whom he was given precedence. Though his enemies, they recognise his faithfulness and that no error or fault was found with him, so they proceed to attack him

concerning the law of his God. This is ever the case, for the enemy hates God and Christ and the expression of divine features in the saints of God. Satan's attack is not against persons, though he may beguile many into thinking so. It is God he is set against, and the spirit of Christ which he would fain obliterate from the world if he had the power.

But the people of God, as manifesting the traits of Christ are constantly called upon to suffer in this conflict between good and evil. It was the spirit of Christ in Daniel that enabled him to walk before Nebuchadnezzar, that gave power to his indictment of Belshazzar and that commended him to Darius. Thus in every phase of the world power and of evil Daniel shewed forth "an excellent spirit."

His conduct and deportment are a challenge to us. "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16. 32.) But, on the contrary, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." (Prov. 25. 28.) The spirit of a man is the most sensitive part of his being, and we can well understand Paul saying to Philemon, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your *spirit*." Philemon would need such grace and influence upon his spirit as he was called upon to receive Onesimus, who once had wronged him. Darius the king was ensnared and fell before the subtle suggestion which fed the inherent pride of his heart.

God was to be excluded and Darius set up in the place of supremacy, thus continuing the line Satan has pursued ever since he first sought to displace God in the affections and confidence of His creature, as in Eden. Darius was foolishly, and perhaps un-

thinkingly, led into a position in which he was to appear as supreme, to be as God. It was an usurpation which will be seen in its fullest extent in Antichrist. (Rev. 13. 11-18; 2 Thess. 2. 4.) Darius in this sense completes the threefold expression of evil that is in the world. (1 John 2. 16.) Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius set forth in their activities the pride of life, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes.

But Daniel never falters, though called upon to serve even in the very midst of such evil and presumption. His testings may take fresh forms, but he is with God and, being a man of God, he refuses to surrender. The test now was as to whether Daniel could live for thirty days without praying to his God. How little these men of jealous hatred understood the devoted prophet. No believer can live without prayer, much less a man of God, for it is not only the expression of dependence upon God, but the means of obtaining that strength whereby he may live. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." They also mount up, they run and they walk. (Isa. 40. 31.) They have strength for entrance into the sphere of privilege, for service and also for testimony before men.

Daniel shines in devotedness to God in this fresh crisis. When he knew that the writing was signed he moved with calm deliberation to "his upper chamber" and he "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." He allows of no compromise, but his first consideration is for God. He might have satisfied a less sensitive heart and conscience by praying in secret, but as true to his name (Daniel means "God is Judge") he takes the right course and leaves the

issue with God. He refuses to admit of "second causes," but pursues his way evenly and with the sense of divine approval.

"As he did aforetime" reveals to us the secret and spring of his power hitherto and of the power which would yet mark this devoted servant of God. His beautiful submission to God at all seasons resulted in the display of a moral courage which carried him through every trial.

Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, the presidents and princes, the den of lions—all alike could be faced in the sublime serenity of a man of God, who put not his confidence in princes but in the living God. Darius sees his error, but it is too late. He laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver Daniel, but his efforts were futile. Darius maintained the rights of the throne at the expense of his affection for Daniel.

David the king had earlier placed his throne in jeopardy to satisfy his natural affection for Absalom. The problem in both cases was as to how affections could be gratified and the rights of the throne maintained at the same time. How blessedly perfect was Jesus as the only One who could maintain the rights of God's throne and yet gratify the yearnings of God's heart. He held inviolate the rights of God, and has also brought glory to God and response to His heart as the result of His wondrous death.

Daniel is delivered, and his "excellent spirit" precludes any vindictive feelings against the king. "O king, live for ever." He can also say, "*My* God hath sent his angel." He can speak of personal intimacy with God and he attributes his salvation to God as his Judge, "before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

He had a conscience void of offence towards God and man.

Darius now speaks of the "God of Daniel" as the "living God," and commands that He shall be acknowledged in every dominion of his kingdom. "So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian." (Chap. 6. 28.) It is worthy of note that after every phase of the world power and of evil has passed away "this Daniel" remains and prospers.

This ends the first part of the book. The remainder brings before us the visions and communications given to Daniel. These have been dwelt upon many times and much light given regarding them. We only desire now to draw attention to the sensitiveness and readiness of Daniel to see and to hear. Though a captive in a strange land, and in one sense an obscure man, yet he receives the most precious, if solemn, unfoldings of the ways of God in government and in blessing. He is a fitting vessel for the receipt of such unfoldings, for he is a man of prayer, and as such he is trustworthy. In chapter 7 he sees the vision of the four beasts and the Ancient of Days and the kingdom of Messiah. In chapter 8 he sees the vision of the ram and the he goat and this is interpreted to him. These things had their effect upon him, for he "fainted and was sick certain days."

In the next chapter we see priestly features in Daniel, for he takes upon himself the sin of the people and says, "*we* have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled."

Then he says again, "whilst I was speaking, and praying, and confessing *my* sin, and the sin of my people Israel." He puts himself first in the failure—eating

the sin offering in a holy place—though he was apparently blameless. He is swiftly answered and has secured divine approval as a “man greatly beloved.” How beautiful in the eye of heaven is one who prays as Daniel in chapter 9. Three times he is referred to as a man “greatly beloved.”

His maturity was evidenced in his dependence upon God; he is not inflated by all his outward prosperity, but remains true to Jehovah till the end. How blessedly he is rewarded at the close. “But go thou thy way till the end: and thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” When every phase of evil has passed, as having been finally dealt with, Daniel remains and will have his part in the coming glory! What an incentive, and what encouragement to us to put God first in every circumstance, and in a day of general departure from the truth to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”

J. H. T.

OVERCOMING.

(4) HEZEKIAH: THE OVERCOMER BY PRAYER.

HOW encouraging it is to find the spiritual power to overcome manifested by one who is entering upon life. Hezekiah had already the spirit of an overcomer when, at the age of twenty-five, he came to the throne in Jerusalem. He entered upon his responsibility after his father's reign of great wickedness, during which there had been a sad departure from God, the doors of the house of the Lord had been shut and the service of God profaned. It may have been through the influence of his mother

OVERCOMING.

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Abijah, that he was able to start so well, for she was the daughter of Zechariah—probably that prophet who “had understanding in the visions of God.”

Hezekiah not only “did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,” but in the *first* month of the *first* year of his reign he opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and instructed the priests and Levites to “carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place,” for he had learned the truth of

HOLINESS.

He thus established three great principles as the basis of overcoming: the *secret* life to be right in the sight of God; God’s interests to have the *first* place; the necessity to maintain holiness.

Hezekiah’s fervent appeal evidenced his earnestness, when he said: “My sons, be not now negligent: for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him: to serve him and that you should minister unto him and burn incense.” Then came the opportune moment for the revival of the sacrifice of the offering which was accompanied with great joy, for “when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began.”

We cannot overcome, nor can we be happy, unless we recognise that all spiritual prosperity is the result of the death of Christ in the beautiful character which the burnt offering typifies—the expression of His voluntary devotedness to the will of God—“an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.” We learn in this that as His followers we are called to willing

DEVOTEDNESS

to the will of God, without which we cannot be overcomers.

It is not surprising that the result of Hezekiah's activities was a great revival of spiritual power and blessing among God's people, for they "brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the fields," until there were many heaps of consecrated things in the temple; as to which Azariah, the chief priest, said, "Since the people began to bring the offerings, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty."

But the great secret of Hezekiah's power to overcome was

PRAYER.

Three times it is recorded that he prayed. On the first occasion it was that he sought healing for those who, though not cleansed, had eaten the passover "otherwise than it was written." He prayed thus for them: "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers." And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

There is a great need for healing in our day. We do well to pray for the healing of the people. Many have acted "otherwise than as it was written," and there is much need on every side for spiritual revival and recovery. Let us have recourse to prayer, for our God hearkens and will heal.

When the vast army of the Assyrians was marching upon Jerusalem and a blasphemous threatening letter had been received from Sennacherib, the Assyrian monarch, Hezekiah found his refuge in prayer. With the wisdom that marked him he "went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord." No further

action was necessary, for Jehovah undertook his cause. That night one hundred and eighty-five thousand warriors of the Assyrian army were slain by the angel of the Lord. Thus the enemy was overcome, but Hezekiah's prayer (2 Kings 19) was the basis of the victory.

No Christian can overcome the great forces of evil which are coming in like a flood to-day, but the presence of God is accessible to us. Serious and great matters can be laid before Him and He, the unchanging One, will certainly undertake the case on behalf of those who fear Him—while victory must result.

Another serious crisis was allowed to arise in the life of king Hezekiah. Stricken with a malady which threatened to be fatal, the prophet's words came to him, "Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and prayed unto the Lord."

His prayer on that occasion (Isa. 38) is one of the most striking and pathetic in scripture. He reached the very depths of soul despair, but having received God's answer and recovered of his sickness his prayer was turned to praise. This soul experience is a victory quite distinct from that of overcoming the world. It is that secret answer to the prayers when in personal soul anguish which produces the triumphant songs of praise.

It is a further solemn lesson that notwithstanding the distinct answer given to each of his prayers, Hezekiah was caught by the subtle flattery of the Babylonian princes; the congratulations of the world took him off his guard, and he was "glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things . . . there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion,

that Hezekiah shewed them not." Even then, when the governmental results of his weakness were pronounced by the prophet, the king bowed to the hand of God and was thankful that "there shall be peace and truth in my days."

Thus a life of holiness, devotedness and prayer yields fruit for God, and prosperity for His people, while the personal result of proving the goodness of God is that at the close of the life history there is the song: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day."

F. S. M.

THE UNIVERSE.

EACH is a unit in the plan
Of Thy design, O God, for man ;
While here we view the cosmic scheme,
One system with a central theme.

Thou wouldst unite in one on earth,
Those that are marked by heav'nly birth,
A circle where Thy Spirit dwells,
And of Christ's glory ever tells.

This unison of hearts below
Is like to that in heaven above,
Where sweetest praises ever flow,
And the whole atmosphere is love.

It is a unity sublime,
Known in the sphere of sense and time,
Yet native to the scene above,
Where flows the mighty tide of love.

There union with Christ on high,
Will be our part eternally ;
Raised to that glorious place of power,
To share our portion evermore.

The church, that company unique,
Throughout the ages there will speak

“ NOW THEN DO IT.”

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Of all His fulness, Christ the Head,
The living One, who once was dead.

To unify this wondrous scene,
He into death in love has been
That everything from Him might spring,
And endless glory to Thee bring.

There every family will dwell
In perfect harmony, and swell
The universe of bliss with praise,
As myriad hearts their voices raise.

A uniformity complete,
All various, and yet to meet
With Thine approval, such the plan
That Thou shouldest dwell indeed with man.

'Tis come, the universal rest,
God all in all, for ever blest ;
The glorious scene is bathed in love ;
Length, breadth and depth and height above. J. J.

“ NOW THEN DO IT.”

SOME unsaved one whose heart the world has
ceased to attract may perchance scan these
pages with a fervent desire to find something to meet
their need, a real felt need. The Editor, as well as the
writer, is in sympathy with your desire. May you not
only find something to help, but may you find Him !
We call attention to Christ. Here is One who can
save, and can satisfy the heart that trusts Him.

We will refer to a scripture in 2 Samuel 3. 17, 18 :
“ Ye sought for David in times past to be king over
you : now then do it.” David in many instances is
a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus. This scripture
is so very full of meaning. We will take one sentence

at a time. Truly there is nothing to bewilder here. May our God give light.

“ YE SOUGHT.”

You can look back to a time, can you not, in your history when you really desired to have Jesus as your Saviour? You sought, but allowed something to hinder, and then the desire gradually faded away.

God in mercy is speaking to you again. We beg of you to listen, and obey.

“ FOR DAVID.”

It may be you heard of Jesus from the lips of a devoted christian mother when you were a little child and your heart was tender. You felt attracted to Him as you heard of the love that went into death for you. It is happy to think that it was the true David that attracted you. Ye sought for David. God knows it, and He yearns that you may yet know Him. “ For David ” in contrast to Saul. When Samuel described the manner of the king they had chosen (1 Sam. 8. 11) he said of Saul, “ he will take your sons,” “ he will take your daughters.” Again and again it is, he will take. Saul took of the people, but David was a giver. This is shewn in 1 Chronicles 16. 3: “ He dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.” How great David was to be able to care for so many! No wonder countless multitudes have been attracted to Jesus, the giver of life and peace, and food and joy.

“ TO BE KING OVER YOU.”

This suggests full surrender! The believer happily conscious of owing everything to the Lord Jesus

PRAYER AND MEDITATION.

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desires that He may be supreme. Receive Him and joyfully bow to His claims. Let us be loyal. He who went into death for us now lives for us at God's right hand. Not only is He our Saviour, but our Lord. All sorts and conditions flocked to David to the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. 22. 2); and we read, "David became a captain over them." There was one will, and hence all went well. They were attracted to David and subject to him.

"NOW THEN DO IT."

Oh, the tenderness, as well as the earnestness of this call for decision. Do you not hear it? Instant decision. You have tarried too long. What a fitting close to such a message. In choosing Christ you choose life. God in His gospel sets the One before you He would have you trust. Divine love calls to you, "Now then do it." As living, God will receive praise from your heart. It is only the living that praise (Isa. 38. 19), and in this God is glorified.

"Sweetest rest and peace have filled us,
Sweeter praise than tongue can tell;
God is satisfied with Jesus,
We are satisfied as well."

H. E. W.

 PRAYER AND MEDITATION.

WE are living in days of great hurry and bustle, such as is prophesied in Daniel 12. 4, "Many shall *run* to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Most of us are affected by this state of things in our school or business life, and unless we are watchful our spiritual vigour will decrease through its influence on our minds and spirits. So much is expected to-

day, especially from the young, in the way of bodily exercise, under the name of sports, that Satan will try to use it to crowd out your times of quiet prayer and meditation, without which it is *impossible* to progress spiritually. They are the vital springs of your life and power. Any student knows it is the private study that tells in the test, or any athlete that the daily training is absolutely necessary for success. Divine things are even more so, intensely practical and real. The Spirit of God supports us along certain ordered lines, and we must go this way if we want to prosper.

It is appalling the lethargy that has settled down upon a vast number of Christians. They are manifest proof of Romans 8. 13. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," that is, they are indulging the flesh in various forms and are morally dying, if not already dead. But these are only the outward effects of an inward cause. A doctor looks for the cause of a complaint before he can rightly prescribe.

One is deeply conscious that the neglect of prayer and lack of meditation is very largely the cause of our spiritual weakness. Oh, but you say, I do pray every morning and evening. Yes; but how long is it for? Most of us commend ourselves to God each morning, and thank Him every evening for His care and mercy. But this is not what one is concerned about. We need to get more alone in our chamber with God and unburden all our heart to Him, and then just wait for Him to speak to us. There is very much more we could pray for in regard to the needs of others as well as ourselves, so that spiritual feelings are promoted in us. But oh, how much the blessed God has to say to us. We should then go out not only refreshed and

strengthened, but reflecting to those around the spirit of Him in whose presence we had been.

But you say, All this takes time. This is just the point we must face. Diligence is needed so that our time is rightly ordered. It will mean greater sacrifice, and we must decide which is the best part of the day to set apart. Mornings are always best, and early rising is supported by many scriptures. But each of us is placed differently. This does not of course conflict with the thought of praying always. We need not get on our knees even, if troubles arise during the rush of the day, but can lift our hearts to God and He will hear and answer. But I have in mind what the Lord refers to in Matthew 6. 6, "Enter into thy closet and shut the door"—really getting alone with the Lord. May we all have grace to take up this wondrous privilege, without which our spiritual life will surely wane.

Now just a few remarks as to meditation. This is perhaps even more testing than prayer. For when we have time to sit down quietly our thoughts wander so, and we find how little power we have for spiritual meditation. Perhaps many who read this make a practice of reading their Bible every day. But if it is only done like an ordinary book, and you think no more about it, you will not get much good, although reading is of course essential. It is what we think about and meditate upon that tells, like the cow chewing the cud; the Spirit will enlarge it for us in this way. A very good practice for the young is to commit to memory portions of the word, and they will be very sweet to think about later on in life when you can understand them better. How important is the prayer of the Psalmist, "Let the words of my

mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight." (Psa. 19. 14.) Paul's word to Timothy, too, is encouraging, "Think of what I say, for the Lord will give thee understanding in all things." (2 Tim. 2. 7, New Trans.)

W. J. W.

THE TRUTH SET IN ORDER IN THE HEART.

IN the preaching of the gospel, the exact setting of scripture is not always stated in applying it to heart and conscience. Therefore the necessity of divine teaching that the soul may be built up by having the truth set in order through the affections. Timothy was to have an outline of sound words, which he had heard from Paul, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. The sound words were first to have edified himself, so that he should be able to build others up on the lines on which he himself had been built up.

The Apostle Peter also in his shepherd care for the lambs and sheep of the flock of God, is careful to state things in their true order so that there should be divine progress according to God. A reference to his epistles will shew this to be the case. And his last words in the second epistle state succinctly the great underlying principles of true divine progress. "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things before, take care lest, being led away along with the error of the wicked, ye should fall from your own steadfastness: *but* grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter, 3. 17.) These two last loving exhortations embody all true spiritual growth and understanding. The

grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ go together. It is what subsists now through Jesus Christ, for John agrees with Peter. (See John 1. 14.) Grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ. All the witnesses in the New Testament testify the same thing, and we may note how the Apostle Paul substantiates the truth in his precious ministry to us Gentiles.

His growth in grace has often been commented on with profit. In his great administrative Epistle to the Corinthians, he is the least of the apostles (1 Cor. 15. 9): in his declaration of the whole counsel of God; in that glorious revelation of that which was hidden in God till this present time; in the zenith of his great essentially christian ministry, he is less than the least of all saints (Eph. 3. 8): and finally in his Epistle to Timothy, in regard to his ministry in the gospel of the blessed God, he says, in the profoundest sense of grace, that he is the chief or first of sinners. (1 Tim. 1. 15.) It is essential that our knowledge of the word keeps pace with our sense of grace, otherwise we shall be puffed up as surely as the word says it. (1 Cor. 8. 1.)

Then all truth is found in the Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Here again the Apostle Paul evidences in his ministry his knowledge of Christ. Again, may we repeat, it is *Christ* that we are enjoined to grow in acquaintance with: "Knowledge" is objective knowledge. (See note to 1 Cor. 8. 1, New Trans.) Thus the apostle develops the truth concerning Christ.

In the Epistle to the Romans he speaks of Christ as the grand subject of God's gospel, in His names of Son of man, Son of God, the great Administrator of

blessings in the kingdom of God, as Lord, and as Head. Through 1 Corinthians Paul establishes the lordship of Christ in regard to the assembly of God on earth; in the second epistle the glories that could not be told in the first, as the Son of God, the Yea and Amen of all God's promises to men enjoyed in the assembly of God now on earth, and the present results among the people of God.

Space forbids to dwell on the fuller progress in the knowledge of Christ in Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians; all of which testify to the apostle's own progress in acquaintance with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To be enabled by the Spirit of God to rightly follow, by enlightened hearts, the way in which Christ is presented is of the greatest and most precious value.

With what joy the Lord Himself must have known the emerging of the soul of that once blind man of John 9 in his persistent faithfulness from the darkness and ignorance of the natural human mind to the full blaze of divine revelation, in the gradual knowledge of Himself! From knowing Him as Saviour unto "the Son of God," the man fearlessly made his way through family, society and religion till his faith was crowned in the blessed presence of the Son of God Himself. (John 9.)

L. O. L.

Earth's problems. "When I pondered it, that I might know this, it was a trouble in mine eyes." (Psa. 73.) Thought and reason could not solve the problem. The brain grew wearier, the heart heavier, the lips more complaining. Light and peace alone are found in "the sanctuaries of God." (New Trans.)

OVERCOMING

(5) HABAKKUK : THE OVERCOMER BY FAITH.

THE character of the day in which Habakkuk lived is vividly described in the Second Book of the Chronicles (chap. 36), when the king “stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much . . . and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending ; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

Habakkuk saw the people departing from God, drifting rapidly towards apostasy and captivity, and as a man of

PRAYER

he had been crying earnestly to the Lord for His people. The burden became so great upon the spirit of the prophet that he opened his prophecy with the cry of anguish of heart, “O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear ? ” Then God takes His servant into His confidence and gives him a vision, shewing him that the state of the people was such that it was necessary that the Chaldeans should be allowed to come, for in the government of God they were “established for correction.” Evil must be judged, for God is “of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.”

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Yet God gave His servant to see that He must and would triumph, for "is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." There are many who in this day look out upon the rapid development of apostasy in Christendom and sigh deeply as they feel the departure from the truth, the spread of evil doctrines, and know that the consequences of such evil must inevitably be reaped. Yet what a comfort to such hearts

"To look beyond the long dark night,
And hail the coming day;
When Thou with all Thy saints in light,
Thy glories wilt display,"

and to long for the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, when He will be manifested in His glory. Such

EXPECTATION

is one great secret of overcoming in a dark day of declension, for if we are assured of the triumph of God we shall be maintained in "earnest expectation, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God."

The vision of Habakkuk was given as God's answer to him as he stood upon his watch-tower and looked out to see what the Lord would say to him. He is encouraged by the word of God that it would surely come, and he is told to "wait for it," and while he waits he learns that

FAITH

is the most important principle, for: "The just shall live by his faith."

OVERCOMING.

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Consider then this man of God, his spirit burdened with the state of God's people, his eyes opened to see the coming glory of Christ, now waiting for the fulfilment of the vision, and while he waits living by faith. Are not these same characteristics necessary if we are to overcome in our day?

But while he longs and sees and waits and lives, he also prays, and the burden of his prayer is for the revival of the people of God. "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known." He knows that while wrath is inevitable God delights in mercy, and he falls back on the promises of God as he pleads, "in wrath remember mercy." How encouraging this is to those who feel the departure from God, to be engaged in earnest, intelligent prayer for a revival of God's work, and mercy for His people, despite the fact that the enemy is coming in like a flood!

The final outpouring of Habakkuk's confidence in God is one of the finest expressions of overcoming in the scriptures, for the three closing verses of his prophecy sound a triumphant note which has encouraged multitudes of tried people of God through many centuries. He is able to

TRIUMPH,

for even if Israel should completely fail to yield fruit for God, if there is the absence of spiritual power, the failure of food supply, and the cessation of sacrifices for lack of flocks and herds, *yet God remains* and the overcomer emerges out of the dark cloud of spiritual disaster joyful and triumphant as he cries:

"YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD, I WILL

JOY IN THE GOD OF MY SALVATION. THE
LORD GOD IS MY STRENGTH."

Thus we leave this man of God with his spirit lifted up above all the departure and depression, sustained by divine

JOY

and strengthened to pursue his walk of faith with God as his strength.

May we too be encouraged to overcome by faith and to joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

F. S. M.

PROGRESS IN THE FAITH.

(1 SAM. 3. 19; MARK 10. 13-22; 1 JOHN 2. 18-28.)

THE great test to every one in this world is, "What think ye of Christ?" If we have received the "faith of Jesus," the Lord Jesus is something to us and we make advance in the knowledge of God, and in the knowledge of Christ.

1 Samuel 3 gives us an example of one comparatively young who advanced in divine things. It is a beautiful example of what true progress is. It says, "Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him." This is what all who are young in the faith want, they want to grow in spiritual affections, and they want the Lord with them, so that what was true of Samuel may be true of all.

The first question is, How are we brought into the faith? Mark 10. 13-16 is a well-known scripture, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God . . . And he . . . put his hands upon them, and

blessed them." That is the way we come into the faith. It is not by effort or attainment, but by putting ourselves in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the simplest possible gospel invitation.

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'Come unto Me and rest ;
 Lay down, thou weary one, lay down,
 Thy head upon My breast.'
 I came to Jesus, as I was,
 Weary, and worn, and sad ;
 I found in Him a resting-place,
 And He has made me glad."

It is Christ who introduces souls to Himself. That is what He did when He took them up in His arms, and put His hands upon them and blessed them. There is no other way into the kingdom of God beside this, "for of such is the kingdom of God." So the simplest possible thought that can express what a Christian is is this—He has been taken up in the arms of Jesus and blest, and consequently is of the "faith of Jesus."

Now the thought of soul progress faces us. Souls are often satisfied with having tasted that "the Lord is gracious," but do not seem to move forward; such may first stand still and then begin to decline. Be assured that to grow spiritually, and to have the hand of the Lord with us in practical life is without any compare. The incident in Mark 10. 17-22 is one of deep interest and the teaching in 1 John 2 coincides with this, and its import with the instruction given to the young man.

It presents to us the Lord as having "gone forth into the way," and then one running and kneeling to Him and asking Him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" We need to

come under the influence of the One who has blessed us and is prepared to do certain things for us which will result in our being in the path where eternal life is enjoyed, and in which God's hand can be with us. This young man was, as many are, well behaved in general conduct, but nevertheless there was "One thing thou lackest." The possession of this "one thing" is the secret of growth, and the Lord being with us. So the Lord says to this young man, and it is His voice to every reader of these lines, "One thing thou lackest; 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." We are called to surrender everything *as object*, and have one Object—Christ. There is no other way for growth but that. The treasure Christ will give is the love of God; if we follow Christ, the One who has blessed us, He will direct our hearts into the love of God. The Lord Jesus has come forth from the heart of God and can give us to know it and give us to know Himself as the source of every grace. The test is taking up the cross and following Him. If we do so it will be gain to us in our practical life, for it will mean we shall get understanding, discernment and wisdom; in fact, all we need for our practical life in this world will flow from Him to us and that in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is a difficult proposition, and in the illustration here, the young man goes away having refused it. He was not prepared to surrender riches for Christ, and he missed *the very best thing*. The pursuit of Christ does not make a man's life unreal, it makes it real. You may have strength, you may have ability, you may have wealth, but *nothing* makes up for the lack

SALVATION.

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of the "one thing," because it is Christ realised in the heart that gives all spiritual growth and enlargement where there are unlimited, boundless, and inexhaustible supplies of good. The pursuit of one object simplifies a man's life down here. If the young man had stayed in His presence, He would have broken the power of the riches in his soul. But he missed the opportunity, brought to his door by Christ, and declined to take up the cross and follow Christ. There is *no other way* but this for true blessing and the developing of our spiritual affections, so that what is set forth as being brought to pass in Samuel is also brought to pass in us, that is, we grow, and the Lord is with us.

W. C. G.

 SALVATION.

I WOULD desire, as feeling the need for oneself, to say a simple word on salvation. There is real necessity in these days for the beloved people of God to be firmly established in what is true. As regards being saved from judgment to come and from a lost eternity, most seem to be clear. The precious blood of Christ has been shed, and this speaks before God. The blood in scripture would appear to stand connected with righteousness—that is, God is now able to righteously forgive because of that precious blood. Nothing can alter that; the blessed One who shed His precious blood has paid ALL, He is now in the glory, "Sat down in perpetuity at the right hand of God," and "by one offering he has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified." (Heb. 10. 12, 14.) His work is complete, His sitting down at the right hand is not subject to interruption, and the effect of His work

is so complete too, that those sheltered by His precious blood are cleared of guilt before God for ever. This is true of every real believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, it does not depend upon their state, nor even upon their going on well, it depends entirely upon what He has accomplished.

But there still remains the question of practical salvation—a daily, yea, hourly matter. Now the thought of salvation supposes a sphere of opposition—that is, there is something we need to be saved from. I have thought that the truth of the “water” would help us here. It says in that precious but solemn record of John 19 that to which the beloved apostle gave witness—“immediately there came out blood and water.” The blood answers every question which the righteousness and holiness of God can raise (that must be first), and then the application of the water in its cleansing aspect comes in bringing to me salvation, cleansing me from all that would defile and rob me of the full enjoyment and blessedness of practical salvation. The kingdom of God is a sphere of salvation, and the Lord Jesus tells Nicodemus in John 3 of the necessity of being “born of water and of the Spirit” before he could enter that sphere. Now the water is the word, and we are purified in our affections, our thoughts, our lives by the application in the power of the Spirit of God’s own blessed word. The Holy Spirit applies the word to us, and it (the word) regulates and cleanses our every action.

In Ephesians 5. 25–27 we read, “Christ also loved the assembly, and has delivered Himself up for it, in order that he might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present the assembly to himself glorious, having no spot.”

What a blessed thought! What complete salvation that will be, and it is accomplished by the "washing of water." Again, Hebrews x. 22 speaks of being "washed as to our body with pure water."

In verse 19 our boldness for entering into the holiest is by the blood of Jesus—there could be no other way. But then as to our bodies, and it is in these bodies we need salvation, we are washed with pure water. There should be in our bodies that which is in practical conformity to what has been done for us. One feels too what power and salvation there is in the full acceptance of the teaching of 1 Peter 3. 20. The flood was death to all in the scene, and as passing through death in spirit we are delivered from the whole scene, and find ourselves in a sphere of salvation where a good conscience before God and the knowledge of a blessed Person in the place of power are wonderful possessions.

Chapter 10 of John's gospel presents to us the wonderful Person of the Son of God. Nothing in this world is great enough to hold that blessed Person. He comes in to lead His people to a heavenly sphere. He came in by the door; everything that had been prophesied in connection with the Messiah was fulfilled in that blessed One. "He came in by the door"; He leads His people out—out of all the Jewish system that had departed from God. He was the door to lead them out; He was, too, the door to lead them in, and as verse 16 shews He leads us in too. Where does He lead us? Into a sphere of salvation, of liberty, of abundance of life. He has laid down His precious life, He has called us and won us, He knows us and we love to follow Him. He is our Shepherd; He is personally (how blessed it is) pledged to the safety of His flock. There is no fold now, no enclosure that

is apparent, but a flock and a Shepherd, He caring for us, going before us, marking out the way, and His sheep following Him. What a path of salvation and blessedness. There is a link with Himself which no weakness or failure which we may discover within ourselves can cause to perish, and no force from without can snatch us from His Shepherd care. He would thus lead us into the blessedness of eternal life. Life is living and living in enjoyment. We may be perfectly safe from hell through the precious blood of Christ, but if we settle down here in a scene of death it is no use talking about eternal life. We need to know the blessedness, and power of it now and we do so as we follow in nearness to Christ. In John 1 the Lord is seeking followers; in the end of the gospel we see where He would lead them to. What blessedness, what full salvation from every opposing sphere is to be found in nearness to Himself, listening to His blessed words, enjoying His company so that a satisfied heart has no desire for anything or anybody else.

This path of salvation has been marked out, it stands before us, secured through His precious death. We have, like Israel of old, been sheltered by the blood, but enemies would oppose the progress of such a company. What is the remedy? "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." There is the path, it is a path of salvation, but to be saved we must take the path. May the Lord encourage our hearts to follow Him, and to know in a fuller measure the power of His gracious hand. "For every one whosoever, who shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." (Rom. 10. 13.)

F. A. H.

“PURE GOLD.”

(EXO. 25. 11, 17, 24, 31 ; REV. 21. 18, 21.)

IN the golden furnishings of the tabernacle we get a blessed truth presented, and that is that God would have a place in which He could rest, a scene in which He could find perfect complacency. In the tabernacle system we get a wonderful pattern of what God had in His mind regarding His relations with men. There are many other things spoken of besides gold, things that have to do with the *outside*, but what we see *inside* is *pure gold*. And nothing was ever allowed inside but what was in perfect suitability to the holy character of that place. How good to take account of the Man that is before God for His eternal pleasure :

“ ’Tis JESUS fills that holy place.”

When we look on to the grand consummation of the purpose of God we see a scene of pure gold. Not in a small material compass, as we see in the Book of Exodus, but a *city* of pure gold. God’s own marvellous work in display ; “ descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.” That city will flood the universe with light, the light of the glory of God. What a wonderful scene to contemplate, when God’s own end is reached, the end He ever had in view, and towards which He is surely moving. How blessed to have the light of it in our souls now, and to anticipate that day, of which we sing, when

“ God and the Lamb shall there
The light and temple be,
And radiant hosts for ever share
The unveiled mystery.”

C. D—N.

HUSBAND AND WIFE AND HOUSEHOLD.

A BRAHAM and Sarah provide beautiful models as husband and wife. Their household (Gen. 18. 1-8) presents elements of wonderful spiritual suggestiveness.

Abraham's characteristics were that he was a called man, a separate man, a moving man (a pilgrim), a worshipping man, a meditative man, and a pleading man.

Sarah was marked by being in accord with her husband. She was also adorned with subjection (1 Peter 3. 5, 6), evidently characterised by regal dignity according to God (Sarah—a princess), and was beautiful in His eyes. Her subjection was coupled with discernment and spirituality, and at least on one occasion she was a light to Abraham. (Gen. 21. 10.) Husbands do well to take account of the God-given exercises of their wives. Sarah was also a woman who laughed in responsiveness to the bringing in by God of the seed of promise. May we be like her in regard to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Abraham was also one who desired to preserve unto God His portion. (Gen. 15. 11.)

Coming to Genesis 18 we have a tent, meditations, heavenly visitors, water, a tree, bread, fine meal and cakes, a young man, a calf tender and good, butter and milk, and divine communications.

The tent would provide a household which would not hinder movements Godward. The tent door is suggestive of a heavenly outlook, as it was evidently pitched in the direction from which God was moving.

If the atmosphere outside was such as to hinder Abraham in his daily service, he found time to con-

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sider, and it is plain that his meditations were in connection with "whatsoever things are pure," etc., for he is not taken aback, nor ashamed when Jehovah and those with Him appear, for "When he saw them, he ran forward to meet them from the tent door and bowed himself toward the ground," exalting God and abasing himself—a true model.

The water would probably suggest what had been obtained, by the Spirit, from the reception of the word in the household, and from the outgoings of the death of Christ. (John 19. 34.) What a privilege to have a capacity which would hold and provide refreshment for divine Persons. The water was "fetched" from the household store.

The tree brings to light the rootings, and growings, and spreadings of the features of the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way as to provide a shade under which the Lord and His messengers can rest and be ministered to in the expeditious, but intelligent, activities of faithful affections. The Lord Jesus personally grew up here like a fruitful tree, delighting the eyes and heart of God the Father. Personally He is now at God's right hand, but how encouraging, how blessed, to know that such a life may be, and is, continued here associated with the true household conditions of the saints of God.

The morsel of bread would suggest those developed, but fresh, impressions of the One who as the Bread of God, came down from heaven to give life unto the world. (John 6. 32-58.) With such impressions livingly ours we can comfort God's heart, that heart which has been, and is, grieved beyond measure at the wickedness of man.

Abraham invites the Lord and those with Him to

such conditions, and to such conditions they gladly respond. "So do, as thou hast said."

Love's activities delight, however, to go further still, and a hastening Abraham finds a responsive Sarah, who makes ready quickly three measures of fine meal, kneads it and makes cakes upon the hearth. The fine meal calls for little detailed comment to those who know something of the secrets of the fine flour offering, but how pleased to take account of a life passed through in manhood for God in beautiful evenness, beautiful availability and beautiful softness. The substance was all in that holy life; the millstones of life's circumstances served to bring out the detailed perfection of what was always there. May our hands spiritually appropriate it, handle it, knead it; and from the heat of love's vehement flame there will come forth food meet for the One who delights to visit our households, both by the Spirit and with His heavenly ones. But why "upon the hearth"? May we not take account of the One who, meek and lowly in heart, humbled Himself. No great position in this world was His, no earthly, kingly glory, but in the lowliest of circumstances He provided pleasure and satisfaction for God. Delightful to see a sister, a wife, stooping in the appreciation of the qualities of that life to have part with her husband in providing for God and His own.

Enough has not yet been provided, however. A calf tender and good is dressed and brought, bespeaking the Lord Jesus, dependent, tender and good, being given up—indeed, giving Himself up—that God might have His portion. How diligently, how appreciatively and how carefully we should take up such a service, such an offering. The presentation of the Person

and death of Jesus has been so spoiled by the activities (the dressings) of the natural, but spiritually unintelligent, minds of men, that we need preservation in the way in which we handle such a wondrous truth. The Holy Spirit is the only One down here who can teach us rightly to handle and present such an offering.

In the joy and vigour of spiritual life, such as the young man would suggest, we may have part in delighting God's heart in bringing such an One before Him, but let us see that our hands are holy and the accompaniments to our offering suitable.

Butter and milk complete the provision, and remind us of the necessity of the refusal of evil (Isa. 17. 5) and the simple acceptance of truth. (1 Peter 2. 1, 2.)

We may, if we have provided and moved like Abraham, stand by like him and find our joy in God's appreciation of what He has found and what we have brought.

He delights to visit us and our households. May we be suitable and have what is suitable to Him.

H. J. M.

THE WATER-GATE.

(NEH. 8.)

AFTER the wall is completed it is recorded that "*all* the enemies were afraid and much cast down, perceiving that this work was wrought by God." Sanballat, the despiser, Tobiah the son and descendant of an awful incestuous conception—the Ammonite—and Geshem the Arabian, like Ishmael his progenitor, all mock and despise the people of the God of the heavens; but all of no avail. Nehemiah

is equal morally. "Should such a man as I flee?" (Chap. 6.) Faith in God, a refusal of any and every intrigue of the enemy; a spiritual eye taking account of the situation; and a final appeal to his *God* to *remember* all those (Tobiah being named first) who would have put him in fear, reveals him with his beloved brethren triumphant by the building of the wall being finished! So is an unholy alliance defeated by the faithful remnant who, led by the prophet, trowel in hand, and sword girded on, while trusting in Jehovah stand triumphant! (Chap. 6. 14, 15.)

"And when the *seventh* month came." What a beautiful setting out is this: the wall completed; all the people *gathered* together as ONE man to the *open* place *before* the water-gate. After all the testing and stress they voluntarily gather before the water-gate! There is no word of command to gather. The exercise of building the wall—a place of defence from the enemy, a place wherein, for the moment, is all that is for God, His people in seclusion for Himself—the motive and gathering force, and their tongues tell out their heart's deep longing to hear from the book of the law, with attentive ear, what their God would make known to them. (Chap. 8. 4.) We behold Ezra the scribe on a high stage of wood which they had made for the purpose. Their hearts being held in separation to God, they being true to His holy name, constituted them a moral platform whereon the "priest and scribe" of verse 9 could stand, for take note he is first priest*—to bring the mind of God, and then scribe—to give us impressions; he is a *writer*, he gives the sense, and he brought the law before the

* "The priests lips teach wisdom."

congregation to both men and women, and to all that could *understand*. He read it in an *open* place! There was spiritual room. There was no evil occurrent, so to speak. As one man they listened—as one man they wept! as one man they spake, “Let *us* all speak the same thing.”

But where is it that all these precious desires are made known? At the water-gate! Let us all be attent to the words that flow forth from that wondrous living stream from the water-gate, for God hath given *us* an understanding, *and it will last all the morning*; it was from the morning till midday. There is no evening, as it were, at the water-gate; would it not include “the young men and maidens”—all that had understanding? Upon the platform erected by the affections of the saints how sweet and strong that holy law would sound out! Ezra, the priest and scribe, *opened* the book in their sight; he elevated the holy law that *it* might be seen—not himself—and when it was seen all the people stood up, shewing moral strength to stand, as it were—with the truth and in it. The priest blessed Jehovah, and with responsive hearts the people say, “Amen, Amen.” They answered. Deep exercise brings out deep praise, and bowing and worship in holy prostration. But the priest carries onward. Things were read distinctly and the sense was *given*. In the power themselves they, the Levites, passed on the sense and blessedness to all, and caused them to understand. How wonderful!

And Nehemiah and Ezra, and the Levites said, “This day is holy to Jehovah, your God; mourn not, nor weep. . . Go your way.” Your way is the way of God. Eat of His portion—the fat! Drink the sweet of it. What you enjoy yourselves send on to others that

have nothing at all prepared. Be still, for the day is holy. Neither be grieved.

Then from the outflow of the water-gate they go up to the mount to fetch olive-branches to make booths as it is written. You come to rest in your own house by what you build in it, and you carry that up to the house of God, and in the *open* space of the water-gate. They went their way first with great rejoicing; and there was, ensuing that, the delight of dwelling in booths, resting and feasting seven days. Time, indeed, for a solemn assembly, for there was very great gladness—blessed outcome of standing in the water-gate.

R. E.

THE STATE OF DEPARTED SAINTS.

WE may think of departed saints in three ways according to scripture. As *dead*, as having *fallen asleep*, as *living* in a state of rest and peace and happiness *with Christ*. As to their bodies they are dead, that needs no explanation. Then they are said to be asleep; this too applies to their bodily condition. Sleep is a *passing* condition, a person goes to sleep to wake up again. Thus it is a state of *rest*. When a saint falls asleep all his activities, exercises, labours, conflict, suffering, all is over, he is at *rest*. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord . . . they . . . *rest* from their labours.” Again, sleep is a state of *unconsciousness*. The saint in falling asleep has become unconscious to his former bodily condition, and the circumstances attaching to it, and to all that belongs to this world; as to all these things he sleeps. But he is *not asleep to Christ* and heavenly things; to Christ he *lives*. He is not asleep in his *spirit*. If it were a state of sleep

the apostle could not have said, "To depart; and to be with Christ, is far better." The Lord could say to the dying thief, "This day shalt thou be *with me in paradise.*" It is a state of undisturbed restful enjoyment of all that the presence of Christ involves, "In thy presence is fulness of joy; and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." F. H. B.

FRAGMENTS (1.)

GATHERED BY S. J. B. C.

Reality.—Not of double *heart*. (1 Chron. 12. 33.)
Not of double *mind*. (James 1. 8.) Not of double *tongue*. (1 Tim. 3. 8.)

Negatives are hazardous arguments. If I say a thing is not in scripture, I assume I know all scripture. (J. N. D.)

Mark 14. 17–19.—"Is it I?" True, though simple, hearts shrinking from the possibility of such a thing, but with more confidence in the Master's word than in themselves.

1 *Kings* 10.—She heard the *wisdom* of the *prophet*; she realised the *splendour* of the *king*; she beheld the *ascent* of the royal *Priest*. Result: No more spirit in her. Lord, keep us thus.

Isaiah 53. 2.—Why should you be delighted with the beauty of Jesus? None but a blind man could ask such a question.

CONTEMPLATION.

LORD, Thy life with hearts adoring,
'Tis our joy to trace,
That most precious condescending,
Thy all-beauteous grace :
Grace which shed its fragrance sweetly
In a sin-spoiled earth ;
Grace with all the pow'r and richness
Of Thy peerless worth.

Lord, Thy death with hearts adoring
(Sight all sights above),
We would e'er be contemplating,
With its depths of love ;
With its height of grace abounding
Over all our sin :
Pow'r it has to charm, enrapture,
Stubborn hearts to win.

Lord, the glory we're beholding,
Shining in Thy face ;
Righteousness divine enthroned Thee
In the highest place :
Set Thee there, the mighty Victor,
Tribute to Thy worth ;
Wondrous answer to the gibbet
Giv'n Thee on earth !

Soon, in bliss divine, eternal
(Fruit of boundless grace),
Joy profound each heart indwelling
We shall find our place.
There upon Thy face for ever
With delight we'll gaze,
And with joy each heart o'erflowing
Thee *for ever* praise !

A. H. L.

GRACE TRIUMPHANT.

NOTES OF A READING.

(JOHN 8. 2-12.)

THE divine authenticity of what we are about to consider has been queried for various reasons.* But the objectors have no more understood the grace this touching incident reveals than did the scribes and Pharisees. Grace is the great lesson it inculcates. Moreover, the last part of John 8 is the sad sequel of the first part. In the opening part the scribes and Pharisees refused to take the only place where grace could meet them, as it did the poor, wretched woman. In the closing part we find that, refusing to be blest themselves on the ground of grace, they resented grace being shewn to the woman. So they took up the very stones they had wanted to hurl at her, intent on casting them at Jesus.

They brought the woman to Him thinking they could confound Him by their questions. But His divine power confounded them. We have the moral power of Jesus displayed on this occasion in a four-fold way.

(1) The power of *silence*. He answered them not, but in silence wrote on the ground. Silence, for the time being, was more befitting than speech. The light began to search them. Nothing is more silent yet more searching than light.

* *Vide* J. N. D.'s note in New Trans.

(2) The power of *holiness*. As “the light of the world” (ver. 12) He shone, and they shrank away from the halo of holiness which enshrined His Person. Thus, when He spoke, “they went out.”

(3) The power of *conscience*. “Being convicted by their own conscience, they went out,” not *en masse*, but “one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last.” Why “one by one”? Because each conscience was individually enlightened and exposed by the light. Why did the eldest go out first? Because he had most sin upon his conscience.

(4) The power of *grace*. The Saviour and the sinner “alone”! What a sight for heaven to contemplate! He did not justify her—He could not do that yet. But in grace He did not condemn her.

Observe what His two down-stoopings in grace portrayed! The first time He wrote with His finger on the ground—the same finger which long before had written the law she had transgressed. That finger wrote on the ground her sentence of condemnation in the law, but those lips of grace would not pronounce it. True, He came not to set aside the law, but to fulfil it. Yet He did not come to *administer* it, but to bear its condemnation for those who had broken it. None in that company felt capable of administering it because none was “without sin.” He alone who was “without sin” (Heb. 4. 15) could administer it, but He would not do it. He who framed the law was above it. He came not to condemn, but to save. (John 3. 17.)

The first down-stooping, then, might suggest His incarnation in grace. It told of that marvellous *κενωσις* when “He *emptied* himself.” (Phil. 2. 7.) Then in the first lifting of Himself up we might see His entrance

THREE PORTRAITS OF ONE MAN.

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upon His public ministry. For thirty years He was silent in obscurity. Then, when He lifted up Himself for His public work, He spoke.

His second stooping down, however, would remind us of that lower, yea lowest, stoop, "He humbled himself . . . unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2. 8.) Then when, in a figure, He had finished His work in the "dust of death" (Col. 2. 14) He lifted up Himself the second time, which suggests *resurrection*. Now, on the ground of accomplished redemption, He can do what He could not righteously do for this sinful woman—He can *justify*. The gospel is not a negation simply—"Neither do I condemn thee," but grace in its positive fulness. "Grace reigns through righteousness." God can be just and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. What a privilege, a portion, a place is ours! For us there is no *accuser* (Rom. 8. 33), no *judge* (Rom. 8. 34), no *executioner* (Rom. 8. 35). We are called, justified, glorified. Thus grace is triumphant. (Rom. 8. 29, 30.)

S. J. B. C.

 THREE PORTRAITS OF ONE MAN.

(READ LUKE 7. 1-10.)

FOR every man there are three men; at least, three pictures of him.

The first is what he is in the eyes of other men. This is the superficial picture of a man; it generally gets very little below the surface; we may call it the ordinary view of him. In the case of the centurion his neighbours could give some account of him, not inaccurate as far as it went: "That he was worthy

for whom he should do this : for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." Jesus does not say this view was wrong ; neither does He say it was right ; He simply disregards it, as not touching the depths of the man's soul in its exercises with God.

The second picture is what a man appears to himself. Some men are vain, self-centred and egotistical ; others, without being that, are very self-conscious ; but whether or not we are these things in any especial degree, each of us has some mental picture of himself ; we think of ourselves as having such and such good points, and we may admit to ourselves such and such defects of character or conduct. We suppose our friends and acquaintances to be aware of the former ; perhaps we hope they have not observed the latter.

This second picture, be it observed in passing, is often ludicrously, sometimes tragically, different from the first. For many of us it would be a rude awakening to discover how different from our own mental picture of ourselves is that which those around us have formed.

In any case, both these pictures are generally very partial, and wide of the mark.

The third picture is the truth about a man ; the true picture ; we may call it God's view of him. It will not ignore anything that is fact in the first and second pictures, but it will take account of everything.

The first picture, that formed by a man's friends and neighbours, is not of first importance, but it is eminently desirable that the second should—not indeed coincide with the third, but be in keeping with it. Whether this is so will depend on a man's experience *with God*.

In most cases men are very well content to be highly

thought of by the world. "He is worthy . . . he hath built us a synagogue," this would satisfy most candidates for the good opinion of their fellow-men. But to the centurion this matter of reputation was simply of no account at all in the crisis in which he found himself. He had become aware of One who had awakened in him *faith*, a light in his soul by which he saw himself as *not* worthy, and looked outside himself for divine power to meet him in his need. If his message to the Lord had been to plead that he had built a synagogue, the statement would have been correct in fact, but, apart from its unseemliness on his lips, it would have presented a distorted, an untrue picture of himself in the sight of God ; it would have ignored what was vital. Abasing himself, he was able to see and to confess the simple truth both about his own unworthiness and the authority of Jesus over the evil that was afflicting him, an authority as simple, direct and effective as that of his own superior officers over him, or his own authority over his soldiers. "*I am not worthy.*"

This was a very clear-sighted, a morally true picture, and such clear sight only comes from humility and faith. The centurion's view both of himself and of Jesus was in keeping with the truth. And if we thus with good and honest hearts recognise ourselves as unworthy of the bounty of God, why then one great hindrance—the woeful *self-misrepresentation* which afflicts the natural man—is removed, and God is free to bless. And not only to bless, but to recognise and justify the work of faith ; and so we see Jesus giving the divine view of the man who has humbled himself and believed. "He marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him,

I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Thus, as always in the long run, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

J. B. C.

"FOR WHICH WORLD?"

Kelly SUCH was the simple and consistent reply of a servant of the Lord, who was one of the ablest scholars of his day, to a learned professor who suggested to him that if he did but settle as a teacher in a certain city he would amass a fortune. That he would have risen to great prominence in this world is undoubted, but his ambitions were not in that direction. The question of first importance with him was not what would be to his personal advantage, but for the Lord's glory. Thus did his service for his Master prove effective.

May each one of us challenge our hearts as to what are our aspirations. Do we desire a place of fame in man's world, where self is made the one absorbing object, or are our desires in connection with what is consistent with God's world, where the Lord Jesus has the supreme place? May He have that place in each one of our hearts!

The Christian does not belong to this world. It is for him to show a spirit exactly opposite to that which reigns in this world, where men's own interests and ambitions are paramount.

Shall we be losers by considering for the Lord first in our movements? Thus only can we expect to prosper spiritually. We have to fulfil our respective avocations faithfully, but "as unto the Lord." He may be pleased to prosper us in connection with

temporal mercies ; if so we are to be faithful stewards. He would not have us be neglectful in connection with the necessities of this life ; but may we have grace to consider for Him first in our lives, and allow those things which are lawful and right to follow in their right relation thereto.

A. E. B.

OVERCOMING.

(6) OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD.

THE exhortation, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," is so contrary to the spirit of the world, and yet so full of the spirit of Christ, that every believer is at once impressed with its importance. The cross of Christ will ever witness to this, for it was there that evil reached its climax. Never was there such an expression of it ; never did sin rise to such a height as when men crucified the Lord of glory. Yet evil did not triumph, for never was there such a victory of good over evil as when Jesus rose from the dead. Perfect goodness in God's beloved Son shone forth in the midst of evil, for at the cross, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

That fearful outburst of evil might have called forth God's unsparing judgment. It would have been just had Jesus commanded fire from heaven upon His enemies, but it would not have declared divine goodness ; it would not have effected God's glory or man's blessing. But Jesus died, accomplishing redemption and unfolding the goodness of the heart of God. Pardon, justification, peace and blessing all flowed out of the triumph of the cross !

* * * * *

Now the followers of Christ are left to act on this same divine principle, to display the same spirit of goodness which shone out so perfectly in Him.

Among the many beautiful examples of this in the scriptures David shines out brilliantly on the occasion when he was being pursued by Saul. He had given the king no occasion to hate him ; on the contrary he had served him with greater fidelity and success than any of his subjects. Yet David was exposed to Saul's deliberate attempts to kill him, and when at last he fled for his life, he was hunted as a partridge upon the mountains.

It was during this period of suffering and exile that he wrote, "The bands of death encompassed me. . . In my distress I called upon Jehovah" ; and again, "My soul is in the midst of lions." His confidence was in God amidst almost overwhelming difficulties. Then came an unexpected test ; an opportunity which by natural reasoning he might have regarded as a providential intervention to enable him to free himself of his enemy, but it would have been overcoming evil with evil.

David and Abishai, his general, came to Saul's camp by night and found Saul sleeping with his spear stuck in the ground at his head. Abishai said, "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day, and now let me smite him." But David said, "Destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless." His touching appeal brought the king to repentance, and David in thus forgiving his enemy overcame evil with good.

* * * * *

Another striking instance is the well-known story of the little captive maid. As a captive in a strange

land, she might well have reasoned that the leprosy of her master was the judgment of God upon him, but instead of the spirit of revenge, she was moved with compassion, and manifested a beautiful spirit of forgiveness. She had a gospel message for her master as she said, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy," and the result of her testimony was that her master was healed, God was glorified, while even to this day hearts are encouraged by the triumph of that little maid who overcame evil with good.

* * * * *

It is in this character of overcoming that the followers of Jesus are enabled to reflect His goodness. There is no place in the spirit of a Christian for retaliation or revenge. It is not now "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," but rather, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink, for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee."

Surely the Lord's own words should inspire us to thus overcome: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

May each be enabled in the spirit of Christ to "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

F. S. M.

SERVICE AND COMMUNION.

ONE of the first desires of the heart that has trusted in the Lord Jesus is to do something for Him. This is the normal effect of the wondrous service of His in giving His life for us. Everything we have and are we owe to Him, and a whole life-time consecrated to His service can never repay such wondrous love. One of the first exercises we have to face in following up this desire is, What are we to do? This question was asked by Saul of Tarsus immediately the Lord arrested him on his rebellious course. But it is interesting to notice it was not answered immediately. His first question was answered at once, "Who art thou, Lord?" But with regard to the second he was told to go into the city and there it should be told him what he was to do. We have to wait on the Lord for guidance and direction as to the particular service He has for each one of us.

In the first place, desires are awakened in the soul, and it is important to follow up these desires; like the woman in John 4, who went into the city and told others about the wonderful Person she had found without being directly told by the Lord to do so. The freshness and reality of these appeals from a young convert are irresistible, springing as they do from the operation of divine grace in the soul. Often, alas! as we go on, our service lacks this power, and we become self-confident or fail to count absolutely on the Lord. But such an attitude if pursued will only lead to disaster.

It is interesting to notice in Romans 6 that the effect of the liberating power of the gospel is to set us free from the bondage of sin on the one hand, but

to secure us as servants or bondmen to God on the other. As God said in regard to the children of Israel, "Let my son go that he may *serve* me." (Exo. 4. 23.) In seeking to be guided as to what we are to do *for* the Lord, we must first of all have fully surrendered *to* Him; as Paul says in Acts 27, 23, "Whose I am, and whom I serve." We are then ready to go *anywhere* and do *anything*. For the force of service in this aspect is that of a slave to a master: unquestioning obedience.

I would just seek grace to put before you, and especially those young in years, a few impressions as to service, and then the importance of communion as bearing on our service. It has already been stated that we begin by desires awakened in the soul. These desires have to be rightly regulated and controlled, just as an engine driver controls the steam of his engine. We are often too much concerned about *public* service and are not prepared to take up the many apparently little things that are to hand each day. We would not act the same way in natural things; any young person knows that if they are to become efficient in any trade or craft, they must begin quietly and humbly and cannot shew much at first. We have to learn first to be faithful in that which is least. It may not bring us before the public eye at all; as one of the Lord's greatest servants has said, "To serve Thee here on earth unknown."

How testing it is to speak to *one* soul alone. Yet this individual service was what our blessed Lord and Master Himself did so often, as John's gospel illustrates. There is no need to imitate others in our service, for if we get our orders from the Lord, there will be a distinctiveness and originality about each

of us. There is a vast field of labour, and the need of souls on every hand is very manifest, as too is a real awakening both among saved and unsaved. Oh, to have the real burden of souls pressing upon us! to be moved like the blessed Lord Himself from compassion on the multitude! This will drive us to Him in fervent and continuous prayer, without which it is impossible to serve effectually.

On the line of fasting too we should be prepared to forego our own comfort, and surrender things which may be right in themselves, but which would occupy our time and money for mere temporal gratification. The time is short, very short, the coming of the Lord is near, when these opportunities will be for ever over. He will then require to know what each of us has gained by trading. (See Luke 19. 15.) What will *you* answer Him then?

Just a word in conclusion with reference to communion in relation to service. By this I mean, the necessity for our own souls to be kept in constant nearness to the Lord, feeding continually on Himself, learning more of His mind and will for us. Otherwise we shall soon get weary in well doing and what is worse our supplies will run out and disaster follow. But if we are continually receiving and giving, we shall be like a running stream, always fresh. How easy it is for service to get beyond our communion, especially if we are active. May we pray much about this. Let us see too that our service is done out of joy and freedom and not like Martha, who was *cumbered* about *much* serving, and thus begin to find fault with others who do not appear to us to be so active. The more we give out, the more we must take in, so that we ourselves are well nourished, and above all,

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that the Lord gets His own joy from our occupation with Himself.

The Lord is still seeking labourers in His vineyard, and if we are ready to be called, He will see that we are well and truly occupied. Sisters have many spheres of service that brothers are not fitted for. They can, for instance, visit houses where openings are given, and enter into the mother's cares with the family and in that way get near the heart in sympathy, thus preparing the way for a word from the Lord.

In all our service, whether little or much, if directed and ordered by the Lord, it will encourage us to look forward to His "Well done, good and faithful servant," and we shall not be influenced by the opinions of men.

W. J. W.

 HEAVEN WHERE JESUS IS.

An anecdote bringing to mind the principle of 1 John 2. 20, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

DURING the great war, a little girl went to church one Sunday afternoon and came home with a puzzled look and this curious question, "Mother, are there two heavens?"

Her mother asked, "What do you mean, child? That is a strange idea."

So she proceeded, "Well, mother, I have been hearing Mr. —, and he said that all the soldiers who died in the war, fighting against the Germans, would go straight to heaven!"

"Well, dear, go on."

“ So I just thought there must be two heavens, one for the soldiers and one for those who love the Lord Jesus ; I didn't like the sermon, mother ! ”

A WORD TO THOSE IN ISOLATED PLACES.

(1 SAM. 17. 40, 49, 50.)

THERE are probably many Christians in out-of-the-way places, and our desire is to speak a word of encouragement to such. A good many, through circumstances over which they have no control, are perhaps for a great part of their time cut off from their brethren, and special grace is needed in such circumstances. In the scriptures referred to above we felt the Lord might be pleased to direct our attention to a few thoughts He may give in order to help any such. The enemy, we know, is always busy trying to discourage, but our God is a God of encouragement, and we can well afford to thank God and take courage, even in the most trying circumstances.

How often does the thought occur to us, Why has the Lord placed me here ? I should like to get among the people of God more often and enjoy more of their fellowship. Such desires as these are right, and we need have no fear but that they will be met in some way or another. But the danger lies in taking ourselves out of the place the Lord would have us in. We may be sure that if we act in any way apart from the Lord we shall lose spiritually. It may be one is placed in a locality altogether away from those whose company one would desire. Our surroundings may be uncongenial and we may think of the children's future. It may be we are in the very place we would not have chosen

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for ourselves. We might reason the thing out and wonder why the Lord ever placed us there.

No doubt these questions are healthy for us if we do not ask in a complaining spirit. In David we have one who was unnoticed and unknown. He was living the life of a shepherd. But no one seems to have known him until a crisis arises in Israel. Then he is brought to light, and we read how he had killed a lion and a bear. He was a man who in isolation proved the support of the Lord. We see by the beautiful psalms of David how he profited by being shut up to God in isolation. This then is undoubtedly one reason why we may be cut off from our brethren, that we may learn the Lord's heart. If we think of Joseph we think of one who was also cut off from his own people, but how near the Lord comes to such. Think of Peter in the prison, and see whose company he sought when he was set free. Peter and John also when they were let go went to their own company. If we get to our own company when we are let go, we shall not suffer, nor will those with whom we meet suffer for our being shut up to the Lord.

The Lord would not have us fretful or complaining ; we shall not learn the lessons He in His infinite love desires to teach us if we complain and fret. His desire is that we might be comforted as a weaned child, sitting like Mary at His blessed feet, listening to His word, learning like David how to overcome. No doubt the lion and the bear spoken of are significant, suggestive doubtless of Satan as he would approach in different ways.

The lion is spoken of as going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The bear would suggest the way in which he would come to take the Christian

in his deadly embrace until every spark of life would be extinguished. The Christian who is near the Lord, though as to his circumstances isolated from his brethren, cannot be overcome, for in whatever guise Satan appears, he will be detected and defeated in the strength of the Lord. It may be, too, the Lord has a few sheep for one to cherish in the place He has seen fit to place one. One thing is certain, the Lord has some purpose in it. Let us see to it we do not spend our time aimlessly and to no profit spiritually. Although isolated we should desire to keep a green spot for Christ wherever He has placed us. How refreshing, too, to the heart of the Lord to look down and see those green spots for Himself.

Now David, we read, hears of the giant. We know David is here a type of the Lord Jesus. But it was to the five smooth stones one would desire to draw attention. David goes forward to meet the giant, but he picks up five smooth stones. It is true that when the Lord met Satan He did it alone ; no man could have part in that. But one likes to think of the five smooth stones as being a little company of saints that the Lord is able to use to do His bidding, made up possibly of isolated individuals. They may be a weak company in themselves, but let us ask ourselves how they came there. We read that it was five smooth stones ; possibly at one time they were large enough to be an obstruction ; how much reduction must have taken place before they could be brought together. The Lord alone can do that. How many of us have had to have the rough jagged edges rubbed off. It may be the waters of affliction have had to roll over us in order to bring us together ; how many storms had broken over those stones ? How much scorching

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by the sun had they been subjected to before they were fit for David to use? It may be the Lord has had to place us in isolation in order to fit us for His use.

Now those stones lie quietly there together, not much use apparently, not taken account of by any one. It may have been years they were lying there, and it may be, beloved, it has taken us years to learn the little we do know of the Lord. But the time has come when they are ready to be used. Trodden under foot, unnoticed, those stones possibly were once so large that they had the power to divide the stream that now flows over them. Now they are fit to come together, now they lie quiescent. So it may be with us, beloved, we may have to remain for years in isolation, but depend upon it the storms that beat upon us, the sun that may scorch us, will only bring about His purposes and fit us to be of use to Him. What a privilege to be fitted for Him to use, and what we learn of Him we learn for eternity. We may be only a feeble company in the eyes of the world, but He who chooses the weak things to confound the mighty will use us if there is a right state with us.

F. W. D.

THE PURPLE CLOTH.

“And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon.” (Num. 4. 13.)

WHAT blessed prospects we view in this in the light of present privilege, when gathered together to remember our Lord in the breaking of bread, with the emblems before us which so preciously

remind us of where His love once took Him. For in the purple cloth do we not see His present position? We often sing, " 'Tis as risen, Lord, we hail Thee," and surely in this connection we see Him crowned with glory and honour, covered with the purple, the royal colour, nothing to be seen here now of the ashes, for we are privileged to see the King in His beauty. But I think we can all agree that to appreciate this we must first have seen the altar and also the sacrifice that had left the ashes, so that even now in present wilderness conditions we are allowed, as we come together, to thus see Him " who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." Previous to this in Numbers the heavenly colour of blue is mentioned, with the outer covering of badger's skins. But here can we not see God's answer to the sacrifice, " Know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

" No traces of the fire were seen as on their way they sped,
For where the ashes once had been the purple cloth was spread."

How wonderful in present grace to thus see Him according to Hebrews 10. 12 and onwards to verse 20. And how good to be able to see that in ages gone by God's thoughts were thus set forth in type. These things were not merely chance, but a part of the way and purpose of Jehovah: " For, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." (Heb. 8. 5.) We are thus privileged to see the fulfilment of all things in Him: in the altar itself the durability of the shittim wood overlaid with brass. Who could have taken this position but Him who offered Himself? In this way the altar

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speaks of suffering : “ We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” (Heb. 2. 9.) Is not this set forth in the purple cloth ? The blue is often spoken of as the heavenly colour, and in many instances in conjunction with gold. And we know that Christ has in Himself all these things ; He is the Son, but we should not have known anything of that had He not been found in fashion as a man, as set forth in the altar overlaid with brass, able to withstand the fire of God’s judgment. Foursquare is equal every way, taking in all, extending to the four corners of the earth.

Coming back to Hebrews 10. 12, the fulfilment of the type, “ This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God,” what an answer to His work, and how appropriate in the type that they should take away the ashes and spread thereon the purple cloth.

“ Worthy of homage and of praise ;
 Worthy by all to be adored :
 Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays !
 Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord.”

H. B. W.

FRAGMENT.

HOW touching it is that in Mark—that gospel so speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect Servant—we have expressed so frequently the request from Him that “ no man should know it.” (See chaps. 1. 34, 44 ; 3. 12 ; 7. 36 ; 8. 26, 30 ; 9. 9, 30.) How clearly His service was all for His God and Father—no human aid was to spread His fame. Surely it bows the hearts of His own who desire to serve Him, giving

them a longing to do so in the same character, that which is done being for the pleasure and eye of God alone.

R. W. W.

FAITH'S VISION.

LOOK *on*, ye saints, how fair the view,
 The glory-land's before us :
 Pilgrims, look *up*, where Jesus sits,
 What glory's shining o'er us !
 Our portion's there in yonder bliss,
 With Jesus ever dwelling :
 How sweet the music sounding there,
 God's praises ever swelling.

This world, with all its boasted wealth,
 We gladly leave behind us ;
 This world that crucified our Lord,
 No more to earth shall bind us.
 We're pressing on toward that land,
 That land of brightest glory ;
 And we, with all the saints, shall there
 Swell love's eternal story.

Eternal love shall fill our hearts,
 Our lips eternal singing,
 But even now, O Lord, to Thee
 Our tribute we'd be bringing.
 We'd give Thee joy *before* that day
 When every tongue shall own Thee,
 We'd crown *e'en now* Thy blessed head,
 And in our hearts enthrone Thee.

Thus, as we see Thee in that scene
 Of glory—blest—accepted,
 We'd loyal be, whilst here, to Thee,
 Where Thou art still rejected.
 Reproach and shame bear for Thy name ;
 (Thine hand is ever o'er us)
 Faith's vision keen beholds that scene—
 The glory-land before us.

C. D—N.

REST AND CHRIST'S YOKE.

(MATT. 11. 29, 30.)

COMING to Christ to get rest really means coming to One who is unsavoury to the world ; the point had come in the ministry of the Lord when it was evident that He was unsavoury to the world. He had piped to them, and they had not cared to dance—He was not agreeable to them. And therefore coming to Christ means that you turn your back upon the world, and no one comes to Christ who does not turn his back upon the world. Christ has been rejected by the world, and if people do not really leave the world and come to Christ, they do not get rest ; but once they *do* leave the world, He makes known to them the blessed activities of the Father, and they then cease from their works ; my works were never any good, my righteous works were but dead works, the only righteous works were His. But now the time has come to cease from works, that Christ may produce in the one who has come to Him holy affections ; He makes known the Father, and so produces the response of affection in the heart towards the Father.

Now the word that follows, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me," does not speak exactly of what Christ gives, the previous verse did that ; but this verse refers more to the pathway, and tells you what you will find in it—"rest to your souls." You enter on a pathway in which you find rest. Well, the yoke of Christ is, I believe, bearing the burdens of others. The characteristic of the Lord's ministry down here

was, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," that is bearing the burden of others. In Galatians we have the word, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Christ was free of every burden, but He came into a scene where people were under burdens, and He not only relieved them of their burdens, but He put Himself under them. You can see in John 11 how the Lord put Himself under the burden of Martha and Mary, He groaned and wept, moved by their sorrow. He bore the burden of others, and hence bearing one another's burdens is called "the law of Christ." "Take my yoke upon you"—Christ was low enough down in the scale of the world to bear the burdens of others; if He had been high up He could not have done it, but He was meek and lowly in heart, and *could* bear others' burdens, and that was His yoke down here. Nothing can equal the pathway of the Lord Jesus down here.

It is a great thing to come down to Christ, to learn of Him, to see that a divine Person in becoming a man here is meek and lowly in heart; but it is just the suitability of divine love to the circumstances in which it was found. Divine love adapts itself to the circumstances in which it is found; it is suitable to heaven, but when it comes down here it is suitable to earth: "Meek and lowly in heart." F. E. R.

(*Extracted.*)

Four classes of hearers: (1) *A sponge*—sucks up good and bad, but it runs out again; (2) *A sand-glass*—passes through one ear and out of the other; (3) *A strainer*—lets out the good and retains the bad; (4) *a sieve*—lets go the chaff and retains the grain.

GOD'S CALL TO MEN.

(1) THE CALL TO SAFETY.

IT is of great importance to realise that God is calling to man, for this is more remarkable than that man should be able to call upon God. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them without signification. The effort of the enemy of God is to engage the attention, especially of those who are young. Many voices are alluring the vast masses around us: the voice of folly is appealing even to those brought up in christian homes to take the downward path of shame and sin. The appeal of wealth is one of the mightiest in the world, oftentimes luring to ruin and death. The voice of fame, too, is often heard enticing to worldly glory; while that of pleasure calls loudly to young and old.

While all these are exerting their influence upon man, God is causing His own voice of grace to be heard by the gospel. Millions have responded to that call. What wonderful grace on God's part to have anticipated man's need, and to call to him even before he has discovered his need of God.

The first call was in the garden of Eden, but then the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, "Where art thou?" He was calling Adam to account. Thank God, He is not calling us to account to-day. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." If He did, it would involve the outpouring of judgment, but He is graciously calling men to SAFETY.

We would appeal to those who do not know the Saviour whom God has provided. Before He comes

out in judgment He calls men to safety. He appeals to the hearts of men, for He is able to save them for eternity.

God's call to Noah was a call to safety: "Come thou and all thy house into the ark." It is inevitable that the judgment must fall. The destruction of this present world-system is imminent, but God has provided a divine means of escape, for Christ has endured the judgment of God for the believer. The great question of good and evil was settled in His death, and He has met all the claims of God. He is now at the right hand of God, and the commandment of the everlasting God is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

Even in these far-off isles of the sea God's call to man is being heard, for

"God NOW commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

The gospel call is heard all the world over, and the value of the atoning work of Christ at Calvary is being proclaimed to men; while the message to every anxious sinner is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

(2) THE CALL TO LIFE.

Another aspect of God's call to man is presented in Proverbs, chapters 8 and 9, where Wisdom is heard crying at the gates, at the entry of the city:

"Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man."

Wisdom is found at the cross-paths, at the place where two ways meet; and many are there. At the critical moment when great decisions have to be made, Christ

as Wisdom causes His voice to be heard in the souls of men. The Lord Jesus is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God," and He calls to *you*!

Wisdom has anticipated your difficulty, whatever it is, and has a solution if you will but listen to that voice. God uses various means to make His voice heard. Sometimes it is the counsel of a wise father; in other cases the words of scripture are brought to bear on the conscience and heart, or perhaps in the pressure of circumstances He causes that still small voice to be heard. And Wisdom says, "Blessed is the man that heareth me."

May our ears be open to the voice of Wisdom. Solemn indeed is the warning to those who refuse to listen. "But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

There is one path—the path of life—in which the will of God is done; the ear is open to Wisdom's voice; it is the path of obedience to the call of God. There is another path—the path of death—in which the will of man is done. The ear is open to Folly's voice, but the end thereof is the ways of death.

Think of the multitudes of young men and women going down Folly's path to destruction, and yet God is calling in the greatness of His love:

"Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death."

May each reader hear the voice of God and be brought to know the Lord Jesus, both as Saviour and as Wisdom.

F. S. M.

THE BIBLE.—EZEKIEL.

No. 1.

THE prophecy of Ezekiel brings before us the solemn fact of the removal of God's throne of government from earth to heaven, and gives the reason of the departure of the glory from Jerusalem. It also foretells the return of the glory when the name of the "city" shall be called "the Lord is there."

Jeremiah had announced that all nations and all lands had been placed into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar; and the weeping prophet had pleaded with "backsliding" Israel to submit to God's governmental chastening and love. (Jer. 27.) Ezekiel develops the prophetic testimony, and declares that God's sword had been placed in the hands of the king of Babylon (chap. 30) and tells of the transference of the throne of government from earth and also describes a change in the nature of God's ruling. It was now no longer to be the direct government of God from His throne in Jerusalem, but an overruling government which had its seat in heaven and would providentially direct things through means of Gentile nations. Ezekiel has to declare this to "*rebellious Israel*."

The main divisions of the book are : chapters 1-11 ; 12-23 ; 24-32 ; 33-39 ; 40 to end.

CHAPTERS 1-11.

In chapter 1 the prophet is seen among the captives by the river Chebar in the land of Chaldea.* In such circumstances he sees visions of the glory of Jehovah. First there were living creatures which set forth in

* Jeremiah had remained in Jerusalem.

symbol the attributes of God as seen in his governmental ways—intelligence (man), power (lion), patience (ox), and swiftness in execution (eagle). Beneath these were wheels, suggestive of His governmental ways themselves, His ways on earth. Above the cherubim was the expanse and above the expanse the throne with the likeness of a Man upon it. The vision speaks of the glory of God as in supreme control of all things. Solemn, indeed, that God could no longer be seen thus enthroned in Jerusalem. The throne is not on earth, but in heaven.

Chapters 2 and 3 give us Ezekiel's commission. His testimony is not to his immediate contemporaries with a view to their recovery, for he is to be dumb until such time as God should open his mouth. From chapter 33. 21 we know he was so until the city was smitten. In chapter 4 we find how the prophet has to enter into the solemn sense of the sin of Jerusalem as set "in the midst of the nations" and to identify himself with the condition of the people. In chapter 5 the judgment is announced.

Chapters 6 and 7 refer to the people as a whole. God's "beautiful ornament" had been degraded. The end had come. Prophets, priests, elders, king, princes would all come under the overwhelming judgment. Ezekiel is to speak as feeling it. (Chap. 6. 11.) The presence of God only exposed the awful evil, the "glory" made the sin appear such more truly. (Chaps. 8 and 9.) Ezekiel is educated to see the necessity of Jehovah leaving His people. (Chap. 8. 6.) Judgment is to begin at the ancient men before the sanctuary. In any time it is true that the greater the privilege the greater the responsibility. (See 1 Peter 4. 17.) It is sad to see the glory gradually

leaving ; God, as it were, lingering over His rebellious people, but unable to stay. (Chaps. 10. 18 ; 11. 23.) Holiness and unholiness cannot exist together. Forbearance and mercy may wait ; but the moral balance of the throne of God must be upheld. We must, of course, remember that the subject is the government of God's earthly people. But principles abide, and even the church comes under similar dealings, as we may see from Revelation 1-3, and in a general way Gentile nations who now enjoy gospel privileges. (Rom. 11.)

M. W. B.

WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE.

(NUM. 13 TO 21 ; JOHN 21. 15-24 ; JAMES 2. 1.)

CHAPTER 13. The spies when they return bring *more* than a report of the good land—they bring the fruit of it. So with us, more than a report has reached us of the land that is purposed for us. How striking is the action of Caleb—stilling the people. It is a wilderness scene they enter, where the people are tested and the incapability of the flesh to enter into the purpose of God is manifested.

Chapter 14 brings in the thought of forgiveness—“pardoned according to thy word.” Those who had despised the pleasant land were forgiven. They had said the *land* is good enough but the enemies are so great. Could we forgive a people who despised that upon which our heart was set for them ? Yet God forgave them. In the wilderness the sin was committed and forgiven. They were forgiven at the intercession of Moses. God said, “I have pardoned

according to thy word." Even so the sufferings of Jesus on the cross and His intercession are the ground of our forgiveness.

Chapter 15. Having been forgiven they are now justified, not for the wilderness, but for Canaan; God cannot do sufficiently for a forgiven people. (See vers. 3 and 19.) Paul in a later day said, "through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things." Have we reached it in our soul history? If so we shall be moving to bring others into the good of it.

Chap. 16. Here it is separation from what is displeasing to God. The holy place of the tabernacle has been polluted by the touch of man, so there must be separation. In the close of the chapter it is the priest who saves the situation—a new function of priesthood, for Aaron stood between the dead and the living. This has been done at the cross of Jesus.

Chapter 17 is the vindication of priesthood. Priesthood is established in resurrection; Aaron's rod has brought forth fruit. Christ has gone into heaven, into a place death has not and cannot invade.

Chapter 18. Now a priestly family comes to light who are cared for with the best of everything, and to whom belongs the privilege of approaching God in the sanctuary.

Chapter 19. There defilement is provided for in the water of separation of the ashes of the red heifer, where all the greatness and littleness of man, the cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet, has gone in the burning by which we are separated from all that from which the death of Christ severed us.

Chapter 20 is water for quenching thirst.

Chapter 21 is not merely water, as in chapters 19 and 20, but a springing well. We are brought back to chapter 13, to Caleb and to Joshua. Now they sing; those who sing are in the good of victory and ready to move into the purpose of God. There are three things in the chapter; first, the brazen serpent, answering to John 3; secondly, the springing well, taking us to John 4; and thirdly, victory over the kings, which suggests the "more than conquerors" of Romans 8.

John 21. John is a Caleb who goes right through the wilderness scene. The Lord challenges Peter three times, as much as to say, You are the one that I want, you have come through the wilderness, you have been forgiven, justified, separated and belong to the priestly family—now care for those so very dear to my heart. Peter had reached Numbers 21, and the Lord wants *that* one to feed His lambs, to shepherd His sheep and to feed His sheep. Sheep need to be both shepherded and fed. Peter saw John following—Caleb was there! Peter had been given his work, why trouble about another. Peter was to serve, John to wait.

James 2. Here we have a pre-eminent Person and a dominant faith—the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory. A pre-eminent Person is presented to faith. Not only has the report reached us, but the gift of the Spirit is ours also. In James 4 two questions are asked and answered—"Think ye that the scripture speaks in vain?" "Does the Spirit which has taken his abode in us desire enviously? But he gives more grace." (New Trans.) We are left in that sense in charge of the Spirit as we pass through this world. The Spirit from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22 has been

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moving. We have to move with the moving Spirit, with the moving testimony, with the moving ark.

I have only very briefly touched the light that scripture affords us regarding our journey through the world. It is good to realise it, but passing good to realise *now* the purpose of God in Christ which is open to us.

E. P.

 THE THRESHING-FLOOR.

THE thought of the threshing-floor is an interesting one. God is pleased to use terms that can be easily understood. There is a great deal to do before the wheat is taken into the threshing-floor; there must be the ploughing, sowing, tilling, reaping and harvesting. And how important all these are in regard to spiritual things if there is to be fruit for God. How important the ploughing; nothing can be produced without it. God uses circumstances, a word from Himself, and many another thing, to prepare soil for the reception of the seed. How quickly at the preaching of Jonah the whole of Nineveh repented. Elisha was found ploughing, content to plough last.

Much might be said as to sowing, tilling and reaping, but after all this is done, before the grain can be used as food, it must go through the threshing-floor where all that is unsuitable is taken away, and only the good is left. In this connection, how solemn the words of John the Baptist concerning the Lord Jesus, "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable." (Luke 3. 17.) He will thoroughly purge *His* floor.

If we bear in mind that the thought of the threshing-floor comes in at the end, how interesting the mention of it is at the burial of Jacob. (Gen. 50. 7-13.) Joseph and his brethren, and all the servants of Pharaoh, a very great company, go out of Egypt to bury Jacob in the land of Canaan. "And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days." God had been working with His servant Jacob; there had been much ploughing, then the sowing, then the tilling, and now we see Jacob gathered into the garner. God's work with him was finished. The Canaanites when they saw it, said, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians," but it was not so, Joseph and his brethren were not sorrowing as those without hope. Jacob "was gathered to his peoples." (Gen. 49. 33.)

In Ruth 3. 2 we have another mention of the threshing-floor. Elimelech left Bethlehem, the house of bread, during the time of famine, went to the land of Moab, and with his two sons died there. Boaz went *through* the famine, having faced all the exercises and difficulties connected with it, and in chapter 3 we find him winnowing barley in the threshing-floor. He is getting the gain, the firstfruits (barley speaks of the firstfruits) of all his faithfulness and toil, his ploughing, sowing, tilling, reaping, etc. How important to *continue* in our work, so that we may have something to go into and come out of the threshing-floor. If it be so, as in the case of Boaz, we shall prosper (he became a mighty man of wealth) and be able, as he did, not only to supply the needs of our households, but have a portion for the widow and stranger. What

have we that has passed through the threshing-floor ? The Lord is looking to His own, as faithful and wise stewards, "to give them their portion of meat in due season." (Luke 12. 42.) But we cannot have anything to give, unless like Boaz we maintain our ground and labour.

Again, in the time of the Judges (chap. 6. 11) we find Gideon "threshing wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites." The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and He delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. They came under the chastening hand of the Lord because of their sins, "And it was so, when Israel had *sown*, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east . . . and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth." (Vers. 3, 4.) Israel was greatly impoverished and they cried unto the Lord. He in mercy sent a prophet, then an angel of the Lord, while Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress. He did not do it in the threshing-floor, the enemy would no doubt have looked *there* for it. He, like Boaz, had persevered in the face of all the difficulties and the enemy's power, and now he was threshing wheat that there might be food. What a word for us ! Is there not a famine all around ? It was such an one that the Lord could use for the deliverance of His people. "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites." (Ver. 14.) May we all be able to "give a portion of meat in due season." But this cannot be apart from real exercise and labour.

In David's day we find the Philistines "robbing the threshing-floors." (1 Sam. 23. 1.) They were not like the Midianites, destroying the increase of the

earth in its growing stages, but were robbing the people of God of their food after the harvest had been gathered in. David in his exercises said, "Shall I go up and smite these Philistines?" And the Lord said, "Go up." (Ver. 2.) And he went up and saved the inhabitants of Keilah. May we all, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, be found "earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), so that food might be preserved for the people of God in our different localities.

We find another reference to the threshing-floor in 2 Samuel 6. 6. The ark of God had been in the house of Abinadab probably about a hundred years (1 Sam. 7. 2), and at the *end* of that time (again the threshing-floor comes in at the end) his *son* Uzzah, contrary to the word of the Lord, touched the ark to steady it, and the Lord smote him there for his disobedience. This happened at Nachon's threshing-floor. What an end; how solemn! The ark had been in his father's house for many years, but we hear nothing of the household being blessed. Later on in the chapter (ver. 11) we read of the ark being in the house of Obed-edom three months only, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and *all* his household. And he was a Gittite. He cherished the ark, and was blessed. May we do so. What a solemn thing, on the other hand, to be like Uzzah.

David in 1 Chronicles 21 is moved by Satan to number the people, with the result that God sends a pestilence upon Israel and seventy thousand men died. In verse 17 David truly says, "I it is that have sinned . . . but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, O Lord my God, be on me." He shines here as the shepherd. God sent the prophet Gad to

say, "Set up an altar . . . in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite." Ornan was prepared to give oxen for burnt offerings, and wood, and wheat for the meat offering. But David says, "Nay; but I will verily buy it for the *full price*." How it speaks to us of Jesus! "If ye seek me, let these go their way," He says. He is willing to pay the full price, alone. David was suffering for his own sin, and the people had to suffer with him. Jesus suffered and died for others. David built an altar to the Lord, and the Lord answered from heaven by fire, and David knew that his offering was accepted. Moreover the Lord commanded the angel, and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof (ver. 27), and in verse 28 David sacrifices *there*. That is the position to-day; the work of Christ has been accepted, God has raised Him from the dead, and judgment is stayed. This is a day of good tidings. In the next chapter (Ver. 1), David says, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel." He immediately prepares stones, iron, nails, etc., for the house of the Lord, *on that spot*, the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Later on Solomon builds the "house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that *David had prepared* in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite." (2 Chron. 3. 1.)

"Peter went out to see the end." (Matt. 26. 58.) Little did he know what would be the end of the Lord's life of devotion when He paid the "full price." Judgment has been stayed, it fell on Him, and Him alone, blessed be His name, and the house of God is being reared on that spot.

W. G.

GATES

(NEH. 1. 3, 4; 2. 7-20; 3. 1-32.)

Please read the scriptures first.

IN these scriptures there is presented the way that God takes to bring about His purposes for blessing in a scene which is marked by ruin and distress. We see here the condition of the people God had chosen to be for His pleasure, but who through sin and disobedience had departed from God and become captives. They are in great affliction and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates burnt with fire; a sad and sorrowful condition of man in general, who in departing from God has come completely under the power and domination of Satan, the great enemy of God and man.

But God in His grace takes account of it, as of old He could say, "I have seen their affliction, and am come down to deliver them," and He sends His well beloved Son. The One who ever stood before Him comes down right into the midst of the scene of desolation to recover it for God and make God known. He came to deliver man from the bondage, and to destroy him that had the power of death. He came as the sent One of God with full authority. His coming aroused great opposition and the enemy was exceedingly grieved that one should come to seek the welfare of man. The enemy knew who had come and raised up all the power of Herod and the Jews to destroy the Lord Jesus, but in that he was powerless.

The Lord came here as a man amongst men. He took account of everything around Him, but did not commit Himself to man, or tell them what He was

going to do. He spoke in parables, and His sayings were hid. He came here in the darkness of the world's night and gathered a few around Him. He had come to do the will of God, and that meant going into death, but for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, and despised the shame. He went out by the way of the valley gate, before the dragon well, to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem. (Chap. 2. 13.) He went out by death because death lay upon all. He fought the dragon, he that had the power of death. He was the only One who could enter into such a conflict. He fought the fight alone and gained the victory. But He goes on to the dung port. He who knew no sin was made sin for us. He bore all our sins in His own body on the tree. He bore our judgment and died for us. He took up the whole question of sin and death, and went right down to the very lowest depths, so that through death He might open the fountain of the grace of God and the king's pool. (Chap. 2. 14.)

But He had to go that way alone. He had to bear the full brunt of the judgment of God and there was none to help. All forsook Him and God Himself hid His face from Him, so that He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But such was His love that He went straight on by Himself. "There was no place for the beast that was under me to pass." He defeated the enemy, destroying him that had the power of death, and after completing the work He comes forth out of death the mighty Victor. He returned by the gate of the valley, in resurrection. (Ver. 15.) The purpose of His coming could now be told forth, and all the love and goodness of God, and that, although death and desolation was on

every hand, a mighty redemption had been effected and a Saviour God made known to man.

Now He would have a people redeemed, delivered, and set for the pleasure of God, a separate people, whose trust is in God, and who are not of the world though in it; so a wall is set up, marking them off, that they may be preserved and maintained in the enjoyment of all that God had for them. There could be no fellowship with the enemy, who have no portion, or right, or memorial, in Jerusalem, and though the enemy may laugh them to scorn and despise them, their trust is in God, "The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build." (Ver. 20.) The power of God is for us, and nothing can overthrow His work, which is effectual in the power of the Holy Spirit, for we can do nothing of ourselves. It is God Himself who worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. So in the building of the wall and the setting up of the gates thereof we see how God has made full and ample provision for His own people.

(1) *The Sheep Gate.* (Chap. 3. 1.)

The first gate that is set up is the sheep gate; it is built by the high priest and sanctified from tower to tower. It is the only way which we can enter. Christ is the door of the sheep. Christ has died for us and made purgation for sins. It is by faith in Him and in His finished work that we can enter. We receive the forgiveness of sins, are cleansed and sanctified, for nothing that defileth can enter. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe." The Lord secures us for Himself and none can pluck us out of His hand. The two towers,

one on either side, speak of the power and strength of the position, secure from every attack, so the second gate is

(2) *The Fish Gate.* (Ver. 3.)

This speaks of the great deliverance that has been effected. It is set with beams, doors, locks and bars. One turns to scripture as its own interpreter, and it is written in 2 Chronicles 33. 14, David built the wall, to the entering in at the fish gate, to a great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities. The Lord would have us see the completeness of the deliverance He has brought about through the victory He has won, that we may be at perfect rest, knowing every enemy is powerless against us. Then in Zephaniah i. 10 we read: "In that day, saith the Lord, there shall be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills." The enemy is completely discomfited and enraged at being despoiled of his prey, but with all his noise and howling he cannot terrify us nor disturb our peace, so seeing the wonderful place of security we have been brought into, we come to

(3) *The Old Gate.*

It was ever God's purpose that He should have a people with Him, and we see that God is bringing about His purposes, that which was established of old, purposed before the world was. We see how we are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, and all His purposes are brought to pass in the Lord Jesus Christ, so that not one of them shall ever fail. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see,

and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." (Jer. 6. 16.) How blessed to rest in the consciousness that the Lord has loved us and chosen us for Himself, all according to the purposes of His own heart, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Death cannot rob us of this peace, for we live beyond death.

C. D-E.

(*To be continued.*)

FRAGMENTS.

THROUGH obedience learn to command.

I GET to heaven by birthright; I get a place in the kingdom by walk right.

God is never a moment too late, but He may come at the last moment.

As Thou wilt! what Thou wilt! where Thou wilt! when Thou wilt! (*Thomas à Kempis.*)

When David was learning in secret how to use his sling, he little thought that one day it would deliver Israel.

Five valleys.—*Achor* (trouble). (Josh. 7. 26.) *Eschol* (fruitfulness). (Num. 32. 9.) *Baca* (weeping). (Psa. 84. 6.) *Hebron* (fellowship). (Gen. 37. 14.) *Berachah* (blessing). (2 Chron. 20. 26.)

S. J. B. C.

GOD'S CALL TO MEN.

(3) THE CALL TO SEPARATION.

THE pride of man that caused him to attempt to build the tower of Babel, though checked by God confounding his language, soon developed into idolatry. Iniquity in its worst form—religious corruption—was rampant, for man was far off from God. The present world-system is idolatrous and corrupt, for it is the development of Babel. It is indeed a babel of voices and pleasures—a mighty world for man's glory and greatness: but God is outside of it all, and this is idolatry.

There was a new departure in the ways of God to meet this condition. He did not again destroy the earth by a flood, nor pour out His judgments upon men. He did not call upon those that feared Him to endeavour to put the world right, but He gave to one man a clear, distinct call to separate himself from it. No doubt the surroundings of Abram in Ur of the Chaldees were idolatrous when God said to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee."

If you, dear reader, have heard God's call to safety and have responded to His call to life, He has a further living call to you, as you are surrounded by unrighteousness, infidelity and idolatry, and that is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye

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shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." That which man has built up, even though it is religious in character, must be left in heart and spirit.

It is not to us a geographical journey, as was Abram's, but to move in affection and in mind out of that which God has judged, and to leave it in obedience to His call. Abram heard and obeyed, for he went out, "not knowing whither he went." He proved that he knew that God was great enough to sustain him in that path. By that act he became the father of the faithful—the head of a long line of men of faith. He first moved in the path of separation from evil. The call to the true heart to-day is, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." You cannot mix the holy things of God with the unholy things of the world ; each must be kept in its own place.

Abram went out. How simply he acted ! God called him and he went in faith. The solution of every question that can arise in the believer's path is found in obedience to God, for He always honours obedience, and it is the only path of happiness.

(4) THE CALL TO SERVICE.

The fourth great call of God is to service. It has pleased Him to entrust His service to men. Angels are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," but the service of God and of His house has not been entrusted to angels ; it has been entrusted to men, and God is calling such to serve Him.

In Mark 3. 13–15 it is recorded that Jesus "calleth unto him whom he would." How delightful to think of the Lord Jesus, the One we love and desire to serve,

calling us to service. He would lead us up the mountain and have us alone in His company, and then shew us His mind as to that part of His service which He is prepared to entrust to us. This desire to serve is found in every true lover of Christ. It was expressed by Saul of Tarsus when he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Let us follow Him up the mountain and learn from Him what He would have us do. We need to consider, however, that we cannot serve ourselves as we choose and then expect to be able to engage in His service just at our own pleasure. He invites us to surrender our whole life for His service and glory—as the apostle said, "I beseech you . . . by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Have we each waited to hear His call? He says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Has each reader responded, "Here am I; send me"? The Lord desires hearts like that to-day. To serve Him is the one interest worth living for. Brothers and sisters, young and old, every heart that loves Him—He would entrust some service to each one, that would yield fruit for God, joy to His heart, blessing to His people, deliverance to the captives of sin, and real joy to the heart of the one that serves Him.

F. S. M.

He enjoys much who is thankful for "everything."
(Phil. 4. 6.)

Learn to hold thy tongue—five words cost Zacharias forty weeks of silence.

THE PRICE AND EVIDENCE OF REDEMPTION.

IN the thirty-second chapter of the Book of Jeremiah we have a striking figure of the Lord Jesus Christ in relation to *redemption*. The circumstances on the occasion of the purchase of the field spoken of in verse 7 are very suggestive, and in meditating upon them we are led to consider the marvellous truth of redemption, and to appreciate more the One in whom we have redemption, the blessed Son of God. We find Jeremiah in prison for declaring the true state of things at that time. He was a true prophet, boldly speaking the word of the Lord. An enemy was at the gate with a vast army ready to ravage the whole scene, and it was *at that time* that Jeremiah was asked to buy the field, which he does for seventeen shekels of silver, and has the transaction attested, and the evidence (two kinds—sealed and open) put into an earthen vessel to be kept for many days and produced at the right time, declaring that full deliverance would be brought about, and the field enjoy the result of redemption, according to the word of the Lord.

Let us consider the One who sold all that He had to buy the field, not only in Benjamin, but the whole world. (Matt. 13. 44.) He, like Jeremiah, was badly treated by men for declaring the true state of things. He said, "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth," which actually they did. Yet even under such circumstances, *He buys the field*. Let us consider the price paid by Him for the purchase. The figure is suggestive, seventeen shekels of silver, or as we read in the margin, seven shekels and ten pieces of silver. *Seven* speaks of spiritual perfection, and *ten* of man under responsibility. This is answered to

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in one Man only—JESUS: that perfect, spotless, holy life of His offered up to God. What a price! Who can tell its worth? At His birth it was said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men." Thus was redemption anticipated at His coming into this world. What was there on earth at this time? An enemy in possession and the people in bondage. He grows up, and at thirty years of age He is baptised and sealed, the heavens being opened, the Father acclaiming Him as His beloved Son in whom is all His delight. The seventeen shekels now come to light in His wonderful life, doing the will of God as Man, glorifying God in all His works and words, where every other man had broken down; going about doing good and healing all manner of diseases. Man, being away from God, could not fit Him into their system, but He goes on His way in marvellous grace to the end He has before Him.

Now the purchase takes place: the seventeen pieces of silver were placed on the altar, the price was paid. He who had every right to live, who had openly evidenced God's claims in His wondrous life, surrenders Himself, under the hand of God, to lawless men and gives up that life. The Victim's blood is shed, the purchase price completely paid. The evidence of the purchase is to remain in earthen vessels. The four gospels give us the written record of the wonderful Person that died out of man's world, yet has left a living memorial behind Him. No one knows the full value of Him who died but God, but the Holy Spirit delights to bring Him before us, and when we have believed on Him to increase our capacity to know Him better. The price for our precious souls having been paid, and for the deliverance of all creation from

the bondage of corruption, Jesus our Lord rises from the dead and gathers around Himself His followers, those who really loved Him, and He taught them the things concerning the kingdom of God.

The name of the place where Jeremiah bought the field was Anathoth, which means *answers*. The saints are to-day the "answers" to the price paid on Calvary. What a full answer there will be to it when the whole creation will enjoy the full result. And what an answer is to be seen now shining in the face of Jesus—all God's glory seen in the face of a Man.

"All the depths of Thy heart's sorrow
Told in *answering glory* now."

After forty days of resurrection life on earth He went back to heaven, as Man; ten days after, when His disciples were assembled in the upper room, in number a hundred and twenty, the Holy Spirit came down upon them, binding their hearts together and filling each heart with the knowledge of a glorified Christ in heaven. These become the sealed and open evidence of the purchased possession. Peter's preaching brings to light three thousand more, and shortly after five thousand are added to the sealed and open evidence, all in earthen vessels. In Acts 3 Peter proposes to the Jews, as a nation, that they should repent and turn to God and their sins would be blotted out, and the Lord, the Purchaser, would come and the original transaction would be brought to fruition, but at the stoning of Stephen they distinctly and deliberately refuse to acknowledge Jesus; but He has a sealed and open evidence of the purchase in Stephen, who bears witness of seeing Jesus in glory ready to come, and when they stoned him he said,

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“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” His last words were, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

Now we come to Saul, who was in sympathy with the murder of Stephen. The blessed Purchaser, now in heaven, speaks to him at the height of his guilty career, and by Almighty power expressed in kindness and love brings him down to His feet in total surrender. Thus we find Saul, in his turn, becomes a sealed and open evidence of the purchase. The whole course of his life is altered as he comes under the controlling power of the Lord Jesus Christ, who makes him a special servant to bear witness for Him. In 2 Corinthians 3 he, as Paul the apostle, speaking to some who had been converted through him, says, “Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.” Then in verse 18, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Thus we see how the sealed and open evidence is carried on, ministered by Paul, but written on the heart by the Holy Spirit.

In the next chapter we read, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” (Ver. 6.) The earthen vessels are frail, but how great the treasure! Soon these frail bodies of ours will be changed and fashioned like unto His own body of glory. In the meantime how great our privilege

and how blest our portion to be in the secret of it, bearers of such treasure.

The "many days" are passing by, and going on to the Book of Revelation we get final results brought into view. In chapter 5 a company of saints, comprised of believers of the present period, are seen in heaven around the throne of God, but the earth is not yet redeemed. But God, who had said to Jeremiah, "Is there any thing too hard for me?" (Jer. 32. 27) is about to bring to full fruition the work of redemption. A sealed book is brought forward and a challenge made, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" No one was found worthy but the Lamb "as it had been slain." The Lord Jesus, who purchased everything, has right. He takes the book to unfold the title deeds.

Whilst this is the cause of exultation and singing in heaven and responded to by all creation, it is followed by terrible things on the earth, where there is opposition to the Lamb. God has a people on earth, sealed, and who give open evidence to His claim to it. They are persecuted, and in chapter 10 we see the Lord Jesus coming as a mighty Angel claiming all, and to strengthen His tried followers. He brings an *open* book: the sealed book is no longer sealed, but opened. The saints are not deceived by false teachers; the book must be eaten, with its accompanying sweetness and bitterness.

In the rest of the book (Rev.) we see the opposition to the claims of Christ coming to a head and being completely swept away, and then we find heaven *and earth* are actually filled with the majesty of His glory. All is set up in divine order where so much disorder had been, and the field is redeemed. The

church reigns with Christ to the praise and glory of God.

In the meantime the evidence in earthen vessels is maintained until all is put into effect. No greater honour can be conferred on the creature than this. How good to know Him who has "gone on high, redemption's work complete." Dear reader, do you know Him? Have you acknowledged His claim? If not, you will do well to bow to His authority *to-day*. If you do know Him, it is well to be reminded that "ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." May the sense of the price He paid in His wonderful love so lay hold of our souls that we may be found at His blessed feet, and our delight be to be found in His service in view of the day when He shall appear in glory, and the whole universe render a full answer to the price He paid for redemption.

*J. D—N.

GATES.†

(Concluded.)

(NEH. 1. 3, 4; 2. 7-20; 3. 1-32.)

Please read the scriptures first.

FOLLOWING *the old gate*, we come to

(4) *The Valley Gate*. (Chap. 3. 13.)

For it is through death we enter into life. The Lord Himself has been that way. He went out by the valley gate, so death has no terrors for us, and though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we

* Passed away February 21st, 1928.

† On page 159, line 7, read Manasseh for David.

fear no evil, yea, we accept death to all that is connected with this world. We are sustained in life in the midst of a scene of death by the One who has full control over all the power of death, for the valley gate is set with doors, locks and bars, and a measured distance of a thousand cubits brings us to

(5) *The Dung Gate.* (Ver. 14.)

We are able to estimate the true worth of all connected with this world, all its glory, all its greatness, and with Paul can count it as but dung that we may win Christ. He counted the cost and measured the distance, and counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of "Christ Jesus my Lord," and to be found in Him. Have we travelled thus far? Is Christ everything to us? Of how much greater value is the portion that we have in Him. There are far greater riches and glory for us in Christ, so He leads us on to

(6) *The Fountain Gate.* (Ver. 15.)

With this is connected the pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and the stairs that go down from the city of David and unto the house of the mighty. He leads us by the still waters and in the paths of righteousness. He brings us into the king's garden of delights. He is the administrator of all the fulness of God, so that we enjoy all the blessedness of that which God has given into His hands, for having freely given His only begotten Son, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things? The fountain of God is fully opened and all its fulness flows forth unhindered and we are brought to the house of the high priest (ver. 20), so that in His house with Him as our Head we can be occupied with Him, and respond

to the love which has brought us to such a place of privilege and joy.

In these first six gates their settings are worthy of consideration. The sheep gate is set with doors, presenting Christ as the One who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. He is there in the glory of His person, but in the fish gate and the old gate, which have beams laid and are set with doors, locks and bars, there is the strength of the foundation which nothing can shake, and in the remaining three they are set with doors, locks and bars, shewing how everything is perfectly under His control and secure from every outside influence and power.

The last six gates are connected with what is *inside*, things connected with the house of God.

(7) *The Prison Gate.* (Ver. 25.)

It is in the house of God that God can be fully known as the God of love, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Lord delights to make Him known as Father—His Father and our Father. We have been accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption through His blood, and should remember that now in Christ Jesus, we who were once afar off are become nigh by the blood of Christ. So the first thought in connection with the house is remembrance. There is the tower that lieth out from the king's high house that was by the court of the prison. The gate itself is not brought in in this verse, but we remember from whence we have been delivered and redeemed. In chapter 12. 39 we read that after the wall was finished, all the people walked around the wall, one company going one way and

the other company going the opposite way. The two companies stood still in the prison gate, and there gave thanks in the house of God. They offered great sacrifices and rejoiced with their wives and children, for God had made them rejoice with great joy. The Lord's last loving request to His own was, "This do for a remembrance of me," and how precious it is when we respond to that request. How it speaks to our hearts of Himself, so that we can rejoice with great joy and shew forth the praises of Him who has brought us out of darkness into His marvellous light. By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise continuously, so that our joy may be heard afar off.

(8) *The Water Gate,*

that lieth towards the east. The next thought is priestly service. The Nethinims dwelt in Ophel against the water gate. This is a priestly company whom Ezra describes as all expressed by name and set for the service of the Levites, so that we can be set for the Lord's interests in the fulness of the water which shall be in us a well of water springing up to everlasting life. We have our eyes toward the east, looking for the return of the Lord, and we occupy for Him in connection with His own until He come.

(9) *The Horse Gate.*

In Zechariah we read that the bridles of the horses should bear the words, "Holiness unto the Lord." Holiness must be maintained and judgment must begin at the house of God. Queen Athaliah was cast out of the house of the Lord and was slain by the horse gate, so that the house of the Lord should not be polluted. This is connected with a priestly company, for the Lord loves us too well to allow that which

would mar the peace and happiness of His house, so that everything that is not according to His will or in keeping with His holiness must go. We are the children of God, and we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for as He is, we shall be when we see Him, and he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure, so that we get the keeper of

(10) *The East Gate,*

or sun gate. (Ver. 29.) We await the appearing of our Lord, when we shall be with Him. How our hearts yearn for Him and send up the response to His last word, "Behold, I come quickly," Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus. He is the sun and centre of God's universe and the consummation of all that God has purposed. He is the head of the corner and the chief corner stone.

(11) *The Corner Gate,*

or gate Miphkad. (Ver. 31.) Everything in God's universe speaks of His glory, and He gives glory and beauty to everything, so that God finds His perfect delight in all He beholds. Nothing can ever again mar the scene of God's pleasure. All is pure gold, according to the goldsmiths, and every attribute of God is seen, and all has been brought to pass through God's beloved Son.

(12) *The Gate of Ephraim.*

This brings us to the consummation of all the thoughts and purposes of God. There are twelve gates to the city, and in chapter 12. 39 we have the gate of Ephraim. Jeremiah writes, "Ephraim is my first-born." God's great thought for us is sonship, to be sons before His face, like His own blessed Son, the

Lord Jesus Christ, to be loved with the same love that rests on Him, to be His companions, His brethren ; one with Him, and in Him to enjoy and to be in the presence of God His Father for ever and ever.

C. D-E.

HEBRON, OR COMPANIONSHIP.

IN a previous paper we saw how God's scheme of redemption was hidden in the names of the genealogy of Genesis 5, which covers the antediluvian period. It will not therefore be surprising to find also that the divine purpose foreshadowed at the beginning can be traced right through scripture from Genesis to Revelation, from its inception to its completion. The more we become acquainted with the letter of scripture and with the word of God, the more one's heart is bowed in reverent wonder and adoration. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so truly are His thoughts than our thoughts. (Isa. 55. 9.)

Now I take it that the divine purpose is brought before our attention in Proverbs 8, where, as it were, we can hear the counsel in the past eternity and Wisdom (figure of the Lord Jesus Christ) speaking, saying, " My delights [were] with the sons of men " (*lit.* the sons of Adam). Then in time when Adam is created (type of the One to come—Rom. 5. 14), the Lord God said, " It is not good that the man should be alone ; I will make him an help *meet* for him " (Gen. 2. 18)—not helpmeet as one word. In this is disclosed the idea and desire of companionship. But the material creation could not provide one meet, or fit, for such a head, therefore the Lord God " builded " the woman. (See margin of Gen. 2. 22, which gives the literal

translation.) This expression is taken up again in the opening of the New Testament, when the Lord says, "I will build my church," or assembly. (Matt. 16. 18.) It is carried on by the Apostle Paul (Eph. 2. 20-22), where he speaks of the saints being "builded together," also by the Apostle Peter (chap. 2. 5), and lastly by the Apostle John (Rev. 21. 2), who is given the vision of the completeness of the building under the symbol of "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," in view of God dwelling with men in the eternal state.

At the first, the thought of Proverbs 8 took shape when the Lord said, "I will make him an help meet for him," but man's total failure, though surrounded by a condition of creatorial goodness, brought in the flood. Nevertheless, even after the rebellion at Babel, God in His sovereignty pursues His purpose and, on His side, calls out Abram, who, on his side, is soon found at Hebron, a name which means companionship or fellowship. Then it was to this city that Abram at the beginning of his history came and dwelt and built his altar. (Gen. 13. 18.) For we are all aware that he is used by the Spirit as the illustration for us of the pathway of faith, and then he is said to be "father of all them that believe." (Rom. 4. 11.) With him there was the response to the call of God in the obedience of faith (Heb. 11. 8), and he moved out from his country, kindred and father's house; then when full dependence on God had been evidenced by giving Lot the first choice, Jehovah speaks to him and gives him *all* the land, and Abram removes his tent and dwells in Hebron. Thus far the type. For us in the language of the New Testament the call

of God has reached us by the gospel (2 Thess. 2. 14), and further, He has called us "unto the fellowship of *his* Son Jesus Christ *our* Lord." (1 Cor. 1. 9.) Abram did not enter immediately into all that Hebron signified; as with us he had many lessons to learn, yet this is the starting point. How much is involved in a good start!

The next mention of Hebron is Genesis 23, and we find Abraham has learnt his lesson through the sacrifice and deep sleep of chapter 15, and his name being changed (chap. 17), because nothing of the old order or of the first man can stand before God. This is confirmed to him by the receiving of Isaac from the dead, in a figure, as the Holy Spirit explains (Heb. 11. 19), and so in the light of resurrection and the power of God, though Sarah dies in Hebron, he can *stand up* from before his dead and purchase the cave of Machpelah. He would hold for himself a link with God's purpose. Tradition has marked the place, and a very ancient and imposing edifice still covers the spot in the Hebron of to-day. Isaac too dies there, and Genesis closes with the statement that the three patriarchs and their wives were all buried in that spot of deepest meaning. Again, how significant is the fact recorded in the first book of the Bible that "out of the vale of Hebron" was Joseph sent by his father to see how it fared with his brethren (chap. 37. 13, 14)—a distinct type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebron is mentioned by name seven times in the Pentateuch, the last being Numbers 13. 22 in a notice which has always been a dark puzzle to commentators, that "Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt," because, as far as the narrative is concerned, there is no apparent connection, but if we consider,

we shall see the point is that the spies, in the spiritual import of the passage, reached the place typical of the divine purpose, a purpose established seven years, a complete cycle of time, before Zoan in Egypt, which is a figure of the wisdom of this world. Psalm 78 tells us that God's wonders and signs had been wrought in the field of Zoan. Then Isaiah 19 speaks of the princes of Zoan becoming fools, and at the last the wisdom of the princes of this world is expressed in their crucifying the Lord of glory! (1 Cor. 2. 6-8.) That the "brook or valley of Eshcol" is identical with the "vale of Hebron" is more than likely. The word or name Eshcol means a cluster of grapes, as in the margin. The hillsides are still clothed with luxuriant vineyards.

In Joshua 14 Hebron comes before us as the inheritance claimed by Caleb. He had seen the mountain at the beginning, had walked all through the wilderness, and now he would secure the blessing. (Ver. 13.) The vision of the fruitfulness and fellowship suggested by that bunch of grapes never left his soul, however small his apprehension may have been, compared to what we may enjoy, we who have received the Spirit.

Finally, David is anointed king over Israel in Hebron (2 Sam. 5. 3), which in a way closes the historical line. Alongside of this we are told (Josh. 20. 7) that Hebron was appointed one of the cities of refuge and that it was situated in the mountain of Judah, or (chap. 21. 11), the "hill country of Judah." What is this but "the city" and "the hill country of Judæa" of Luke i. 39 and 65? Again the starting point for the working out of God's purposes, no longer in type but now actually, for there his parents resided and there John the Baptist was born, who was to be the fore-

runner of our Lord Himself: He who, by His death and resurrection, was about to bring into being the new generation, those of whom He could say, "My brethren." Of this the Spirit had already borne witness, when in Psalm 45. 7 He speaks of One anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, using the very term with which our word Hebron is connected, and in Hebrews 1 referring the passage to Christ personally, so that no mistake can be made.

Thus would the scripture lead us along from the primal type of Adam and Eve, through the ways of God with men on earth, to the consummation in the "great mystery" of Christ and the church. (Eph. 5. 23.)

Once more Genesis 5 gives us the "book of the generations of Adam," a chapter stamped with death—"and he died" eight times repeated; on the other hand the New Testament opens with, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ;" the One who has abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel. (2 Tim. 1. 10.) So while in the New Testament Hebron is not named, the divine thought set forth by the name is secured in the new generation, the companions or fellows begotten of His death, and of His order, and to whom He has given the spirit of life of another order of man, even the Holy Ghost. (John 20. 22; Acts 2. 33.)

At the beginning of the history Abram reaches Hebron; there he learns typically the lesson of death and resurrection, and there he lies till the voice of the Son of God will call him out of death. Caleb secures Hebron for his possession and inheritance in a geographical way, but for us it has been recorded in order that in a spiritual way we may enter upon and

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enjoy the peculiar privilege of the saints of the present period. What can be more wonderful than, surrounded as we are by the havoc of man's mind and will, but as having received the Spirit, to be able to reach the divine end, the assembly, and to know the Lord in the midst of His saints. Surely nothing short of this can be the truth into which the Spirit of truth has come to guide us, for it is the perfect triumph of good over evil, the complete answer to the counsel of Genesis 2 before a blush of evil tinged this creation. Love has triumphed, but it necessitated the sufferings and the death of Christ; therefore may each of us with increasing affection respond to the invitation of the supper; symbols expressive of the manner in which He touched us where we were, in order that we should reach Him where He is. Beyond the supper is the day of display when we shall be acclaimed as His own and the marriage of the Lamb will be celebrated. Even to-day it is our privilege to minister to His heart, to give Him with adoring affection the desire of His heart, the companionship of those “builted together” for Himself.

A. J. M.

“IT SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID.”

(ISA. 55. 11.)

A SERVANT of the Lord went into a shoemaker's shop to get some laces.

On departing he left a tract on the counter, asking the cobbler to read it. But a sniff and a sneer was all his reward—as he thought. He had to learn again that God has His own way of prospering His work and of cheering His workman.

After our friend had left, the shoemaker looked

round for something he wanted, and his eye caught sight of the tract.

“Just the thing,” he said with a grin, “it will be of some use.” And so it was, but very differently from what he thought. Catching it up he deftly put the paper between the upper and nether soles of a boot he was mending.

The man who owned the boots wore them for some months; and then they needed soleing and heeling again. This time, however, he took them to another cobbler.

When this other shoemaker ripped off the old soles, he found the tract, and *preserved*.

He read it curiously. He read it carefully! The Spirit wrought conviction. The seed long dormant in strange soil found “good ground.” It germinated and fructified—“first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn.” The second cobbler received the blessing the first had despised. The story came out afterwards, and by degrees, and in a remarkable way; and he who was blest by the tract and the tract distributor learnt its history, and both rejoiced together.

“Sow in the morn thy seed,
At eve hold not thy hand;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed,
Broadcast it o’er the land.

And duly shall appear,
In beauty, verdure, strength,
The tender blade, the stalk, the ear,
And the full corn at length.

Thou canst not toil in vain;
Cold, heat, and moist and dry,
Shall foster and mature the grain
For garners in the sky.”

S. J. B. C.

THE ACTIVITIES OF GRACE.

IN John 14 there are two great activities of grace : the first is faith, and the second is love. "Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me," faith in Christ is the first thing. Have you faith in Christ as you have in God ? not only as risen, but as sitting at God's right hand ? In Ephesians we read, "After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus" ; and in Colossians, "Your faith in Christ Jesus" ; but it is faith in Him who was here. It is of deep importance that you believe in Him who was here, but who has gone away. The great attempt of Christendom is to ignore His rejection. Consequent on His rejection He was exalted to God's right hand. The more truly you accept His rejection, the more your heart will be drawn to Him in His exaltation. Hence He says, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," that is the first great activity of grace in you. Then follows, "I go to prepare a place for you." Did you ever see a man who was truly serving the Lord seeking a place here ? You do not look for a place where He is rejected, but you rejoice that you have a place where He is, and He comforts you by saying, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may also be."

Now let us look at the links in the chain of faith. First, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Next, "I go to prepare a place for you." Next, "I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Next, "Greater works than these

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shall he do ; because I go unto my Father.” And finally, “ Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” The climax of faith is, “ If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.”

Now look at the links in the chain of love : “ If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Love delights in obedience. “ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter ” ; and He will remain with you, and be in you when Christ has gone away. But He adds, “ I will not leave you orphans : I am coming to you.” This is addressed to the company, the individual is addressed in verses 21–23. It is of much importance that we should bear this in mind. Many have applied this scripture, intended for the company, to themselves individually.

In verse 23 the individual is addressed : “ If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” It is the explanation of verse 21, which is individual ; He will have an abode by the Spirit in your hearts. In verse 26 you get the power for the provision, “ The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” How blessed that the Holy Ghost should bring all things to their remembrance “ whatsoever I have said unto you ”—all we have in the gospels. It is deeply interesting to apprehend in any measure Christ’s service during the three and a half years, as He opened out the heart of God to man : “ The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” You are here to reproduce Him now.

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You are learning Him inside, that you may be fitted to set forth the heart of God to man. You cannot preach the gospel or render any true service but as you know how Christ declared the heart of God to man.

Now the chain of love ends with this most touching grace: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." And then He repeats, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Extracted.

J. B. S.

CONFESSING JESUS AS LORD.

IT is very encouraging to hear that all over the world there are those who are confessing Jesus as their Lord. Many of these are young, and this causes increased thankfulness, for these young lives can now be spent for the Lord Jesus instead of in the pursuit of worldly pleasures.

It is to such that this is written, trusting that the Lord may help each one who has confessed Him to realise what is involved in that confession, and that it leads to great results for God and for them.

To "confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord" is an act of

COMMITTAL.

From henceforth the believer is publicly committed to Him and is regarded as one of His own. This is beautifully illustrated by the confession of Amasai, who came to David when he was in rejection and reproach. When challenged by David he said, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." From that moment Amasai and those with him were committed

to David, to be his followers, to suffer with him and to serve him.

But this leads to another consequence of confessing Jesus as Lord, that there should be

OBEEDIENCE

to Him, for Jesus said, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" The word says, "to obey is better than sacrifice." Having confessed Him as Lord, it is due to Him that we should do His bidding, for He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

It is the great privilege of the confessed followers of Jesus to enjoy

NEARNESS

to Him. Intimacy and communion are the portion of His disciples. He desires that His own should keep near to Himself, for it is disastrous to follow "afar off." Peter proved that when he went into the high priest's house, for he soon denied the Lord instead of confessing Him.

John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, enjoyed such nearness that he "leaned on his breast at supper." He could ask the Lord questions that Peter hesitated to put. How great is this intimacy, for Jesus said, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

It is of utmost importance, too, that the one who has confessed Christ should be marked by

FIDELITY,

for faithfulness to Christ cannot be overestimated. He said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Be true to Him!

It is recorded that when Jesus was crucified the people stood beholding. That was a group of the enemies of Christ. But we also find that all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off beholding. This was a group of those that loved Him. As those who loved Him stood together in faithfulness to Him on that memorable day, so we are tested to-day by the company in which we are found. Fidelity to Christ would lead us to stand with those who love Him and apart from His enemies.

If this step has been taken, there will inevitably be tests arise in the path, for this step involves the whole of our lives. We shall therefore need

ENDURANCE.

Timothy was exhorted to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." A soldier is of little value if he cannot endure. If he is true, he will not give up or flee before the enemy because the path is rough and hard. The Lord will give grace to enable us to endure for His sake, and for the sake of His people, as the Apostle Paul, who said that he endured all things for the elect's sake.

The greatest result, however, of confessing Jesus as Lord is that we are brought into

SALVATION,

for "the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart . . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be *saved*." We need salvation all along our way; in the home, the school, the business, and every sphere of life. To be saved from the judgment of God is

wonderful, but it is but the first effect of the mighty work of salvation. We need salvation from the power of sin, from the power of Satan, and from the evil influences of the world, to walk in liberty before God and men. It is in the constant confession of Christ that this will be enjoyed, for "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

The seventh great outcome of confessing Jesus is that we can then enter upon the path of

SERVICE,

for those who have confessed their allegiance to Christ are those He delights to use in His service. What a happy result of the true-hearted confession of Christ to have the life devoted to the service of God! Surely the prayer of each believer is "that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might *serve* him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life."

F. S. M.

THE BIBLE.—EZEKIEL 12-23.

CHAPTERS 12-19.

THESE chapters embrace two sets of prophecies, chapters 12-19 and 20-23, the former particularly referring to Jerusalem, though including Israel. Chapter 12 refers to the *Prince* in Jerusalem—Zedekiah; and Ezekiel is a sign to the house of Israel. "It may be they will consider," Jehovah says. In many ways the prophecy of Ezekiel resembles the writings of the Apostle John. The Lord's actions and position in that gospel are not in special relation to Israel. He is viewed as rejected from the outset.

(John 1. 11.) Yet signs are given, but all to no effect.
(John 12. 37, etc.) Judgment was imminent. (Ezek.
12. 21–28.)

Chapter 13 speaks to the *prophets*. It is a solemn thing to profess to give the mind of God, even if done in sincerity : awful indeed the position of one whom the enemy uses to oppose the testimony ! We cannot read scripture without seeing that a false word, a lie, is one of the enemy's chief weapons. (2 Peter 2 ; 2 John 3. 8 ; 2 Cor. 11. 13 ; 1 John 2. 18, 21.) Hence it is not surprising that falsehood makes the heart of the righteous sad (ver. 22)—a remarkable expression.

Chapter 14 is addressed to the *elders* of Israel, the responsible element, as we might say. They had set up idols in their heart. If we have idols, God may answer us according to them. How dangerous the attitude of praying about a matter when we have very distinct *wishes* in it. We may get our answer according to our *wishes*. (Psa. 106. 15.) To inquire of God the heart must have no idol. The condition of things as in chapter 14 is hopeless. Though Noah, Daniel and Job were in the land they would but deliver their own souls. But a remnant would be left.

Chapters 15 and 16 particularly refer to Jerusalem. As the wood of the vine, if it did not fulfil its purpose, it was of no use whatever. The remarkable mercy and favour of God are seen in chapter 16, so that Jerusalem was beautiful with Jehovah's comeliness (ver. 14), which He had put upon her. Through idolatry Jerusalem's condition was that of utter degradation, comparable to that of Sodom and Samaria. But though God would deal with them according to their unfaithfulness (ver. 59), yet in the end it would be seen

that He was ever true and would give them to be ashamed of themselves and bless them with an everlasting covenant. (Vers. 60 and 62.)

In chapter 17 we see how seriously God regarded the fickle heart of Zedekiah. He had broken his oath. The heathen king had assumed that Jehovah's name would at least have been respected. Hence the severity of the judgment. This gives rise to chapter 18, which gives principles relating to God's ways and a lamentation over the "princes of Israel" in chapter 19. What a condition for "princes": no voice and no power. (Vers. 9 and 14.)

CHAPTERS 20-23.

These chapters refer to *all* Israel, but I judge that chapter 20. 30-38 has special reference to the ten tribes. Those guilty of the rejection of Christ (that is, Judah, etc.) have the sorrows of Antichrist to go through and are dealt with differently. But here the question is idolatry and the sinners among them—the rebels—do not enter the land. (Ver. 38; see also Amos 9. 8-10.)

The way God refers to the repeated occasions on which He had wrought for His name's sake, appeals to the heart. It had been His sovereign mercy that had saved the position all along; but as it was a question of government His hand had been upon them. (Vers. 25, 26.) Two details of great interest are seen in this chapter 20, namely, (1) the sabbath was the *sign* of the covenant. This explains the Lord's action in Matthew 12 as to the sabbath. If the *link* between God and His people (that is, the King) was not owned, as in David's day, the *sign* of the covenant (that is, the sabbath) had no meaning. Then (2)

Israel is to be brought into the “bond of the covenant,” that is, the covenant will have its answer in them. They will then be accepted (see vers. 41-44) and appreciate what God had done.

Chapters 21 and 22 continue the proclamation of God’s judgments against Israel, having Jerusalem as a centre, and with the “profane wicked prince” therein. In chapter 21 we may note how the prophet’s actions and even gesture are all to betoken God’s deep feeling as to His people. “Sigh” (ver. 6), “cry and howl” (ver. 12), “smite thy hands.” (Ver. 14.) The “crown” is to have no real resting place till Christ comes. (Ver. 27.) Chapter 22 shews how Jerusalem was a centre and lodging of evil, and governmentally God would make it so. (Vers. 19-22.) Priests, princes, prophets and people are all corrupt. God sought for a man and found none. (Ver. 30.) In chapter 23 Samaria and Jerusalem are figuratively referred to. The greater evil belonged to Jerusalem. (Ver. 11.) We must note that idolatry is the question, not the rejection of Christ.

To sum up, in a review, these chapters we have : chapter 12, the Prince in Israel ; chapter 13, the prophets ; chapter 14, the elders ; chapters 15 and 16, Jerusalem particularly ; chapter 17, Zedekiah’s fickle heart ; chapter 18, God’s government ; chapter 19, lamentation for the princes. Then chapter 20, the sabbath the sign and then the bond of the covenant ; chapter 21, Jerusalem a centre of evil ; chapter 22, God seeks but does not find one man to stand in the breach ; chapter 23, the corruption of Samaria and Jerusalem.

Chapter 24 follows, opening a new prophecy and giving the date of the solemn blow of judgment. It

has happened to Israel ; it will happen to a Christless Christendom, alas ! (Rev. 3. 16 ; 18, 21 ; Rom. 11. 21, 22.)

M. W. B.

FOUR ASPECTS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

PART I.

IN connection with the journey of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, we have four types of the death of Christ : the passover, the Red Sea, the brazen serpent, and the Jordan. The scriptures which would correspond to these in the New Testament are Romans 3. 21-26 ; 6. 1-14 ; 8. 3. ; Col. 2. 11-13, 20 ; 3. 1-3.

The blood of the paschal lamb established *the righteousness of God*, and secured everything for the people ; on this line nothing more was needed. The other three types added nothing to the value of the blood, nothing more was needed on God's side ; they set forth what is needed on our side that we may come into the enjoyment of what has been secured for us. In appropriating the death of Christ in these three aspects we enjoy the present salvation of God, come into the liberty of the Spirit, and enter upon that which is typified by the land of Canaan, namely, the full blessing of God as established in the glorified Christ, according to eternal purpose. (Eph. 1.) Canaan is a type of the heavenlies where all our blessing lies, the inheritance of saints in light.

The foundation of everything is redemption in the blood of Christ ; it has secured everything for God. Before God could move in mercy toward the people, He must establish *His own righteousness* ; He must

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justify Himself before He could justify the sinner. "Whom God has set forth a mercy-seat, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness." Israel as sinners, like the Egyptians, were amenable to the righteous judgment of God, all men are, as it is written, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "All the world has become guilty before God" (or become subject to the judgment of God). How then could God make a difference, executing judgment on the one, and sparing the other? He must justify Himself in so doing; He must be just in all that He does. He cannot forego the judgment He has passed on sin, it must take effect. Then apart from expiation, all must die. In expiation the judgment takes effect in the victim, and the sinner is free. With the Israelites the lamb was the victim; the blood sprinkled on the door-posts of their houses was the witness that sin had been expiated in the death of the victim. We might say the sinner had died in the victim. God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." In so doing God did not sacrifice His righteousness. Justice being satisfied, mercy could be exercised. "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment." "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation . . . for therein is the righteousness of God revealed." Every claim of God has been satisfied in the blood of Jesus, so that He is just, and the Justifier of him that believes on Jesus. The blood which satisfied God's righteousness justifies the believer. (Rom. 5. 9.) If we would understand the value of the blood, we must consider the greatness of the victim, He who by the eternal Spirit offered *Himself* without spot to God; it is the precious blood of Jesus Christ, *God's Son*. If men deny the deity of Christ,

they have lost the efficacy of the blood. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

There can be no solid peace until you see that you are *justified in the righteousness of God*. We are more ready to apprehend that we are justified by the *grace* of God than to understand that we are justified in the *righteousness* of God. That is the solid rock on which the believer stands. Man has no righteousness of his own in which he can stand before God. But God in the gospel proclaims *His righteousness* as the only ground on which a sinner can stand before Him, and this is *unto all*, for all, and *upon all that believe*. The sinner who submits to God's righteousness is justified; he is accounted righteous by God. That righteousness for man must be the result of death was shewn when God clothed Adam with skins. "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked."

Now that God's righteousness has been established, He is free to move in mercy toward His people; He can carry out all that is in His heart to do, nothing can stand in the way. "His hand, His heart, His house are free." The enemy is silenced, and God is free to carry out all His blessed will.

But so far the people were still in Egypt, and under the power of Pharaoh in the house of bondage. Egypt represents the world as the sphere in which Satan exercises his power; he is the ruler and god of this world. It is, too, the sphere in which sin and death reign, where every man naturally is in bondage to these elements; he is a bond slave to Satan, sin, and death. Sooner or later he finds that sin is a hard taskmaster, and the wages of sin are death. When a soul wakes up to realise his bondage, he cries out for deliverance, "What shall I do to be saved?"

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“Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” When the people started to go out of Egypt, they found themselves completely shut in; before them was the Red Sea, and behind them the mighty hosts of Pharaoh: death before them, and the enemy’s power behind them. How helpless man finds himself in the presence of death. Death is the evidence of Satan’s power over man. The people cried out unto the Lord; it was all they could do. Moses said, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the *salvation of the Lord.*” It is when the soul finds itself in this position, and cries unto the Lord, the Spirit of God reveals to him the salvation of God *in a living Saviour*, a present and complete deliverance from a world under judgment, from the power of Satan, from the domination of sin, from the fear of death, and ultimately from all that is connected with our present flesh and blood condition. All this is assured to every one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” For Israel it was a salvation yet to be accomplished. What was in itself death, became the way of salvation. The Red Sea was a type of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ in entering into death has destroyed the power of the enemy, and made it the way of salvation. His triumphant resurrection is the evidence of the complete overthrow of the enemy’s power, the annulling of all that held man in bondage, so that God is able to present to men a complete salvation in the risen, living Saviour. We have not to wait to see what God *will* do, it is *already accomplished*. Israel looked behind them and saw the whole power of Pharaoh dead on the seashore. God had triumphed and they were saved. (See Exo. 15.) So the believer can sing.

“Death and judgment are *behind us*,
 Grace and glory are before ;
 All the billows rolled o’er Jesus,
 There they spent their utmost power.”

“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory
 through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

F. H. B.

THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

THE Spirit of God would emphasise at the present time the necessity of the element of the fear of God being found amongst us. We need not only to be acquainted with the things which belong to the fear of the Lord, but to be affected by them in a practical manner.

In the Book of the Proverbs the fear of the Lord is mentioned several times, and one would desire to draw attention to seven places in the book where it is spoken of. The first is in chapter 1. 7 : “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” If there is with us a desire to serve God we must begin at the beginning of things, namely, the knowledge of God. In the Epistle to the Romans we are brought to a knowledge of God. The impression the apostle would leave upon our spirits is that God can be known in the three ways spoken of in chapter 15 : as the God of endurance, we learn how to endure by the knowledge of God ; then as the God of hope, through whom we learn how to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost ; and in the last verse as the God of peace, so that in all the confusion sin has brought in we are able to pursue the path in a sense of peace. We are maintained in the fear of God by having to do with God in every one of our move-

ments here, and we grow in and by the true knowledge of God.

In chapter 8. 13 we read, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." It is by the knowledge of God that we are brought into touch with good, and knowing good we learn to hate evil. In the Epistle to the Corinthians the apostle laboured that they might know the good and thus be enabled to hate the evil, and what we hate we turn from and do not practise.

In chapter 9. 10 it is said that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Having learned to know God and to hate evil, the next thing we discover is that we want a resource and that we need direction. This suggests the Epistle to the Colossians, where we see that wisdom is found in the Head, and we are exhorted to walk in wisdom towards those without. We need to be directed by the Head as to what is suitable to God in all the details of our life. The three young men in the Book of Daniel went into the fire in their coats, hosen and hats, which would suggest they were suitably clothed as those who have to say to God in the presence of men.

In chapter 14. 27 it is "the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life." The suggestion is the enjoyment of life. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the thought of abundance is dwelt upon. The apostle can find no language strong enough to give expression to the greatness and the fulness of the purpose of God. There are no limitations with God, and we are filled into all the fulness of God. There is a wonderful unfolding of divine thoughts to our souls to be enjoyed in the power of life, and in all the freshness of the Spirit, which is mentioned in every chapter.

Chapter 15. 33 gives us the thought of the discipline

of wisdom : “The fear of the Lord is the instruction [or discipline] of wisdom ; and before honour is humility.” The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the way God takes with us in discipline in order to bring us to true thoughts of ourselves and to true thoughts of Christ. In Hebrews 12 it is not only a question of serving God, but how we serve Him, that is, acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. What marks the present moment is lightness and lack of knowledge of what is suitable to God. We must not forget that “*our* God is a consuming fire.” God would impress upon us His majesty and holiness, and would have us touch things in the light of this, so that we might be marked by reverence and godly fear. The end and aim of all discipline is that we may learn humility, and then God will put honour upon us, for before honour goeth humility.

The next thought is in chapter 19. 23, “The fear of the Lord tendeth to life,” which would suggest to us the Epistle to the Philippians as that which shews the great result of all the exercises of Paul ; the contentedness and satisfaction which mark him and thus he was buoyant when being visited with evil. Christ and the saints are the joy of his heart.

The last is found in chapter 31. 30, 31 : “A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands ; and let her own works praise her in the gates.” Her worth is to come into public view. God would have us take part in His service suitably to His mind. She is to be given the fruit of her hands—the outcome of her own exercises with God, and this is seen in the gates of the city. She was marked by wisdom in all that she did ; she expressed God, and that in administration in relation to His

things. David is the great administrator of the Old Testament. Before being known in the gates he had gained in secret victories of which no one knew anything; the lion and the bear had been met and overcome. Then amongst other things said of him, the list finishes with, He was also a man of goodly presence, and the Lord was with him.

What does my presence affect among the people of God? Paul's presence preserved the saints. He speaks of his presence in writing to the Philippian saints, and leaves on their spirits a very definite sense that the *Lord was with him*. May this be the paramount concern with each of us.

R. H. S.

PSALMS 127 AND 128.

PSALM 127 gives us God's side—what Jehovah does. He builds the house and He keeps the city. We must begin by having faith in God. "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." Then in verse 2 we get His beloved referred to. This psalm is a song of degrees for Solomon. It suggests God's delight in Christ as the One who brings in the rest of God. We get God's Beloved spoken of. This psalm shews us how we can find our rest, that is, where God has found His—in Christ. We find that everything is accomplished in Him, and we can rest in that One who is the Son of the Father's love. Unless we begin in that way we shall be on a wrong line altogether, and we shall be striving to build up something in our own strength. Christ is spoken of in the Epistle to the Colossians as the Son of His love, and that blessed

Person who is spoken of in that way is the One who is the Head of the church, His body. He is the life-giver, the One who gives real impulse to the assembly. Every other kind of energy must fail and break down. In the world to come, the blessed Lord will give impulse to everything. He has given His flesh for the life of the world, and the day will come when the whole earth will receive impulse from Him. What will be established on earth in a public way is known now in the assembly. That company is spoken of as His body. The Son of the Father's love is the Head of the assembly.

In Psalm 128 we get our side—the way by which we are brought practically into things and are maintained in them. So this psalm begins, “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.” The fear of the Lord comes first. He makes Himself known to us; He is given a place in our hearts. And then what follows is walking in His ways. Walk is very important. The Lord said to that man in John 5, “Rise, take up thy bed, *and walk.*” It is the One who gives *life* who can say, *Walk*. It is not that we are acted on like machines; the Lord gives us life, and He would have us walk in the energy of life, and divine love, so that the one who is blessed is the one who fears the Lord and *walks* in His ways. There is a step for you at this present moment. I do not know what it is, but there is a step for you to take. Walking is made up of steps—one step follows another. There is a danger of our becoming theoretical and just taking things up as doctrine, but this is very practical, “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.” There is a step for every one of us to take. The step we took yesterday is not the

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step to be taken to-day. Christians are often hindered. They make a move, and it costs them something, and they experience blessedness in connection with it, but they do not go any further. They can only tell you of one special experience in their lives, and that means they are no longer walking. This psalm speaks of those who are walking—not yesterday, nor last week, but now.

Then we must remember that it is walking in His ways. How suggestive that is. How we should treasure every thought of God if we took that in. You might say, But how is it to be brought to pass? We must keep in mind the way the previous psalm begins, "Except the Lord build the house." God's building must go on. If God is not doing it, man's labour is in vain. The Lord builds the house and He keeps the city, so that when He says, *Walk*, you are under His protecting hand. You may say you cannot do it because there are obstacles in the way. But if you act on the light you have you will find the protection of the Lord. There is a step for you to take at this present time, and as you take that step you will find the Lord's protecting hand. He is the One who builds. He is the One who keeps the city and guards everything.

C. M.

FIVE WIDOWS IN LUKE'S GOSPEL.

(1) Widow of Sarepta—a needy, far-off Gentile sinner. Lesson: *Salvation*.

(2) Widow of Nain—bereaved, desolate, sorrowing. "Let thy widows trust in me." Lesson: *Comfort and healing*.

(3) Widow of the city—wronged, importunate, persevering. Lesson: *Prayer*.

(4) Widow of the treasury. She gave her little, but she gave her all to Jehovah's house. Lesson: *Devotedness*.

(5) Widow of the temple. "The tribe of Ashur"—an old but *happy* saint. "Departed not from the temple"—*seclusion*. "Served God"—*ministry*. "Fasting and prayers"—*self-denial* and *dependence*. "Gave thanks"—*worship*. "Spake of him to all"—*testimony*.

S. J. B. C.

WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!

Marred vessels. (Jer. 18. 4.)

Earthen vessels. (2 Cor. 4. 7.)

Broken vessels. (Judges 7. 20.)

Vessels of *mercy*. (Rom. 9. 23.)

Holy vessels. (1 Chron. 22. 19.)

"He made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." (Jer. 18. 4.)

"To be conformed to the image of his Son." (Rom. 8. 29).

MARRED by sin—Thy grace has wrought
 To redeem, and change our lot :
 Earthen vessels—Thine the power
 To maintain us every hour.
 Broken vessels—that the light
 May be shining clear and bright ;
 Touched by mercy, heavenward bound,
 In Thy holy service found.

Soon, on high, in realms of light,
 Changed into Thine image bright,
 We shall see Thee face to face,
 Brought to glory through Thy grace.
 With Thee, like Thee, Jesus, Lord,
 Thou wilt be by all adored.
 Blessed our eternal lot—
 To display *what God hath wrought*.

Winnipeg.

C. D—N.

FOUR ASPECTS OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

PART II.

BUT after this first blush of victory the soul has to pass through a period of testing like the man under law. (Rom. 7.) This is a painful but useful experience, in which the soul learns the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and realises that he is a *slave to sin*, and is utterly powerless under its dominion. This is what Bunyan spoke of as the slough of despond. This was exemplified in the history of Israel under the law in the wilderness. The effect of this testing was to make manifest the incorrigible nature of the flesh, its utter incapacity for producing anything for God, or appreciating anything of God. They not only broke down under law, but they *despised the manna*, type of Christ, the bread come down from heaven. (Isa. 53. 2, 3.) We have all to learn this lesson, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God, so that it is impossible for man in the flesh to be with God.

It was at this point of their history that God sent fiery serpents among the people, and much people died. They had the experience of death in themselves; as the man says, "When the law came, sin revived, and I died." (Rom. 7. 9.) The deadly poison of the serpent was a type of the killing power of sin, as it says, "sin killed me." There was only one remedy for this condition; that was the uplifted serpent of brass. The Lord refers to this as the type of His death. (John 3. 14.) It represents that aspect of the death of Christ, the cross, in which God has expressed

M

His judgment of what man is, and in which He has condemned all that man is as in the flesh. "God, having sent his own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, has *condemned sin in the flesh.*" (Rom. 8. 3.) The state of man in the flesh was such that it could not be improved; God does not undertake to do anything of that kind, He could only *condemn* it. "Our old man has been *crucified with him [Christ].*" (Rom. 6. 6.) Paul, taking account of himself as a man in the flesh, says, "*I am crucified with Christ.*" "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its passions and lusts." They are not trying to improve it. It is when we have experienced what the flesh is in its sinfulness, utter weakness, and its incapacity for the appreciation of Christ and divine things, it is then we are glad to look at Christ lifted up, not as bearing our sins only, but as *made sin* for us, bearing all that was due to us, and dying, and in doing so bringing to an end our old Adam condition, closing up our past history for ever. And all this that He might become to us the last Adam, imparting to us His own life. It is the beginning of a new day when we reach this point in the history of our souls. After the brazen serpent Israel came to the springing well. This would prefigure the reception of the Spirit, as the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8. 2.)

From this point Israel is viewed as *a new generation*; they are now ready to enter into the land of promise. "If any one be in Christ, there is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold all things have become new," or new things have come to pass. (2 Cor. 5. 17.)

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After the brazen serpent, and the springing well, Israel, typically a new generation, make straight for the land of promise, and arriving at the river Jordan, they encamp there three days before passing over. The Jordan was the gateway into the land, and prefigures the death of Christ as the way into the heavenly places where all our blessings lie ; our inheritance is *on the other side of death, where Christ is*. He has gone in by way of death and resurrection, like the ark of the covenant going before the people into the Jordan. We have the antitype of this in the Epistle to the Colossians. Believers are said to be identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as if alive in the world?" etc. (Col. 2. 20.) "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3. 3.) If we have died with Christ, we have no status in connection with this world, socially, religiously, or politically ; our citizenship belongs to another country. There is no other way by which we can enter upon our proper heavenly relationships and privileges save as realising our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

But naturally we should say, like the two and a half tribes, "Bring us not over this river." As having the life of the earthy man we cling to earth and earthly things. It is only *in the life of the heavenly Man* that we can enjoy heavenly things. Which life do we cultivate ? It is as quickened together with Him that we are capable of taking possession of our heavenly inheritance, or enjoying heavenly relationships. It is as coming under the mighty influence of the love of Christ, and as drawn after Him, that we shall be prepared to accept death and resurrection with Him,

that is, leaving behind all that belongs to this present world, to have *part with Him where He is*. We are not forced to pass over ; we follow the ark of the covenant by attraction. “ Wilt thou go with this man ? ” We are maintained in the enjoyment of our association with Him as He dwells by faith in our hearts.

It is encouraging to know that this is the will of God for us, it is our calling. He has not only saved us, but *called us with an holy calling*. As with Israel, they were not only saved from Egypt, they were called to possess the land of Canaan. So we are called to possess all that wealth of spiritual blessing which God has conferred upon us in Christ, in heavenly places. (Eph. 1. 3.) God has made Him most blessed for ever, and in wonderful grace called us to have *part with Christ* in all that He has conferred upon Him as man. Moreover, He has given us the Spirit, not only to give us the light of these things, but to enable us to take possession of them as our present and eternal inheritance. Hence we have the exhortation, “ Seek *the things which are above, where the Christ is sitting* at the right hand of God : have your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth.” Thus we have seen that the death of Christ which has been the way of salvation to us, has also opened for us a door into a system of heavenly and eternal blessing in association with Christ.

In the Lord's supper we have this aspect of the death of Christ before us ; we contemplate Him as the true ark of the covenant, in love to His own, going down into death to make a way for them to follow Him as the One who was about to ascend to His Father and God. As He said to Mary Magdalene, “ Go to my brethren, and say unto them, *I ascend*

to my Father, and your Father ; and to my God, and your God." It is His desire that we should have a taste of heavenly joys before we get there actually and for ever. " I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also."

F. H. B.

OUR MOTIVES.

IN the light of the word that " the Lord weigheth the spirits," it is important that we should be concerned that the motives which lie behind our words and actions are approved of Him. In God's account the motive is greater than the action, for " the Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Moreover, self is so great a factor in our movements that it may often prove that the secret of many a praiseworthy action is really the love of self.

The right primary motive for every activity is expressed in the words of the Apostle Peter :

" THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED."

(1 Peter 4. 11.) How effective every action will be that is actuated by this pure and holy desire. To glorify God must ever be the highest motive that could govern man. Jesus, the One who did the will of God perfectly, said, " I have glorified thee on the earth." It was the one commanding spring of His perfect life, for He said, " I do always those things that please him."

When the love of God has been shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and the body of a believer has been presented to God as a living sacrifice, Christ

becomes the true spring of that life. This is beautifully expressed in Philippians i. 20 : According to my earnest expectation and my hope,

THAT CHRIST MAY BE MAGNIFIED IN MY BODY,
whether it be *by life or by death.*

When Ittai the Gittite voiced his devoted love to David he said, "Surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether *in death or life*, even there also will thy servant be." It will be observed that he placed death first, for he was expressing his willingness to be faithful unto death, but Paul refers to his desire to live Christ here, and therefore he places life first that he might be here for Christ's glory.

Every heart that has been touched by divine love has true affection for the church of God. God's assembly has become a living reality, and each one that composes it has become an object of affectionate interest. The activities and service of such would be governed by the holy and sincere motive

" THAT THE CHURCH MAY RECEIVE EDIFYING."

(1 Cor. 14. 5.) This would greatly promote the building up of the people of God ; while it would prevent much injury caused by selfish interests and jealous feelings. The exhortation is given to "seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."

It must follow that the activities of our God in His grace towards men in the gospel will be of deep interest to those that love God. As the heart is moved by the kindness and love of God our Saviour, one of the great impelling motives of that life will be

“ THAT THE WORD OF THE LORD MAY HAVE FREE COURSE and be glorified.” With this desire it is of great moment that “ our conversation should be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.”

Then there are the personal motives affecting our own spiritual prosperity and progress. The secret of Paul’s personal life is disclosed in Philippians 3. 10 in his desire

“ THAT I MAY KNOW HIM.”

He was prepared to suffer the loss of all things for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. This is the greatest personal desire that any believer can cherish, and though it may involve loss and suffering, this is worth while if it leads to a more intimate knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It may be that when we seek divine guidance and do not receive an answer as soon as we expect, we need that our motives should be tested. It would be well to seek grace to apply these searching yet profitable tests to each proposed movement or activity :

Would God be glorified thereby ?

Would Christ be magnified ?

Would the assembly be edified ?

Would the work of the gospel be furthered ?

Would my knowledge of Christ be enhanced ?

If our proposal will bear this challenge, we may proceed with confidence and the assurance of divine support. May we each have grace thus to be “ sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.”

F. S. M.

OUR MIND AND SPEECH.

CHRISTIANS who in their daily life are called upon to rub shoulders with the world must often feel the danger of insensibly adopting its outlook and modes of thought, to the loss of that which is distinctively Christian.

Much of our time is spent among men who would hardly pretend to be in any living sense of the word Christians; not disciples of Christ, professing obedience to Him or recognising His interests; and unless we cherish our calling we very easily adopt the world's standards and the world's values. In so doing we yield up our birthright; we forget that we belong to a holy nation.

Our valuation of other things, things in general and things in particular, will largely depend on how we think of ourselves, in relation to our calling. If we think of ourselves just as ordinary men, "men of the world, which have their portion in this life" (Psa. 17. 14), we shall naturally adopt the world's thoughts, and there is an end of it, so far as concerns anything for Christ in our lives. God only will know whether we are really His: we shall hardly know ourselves.

It may be answered that we should not think of ourselves at all. But this would be going too far. It is most true, and of great practical importance, that we should be free of ourselves, free from any pharisaical spirit, free from any unhealthy self-consciousness; that we should have God before us and not ourselves; but it is also true that if God has called us to be His sons; if we are, as in the opening words of many of the epistles, "saints by calling"; we

have no right to ignore this calling. It would be no true humility in the sons of the King to be unmindful of their royal birth.

The first question, therefore, is whether we frankly take account of ourselves—and by ourselves I mean all believers—as “saints,” the called of God. Of course the world will not think of us in this way; but if a Christian is true to his calling he will be such that the world’s categories will not cover him; there will be something about him that the world does not understand; it will indeed *misunderstand* him, for it will put him into one of its own categories, which at best can only cover what is “natural” in him, not what is spiritual. If we accept the world’s categories, if we find them suffice for us, we shall prove thereby our lack of spiritual grasp and of faith in the power of God.

We are indeed too ready to accept these categories; like Peter, who, when asked, “Doth not your master pay tribute?” answered at once with an unintelligent “Yes.” But when he was come into the house Jesus invited him to consider the question from a higher point of view, that of the freedom of “the sons.” (Matt. 17. 24–27.)

“Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23. 9); that was a prophecy of no “private” or “particular” interpretation (2 Peter 1. 20), but many-sided and of wide application. It is not merely a question of outward separation; but in establishing a “people” on earth God has given it something to maintain, something to represent, a testimony to render, which falls

outside the natural thoughts of men, because it is essentially greater and higher, because it is spiritual, and of God.

To hold this position in our own souls is a duty, not to ourselves, but to God who has called us. But it needs some vigour of faith and nearness to God. It was when Israel lacked these things that they longed for a king; they wanted to be like other people, to be "reckoned among the nations." They failed to appreciate the quality of uniqueness in God's elect.

Scripture records—though no one can refer to it without some searching of heart—an occasion on which even Paul seems to have yielded something in this respect, when he relieved his position for the time being by calling out, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee." (Acts 23. 6.) He accepted for a moment the categories of the religious world, though they could not really "explain" him. Fewness of words becomes us in speaking of such an incident in the life of the great apostle; but it is worth pondering.

The Corinthians were largely thinking of things, judging of things, in a merely human and not a spiritual way; that is, apart from the Spirit of God; and the lack of spiritual understanding was accompanied, as it always will be, by a moral standard unworthy of a Christian. "Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and *walk as men*?" It looks as if Paul had foreseen the danger, for in first going to preach to them he had "determined not to know anything among them, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified"; the cross is the starting-point of all wholesome lessons and of all right judgments. (1 Cor. 2.) He goes on to warn

them against worldly judgments: "Now we have received, *not the spirit of the world*, but the spirit* which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth*, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." How it jars upon us when we hear spiritual things—the things of God and of Christ, of the glad tidings and the church—spoken of, assessed on a merely "natural" footing. Nehemiah tells us of some of the people who spoke "half in the speech of Ashdod," and could not speak in "the Jews' language"—the language, the mode of thought and speech, of the true Jews, of the Israel of God, (Neh. 13. 24.) (Ashdod was a city of the Philistines, those people who were outwardly in the land, but were not of it: they had not been led by Moses through the wilderness, nor followed the ark over Jordan.)

These "natural" judgments are never far away from us, and in spiritual things they are always wrong, because they leave out of account the most essential elements, the mind and will of God. A simple example is the unbelieving advice given to our Lord by His brethren to go up to the feast. "If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world." (John 7. 4.) They could not take in the possibility of His being moved by an entirely different set of motives from those which governed their own actions. Along such a line of worldly unbelief we shall find no light nor understanding.

It is not that spiritual things are not, in a lofty

* The Spirit of God (with a capital "S") produces a corresponding spirit (small "s") in the believer.

sense of the word, natural; they are in accordance with their own nature; they are not artificial, they are living; but they are beyond the order and range of men's natural thoughts as uninstructed by the Spirit of God. The question is not one of intellect, but of moral estimation, standards of value, modes of thought, and motive.

Not only motive, but also the attributing of motive to others. The Corinthians, unspiritual themselves, could not understand the motives which weighed with Paul in deciding at what time it would be wise to visit them again; they lightly judged him to be moved by considerations merely human, worldly, opportunist. "When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? But as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." (2 Cor. 1. 2.) If we are unspiritual ourselves we shall be unable to discern a spiritual motive in others. "But he that is spiritual judgeth [discerneth] all things."

Now this way of regarding other things and other persons was closely connected with the failure of the Corinthians rightly to regard themselves. Therefore Paul, while he upbraids them for their unworthy moral conduct and their unspiritual modes of thought, does not hesitate to remind them with equal energy of their high calling. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye." A consciousness of this truth would give us the right starting-point in our estimation of other things. Without it we shall shew a certain lack

of spiritual refinement, a bluntness of sensibility. Our speech will betray it.

We belong to a great metropolis ; Jerusalem above is our mother. By contrast with the law the great feature of this city is that it is *free*. (Gal. 4. 26.) But when it is seen coming down out of heaven from God, a city of pure gold, one of its glories is its “ wall great and high ” ; not to cut off intercourse—for the gates of the city shall never be shut—but something which defines and encloses it and marks its strength and character ; something which is built on “ foundations,” moral foundations, “ garnished with all manner of precious stones,” features of rare and varied beauty ; nothing that defiles, nothing “ common,” can enter in. (Rev. 21.) “ Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces.” (Psa. 48. 13.) “ Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.” (Psa. 87. 3.)

But the saints are, or will be, that city ; and we want to cherish, and grow into, its glorious features now, while we wait for its manifestation. We want to be “ vessels unto honour, *sanctified* [that is, set apart specifically for divine purposes] and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” (2 Tim. 2. 21.) It is a high calling. We are not merely *left* in the world, we are *sent* into it, in some sense to represent God. “ As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” (John 20. 21.) And if we justly take account of ourselves in relation to this calling, it will greatly affect our spiritual valuations, our moral estimates, both of things in the church and things in the world. Our standard of value will be “ the shekel of the sanctuary,” and neither the mind nor the speech of Ashdod will be ours. J. B. C.

“LO, I COME TO DO THY WILL, O GOD.”

WHAT a delight to the heart of God must have been the occasion of the advent to this world of His beloved Son!

Well can we understand the rejoicing of that great multitude of the heavenly host as with one accord they exclaim, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2. 14.)

Never had there been such an one here before as that glorious Person. Though co-equal with God, how wonderful to think of Him in the love and grace of His heart taking upon Himself the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men! How this world was lit up with the light of heaven at the presence of that holy One of God!

At the commencement of His public service amongst men, God would draw the attention of every one to Him, and Him alone, by the voice which came from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3. 17.)

Oh! what a pathway of devoted love and service to God and men was His! Every action which He performed, every thought, every word which fell from those holy lips was the full expression of God Himself!

Then to think of such a holy life of service culminating in the untold sufferings of Calvary must ever bow our hearts in reverent awe and worship! There God’s heart was told out to the fullest extent possible by Him who alone could do so.

It is now our blessed privilege to look up and behold by the eye of faith that same glorious Person, the triumphant One over death and the grave, now

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crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of the majesty on high. And every true heart rejoices to declare that He alone is worthy.

Does not the contemplation of so glorious a Person, and the consideration of His devoted love in life and in death touch the chords of our hearts? We are left here for a definite purpose, that we might walk here as He walked.

As the will of God was ever His delight, so may we, in our measure, desire to be governed by that holy will also. May we not each one pray, in the language of the Psalmist, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God.” (Psa. 143, 10.)

It must be a great pleasure to God, as He observes people on all hands doing *their own* will, to see those of His own who are really set upon being guided by His will.

In this, as all else, the Lord Jesus Christ is our blessed example. “Even Christ pleased not himself.” (Rom. 15. 3.) Indeed, He could say in truth in regard to His Father: “I do ALWAYS those things that please HIM.” (John 8. 29.)

How encouraging it is to know that, in spite of conscious weakness and failure on our part ofttimes, He takes account of any desire on the part of the feeblest Christian who seeks to do His will in any measure. May this desire be increased in each one of our hearts so that in practice His will may be done in a greater measure on earth as it is in heaven!

A. E. B.

THE BIBLE—EZEKIEL 24-32.

RIGHTLY to understand prophecy, and especially the prophecy of Ezekiel, we must recognise the peculiar place the land of Israel has in the mind of God and the place that in His government He gave to Jerusalem. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." (Deut. 32. 8.) This scripture is really a key to all prophecy. Prophecy deals with earth; and hence Israel as a people, the land of Israel as a country and Jerusalem as a city have each a unique place. It is this that explains the importance attached in Ezekiel 24 to the fact of the king of Babylon setting himself against Jerusalem. Ezekiel has to write the name of the day. Outwardly it appeared as if the city of the great King, Jehovah, was to be conquered by a heathen emperor; but in fact it was Jehovah's doing. Jehovah's sword was being placed into the hand of Gentiles. Moreover Ezekiel is to express the sorrowful condition of God's people, who were about to suffer under the government of God. As a priest he is to feel and set forth their experiences. He is told that God would take away with a stroke his wife, the "desire of his eyes." He is not to weep, however. Humanly this might be impossible, but supported above nature (as in chap. 4) Ezekiel does as he is commanded. The incident illustrates how truly a servant has to be identified with the condition of those he addresses.

The king of Babylon draws near to smite Jerusalem. When the city is actually smitten Ezekiel is

no longer dumb" (see chap. 33. 21, 22), for his prophecy was not an appeal to his contemporaries with a view to their recovery, but a testimony to that which was inevitable.

Jerusalem being considered as coming under judgment, the surrounding nations come into review. If judgment begin at the house of God, where shall the ungodly appear? (See 1 Peter 4. 17, also Psalm 50; contrast verses 5 and 16.) Ammon, Moab, Edom, Tyrus, Zidon and Egypt are judged. The reason given in each case is because of their behaviour towards what was of God *on earth*—the sanctuary, Judah, Jerusalem or Israel. In the case of Tyrus, the lamentation (chap. 27) goes further than in regard to the city itself and refers to the world of commerce. Does not the "Prince" refer to the future head of that system, the man of sin, and the "king" to Satan? I believe so. The language is distinctly applicable. The devil sins from the outset. God has not told us beyond this: "Till iniquity was found in thee." The secret things belong to God. With Egypt emphasis is laid upon the statement: "My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself"; therefore God would be against his rivers. (Chap. 29, 3, 10, etc.) Egypt represents the world of natural resource (as Tyrus the world of commerce), which man claims as his own and thus seeks to be independent of God. It is a "staff of reed" to God's people. Fear fills the heart of Egypt. In Luke 21 we read of men's hearts failing them for fear of those things coming upon the earth. (See also Ezek. 30. 13.) Nothing is so terrible to a natural man as to have to depend on God. Egypt and Ethiopia seem specially to refer to what is natural. All comes under God's

judgment and with Egypt (great in its greatness, chap. 31. 3), others who also appeared great are laid in death. (Chap. 32. 22 to end.) The passage reminds one of Psalm 49 : " Death shall feed on them."

M. W. B.

ARE YOU RELIGIOUS ?

THIS question is often asked in the world, and very few who raise it or those who profess to be religious have taken account of the divine meaning of religion as expressed in James 1. 27. The object of this paper is to draw attention to this scripture and to dwell shortly on what it states, that we might all examine ourselves by God's standard, and no doubt most will have to admit how far we come short of it.

In the first place it is called pure religion and undefiled. This is in contrast to the previous verse, where it speaks of vain religion. There are those who seem to be religious, yet that unruly member, the tongue, soon betrays them, for it is not bridled or controlled. It is clear from the verse before us (ver. 27) that what God acknowledges as true religion is not only what we *say*, but what we *do* and *are*. One who only appears to be religious and is not real, deceives his own heart. This shews how far one can go on the line of pretention. Many a man succeeds in deceiving others for a long time, and perhaps even a lifetime. As has been said : " We may deceive all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time ; but we cannot deceive all the people all the time." Be sure your sin will find you out (Num. 32. 23) is a very searching scripture.

It is possible to deceive our own hearts by an outward profession without any inward possession. Then let us pay diligent heed to the marks of pure religion. It must be pure as to its source and pure in its outflow ; for many a stream which is pure at its source becomes corrupted as it flows onward. Hence this religion is undefiled. Its start is right and its course is true and sincere. Then, too, it is before God and the Father ; no mere vain shew before men, but a life lived under the searching eye of God. It is pleasurable to Him, and as it flows out to men, sympathy and compassion is expressed to those in the deepest of distress and sorrow. The fatherless and widows are the objects of God's special care (see Psa. 68. 5, and many other passages), hence the one who has truly had to do with God comes out from Him and acts like Him. How different to the religious Pharisees of whom the Lord said in Matthew 23. 14, " Ye devour widows' houses." Theirs was vain religion.

Then a further feature of pure religion is added, namely, to keep oneself unspotted from the world. This is testing indeed. How many of us can say we have no marks of the world upon us. Worldliness is the greatest hindrance to spiritual power and testimony, and we are caught by its snares often before we are aware. There are various ways in which it seeks to soil our garments with its filth : pleasures that fail to satisfy, vulgar fashions which rouse the passions, associations and friendships which corrupt the affections, and even a religion that savours of good, yet has its origin in the mind of man and therefore exalts man and dethrones Christ.

It may help in this connection to draw attention to four utterances in that wonderful prayer of the Lord

Jesus in John 17, where He unburdens His heart to the Father in regard to His own.

Called out of the world, for blessing. (Ver. 14.)

Kept from the world, its evil. (Ver. 15.)

Sent into the world, in testimony. (Ver. 18.)

Taken out of the world, to glory. (Ver. 24.)

In the address to the church in Sardis (Rev. 3. 4), He refers to those who had not defiled their garments, and their reward is to walk with Him in white, for they are worthy. If we have failed and become spotted by contact with this world, let us get to the Lord about it at once and avail ourselves of the water of the word for cleansing, so that the features of pure and undefiled religion may be seen expressed by us for the Lord's glory and the blessing of men.

W. J. W.

CHRISTIAN AMBITION.

THREE times in the Greek New Testament the word *φιλοτιμέομαι* occurs, which signifies "*to be ambitious.*"

(1) Be ambitious to preach the glad tidings where Christ is not known. (Rom. 15. 20.)

(2) Be ambitious to be quiet, to do your own business, to work with your own hands, and to walk reputably. (1 Thess, 4, 11.)

(3) Be ambitious, whether present in the body or absent with the Lord, to be only and always well pleasing to Him. (2 Cor. 5. 9.)

S. J. B. C.

THE VALUE OF A WALL.

THE various ways in which walls are mentioned in scripture should encourage our hearts as to God's thoughts for His people in this difficult day.

The wall which king Manasseh built after he was converted has a valuable application to the young believer to-day. The king had been converted to God as the result of God's ways with him, for he had been taken captive, bound with fetters, and carried into Babylon. It was while in affliction there that he besought the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. When God brought him back to Jerusalem "Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God. Now after this he built a wall without the city of David . . . and raised it up a very great height." This would answer to a bold and positive

CONFESSION

of a young convert, for he put a clear boundary between himself and those who were not on the Lord's side. The open confession of one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ brings salvation, for "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The soul is thus fortified against the hostile forces which are against him, and he proves the power of the name of the Lord to support him.

It is important to build this wall to a very great height, for there can be no compromise with the enemy. Manasseh's wall would be a testimony to the

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world that God was his God, God's city his city, and that he would not give God's enemies a place.

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The building of the wall by Nehemiah (chap. 4) presents a further development. The wall of Jerusalem had been broken down, so that in type the principle of separation from evil had been allowed to lapse, and there was no power to keep the enemy out or to hold the people together within. The only way by which the people could be together for God and held in unity was by the rebuilding of the wall. It has been well said that separation from evil is God's first principle of unity. So Nehemiah and his compatriots built the wall, "for the people had a mind to work." Through much opposition and many discouragements they set forward to secure by separation the privileges of their citizenship that they might be undisturbed from the harassing of their enemies. At last the wall was finished, and when the enemies heard thereof they were much cast down, "for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God." The word to each one who would be a vessel unto honour to-day is, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." This is the wall of

SEPARATION

which is so essential if we are to be maintained in spiritual power.

* * * * *

The wall which enclosed the garden of the beloved in the Song of Solomon 4. 12 is of quite a different character. "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up; a fountain sealed." The bridegroom desires to have his own with himself in communion

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In response to his love the bride invites him, "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." The wall enclosing His garden was built by Himself when He gave Himself for the church. His death stands as a barrier between His church and the cold, unsympathetic world around, that she may enjoy the restfulness of that garden of delights with Himself.

What a beautiful suggestion this scripture is of the mutual love of Christ and the church. It tells of the

SECLUSION

of the presence of Christ in that sacred enclosure.

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The complete thought of the wall is disclosed in the holy city as she is seen descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, for there the wall is "great and high." (Rev. 21. 12.) Many spiritual lessons are to be learned from this jasper wall and its twelve foundations, garnished with all manner of precious stones, but one outstanding thought is indicated: that it is for the

PRESERVATION

in holy purity of everything that is for God's pleasure and glory, and that no evil can enter there, for "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth."

In the light of that coming glory we would cherish the teaching of that wall and seek to answer to it now; to see that our wall is great enough to *embrace* all that is for the glory of God and high enough to *exclude* all that defileth or would be inconsistent with that vessel of glory.

F. S. M.

SEVEN SECRETS.

SECRET SINS. (Psa. 90. 8.)

ONE of the first discoveries we make when our souls are exercised in regard to God, is that there are secret sins that we commit; sins that if our friends knew of would perhaps degrade us before them, so that we could not face them again. Yet they are all *open* to God. As the above psalm shews, "Thou hast set our . . . secret sins in the light of thy countenance." Young believer, what about your secret sins? those sins which would brand you as a hypocrite if known to the world. Have you been to God about them? Job was probed on this very line. "Is there any secret thing with thee?" (Job 15. 11.) David, too, prays in Psalm 19. 12, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." God is going to judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. (Rom. 2. 16.) We can face them now, and find forgiveness through the blood of Christ and power in the Holy Spirit to walk uprightly and to be preserved from the deceitfulness of sin. Some one has said that the very word sin, as you pronounce it, contains the hiss of the serpent.

SECRET PRAYER. (Matt. 6. 6.)

The Lord Jesus Himself refers to this as a necessary part of our life here if we are to be in the good of His kingdom. Yea, He Himself sets the blessed example, being found *apart* for prayer in Matthew 14. 23. Depend upon it, dear young believer, you cannot go on without this constant secret prayer to God. We find that this becomes our secret place, where we can hide in each trouble and resort in each triumph.

Have we not often to admit that many of our failures can be traced to lack of secret prayer? We have been weak in the presence of our enemies because we were not drawing supplies from head-quarters. Then, too, what joy can be compared to an hour spent alone with the blessed God, in communion with Him, our hearts expanding in the warmth of His love like a flower opening in the sun. May we seek it more and be able to respond with the Psalmist, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." (Psa. 27. 8.)

SECRET FASTING. (Matt. 6. 16-18.)

This is a necessary accompaniment of prayer, and releases us from many things which hinder our prayers from being effectual. We are prepared to surrender even our own ease and comfort that we might be more free for the Lord. Little things that weaken our spiritual power are set aside. It is done out of love and not in any legal way, realising the immense gain as the outcome. Fasting no doubt differs with each of us according to our peculiar tendencies. The more intimate our walk with the Lord the more we are prepared to forgo for Him. Things right in themselves become a drag on us when over-indulged in.

SECRET SUPPLIES. (Psa. 25. 14.)

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." Daniel is a beautiful example of one who had secret supplies. He and his companions were marked firstly by secret fasting. They refused the king's meat and had instead pulse and water. Yet they obtained the king's favour, and Daniel was able to receive secret revelations from God.

SECRET DISCIPLES. (John 19. 38.)

It is said of Joseph of Arimathæa in the above passage that he was a disciple, but secretly for fear of the Jews. There may be many such about to-day ; those who are afraid to confess their Lord. They have never told any one they are Christians. Hence they have no real joy, but are faint-hearted and feeble. Oh ! if one such as this reads this paper, let me plead with you to make a bold and definite stand for the Lord. Think what He did for you. He suffered the agony of the cross that you might not only live with Him in glory, but be a witness for Him down here. That is why you are left in this world. God has not given us the spirit of fear or cowardice. (2 Tim. 1. 7.) "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord."

SECRET ENEMIES. (Psa. 10. 9.)

Satan is ever on the alert to attack us, and is always changing his tactics. He does not always approach us in the open, but sometimes appears as a wolf in sheep's clothing, pretending to be a friend, yet one of the bitterest of enemies. The Psalmist here prays to be preserved from such. Those who lie in wait secretly, as an enemy in ambush, and, alas ! they often succeed, as the psalm shews. Then we need to remember the word of the Lord Jesus, "Watch." (Mark 13. 37.) Also in Psalm 64. 2, we get the secret counsel of the wicked. There are those who are continually against us. But as in Daniel's case our God is able to deliver us.

SECRET STRENGTH. (Psa. 31. 20.)

The world does not know the secret of the believer's strength. Like the Nazarite's vow, it is between him

and God. They see the effects of it and flee before him. How blessed then to know what it is to be hidden in His secret presence from the pride of man; to be kept secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. The Lord Jesus could bid His own be of good cheer, in spite of hatred from the world, and could remind Peter that although Satan desired to have him, He had prayed for him.

W. J. W.

THE DEDICATION OF THE WALL.

(NEH. 12.)

“**B**UILD thou the walls of Jerusalem,” “they shall prosper that love thee.” In the faith of this the wall was built again in much adversity, and in the teeth of much manifest intrigue and opposition, as is recorded of Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem the Arabian. The work was crowned with spiritual prosperity because the people’s hearts were set on reconstituting that which their enemies had broken down! In chapter 4 both taunt and insult are hurled at God’s people: “Will they finish in a day? Will they *revive* the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, when they are burned?” So said Sanballat! And the Ammonite—the son of the unholy conception—mocks: “Even . . . a fox . . . would break down *their* stone wall”! Listen to Nehemiah’s appeal: “Hear, our God, *for we are despised*, and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey *in a land of captivity.*”

The enemy first learns that the walls are being repaired, and then grows very wroth. Then he hears that God had defeated all their evil counsel, even that the wall was builded. (Chap. 6.) So we see, without

labouring the point, that all the attempts of the enemy failed (as indeed all Satan's attacks will, and must fail, for God is His people's defence) and that they have built the walls of Jerusalem, and so come into that sphere of spiritual prosperity and joy according to the word: "*they* shall prosper that *love* thee." "May my right hand forget her cunning if I forget thee, O Jerusalem."

Geshem the Arabian—a son of Ishmael who mocked at the son of the free woman—with the others may carry on his mocking. Tobiah and Sanballat may carry on in this unholy alliance; but the faithful hearts are made to rejoice, for they now are within the walls of their beloved city. "It came to pass that when *all* our enemies heard of it [that the wall was finished], *all* the nations that were about us were afraid and were much cast down in their own eyes, and *they* perceived that this work was wrought *by our* God." (Chap. 6. 16.)

The moral sequence is obvious! God's people had already heard the holy law read; had heard it with deep desire and contrition of heart; they had wept together, stood together, praised and worshipped together; they had learned somewhat of its precious sense *given* by the priest and scribe, and now the priests, Levites, and singers come to hold the dedication of that wall which spiritually marked the place and people as separated and separate unto the holy name of Jehovah.

One would like to suggest here that (like unto the occasion when a platform was erected whereon the scribe Ezra stood to read the law to the people, that the true platform was that of *their spiritual state* at that time) what made the holding of the

dedication a real and joyous thing was the unique fact that the Levites were both *sought* and *brought* "out of *all* their places" to hold this joyous service. This involved moral conditions in the people—it was with desire they desired it, so to speak—the Levites responded to the desire of those who *brought* them, and so gave a livingness to their service with thanksgiving and with singing. Note, too, that the children of the singers were present; all that had understanding and could sing the Lord's song. There were homes for singers, "hamlets round about Jerusalem." (Ver. 28.) Then the priests and Levites *purify themselves* and people—the gates and walls. Though there was moral condition, the entrance into His gates with praise ever demands this! "Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people."

Holy conditions thus brought to pass, Nehemiah brings the princes of Judah upon the wall in two great choirs and processions. Things proceed! After opposition there is spiritual advancement. Holiness maintained must ever thus find its true issue. Things are being equalised, for half the processions go one way, one choir with each half—for a second choir went in the opposite direction upon the wall, "even unto the *broad wall*," a place suggestive of holy liberty and connected with a twofold witness as to separation. It may be helpful here to note that Ezra, both priest and scribe, went before the choir—the priests and singers lead—whilst the prophet brings up the rear in spiritual comeliness: "I *after* them." He had brought the mind of God to them, and now he guards the rear in holy watchfulness and humility!

At the fountain gate they went up by the stairs

of David. Once David went up weeping : his eyes were as a fountain of tears, but he reached the top, and that meant the zenith of his joy : “ Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” They played on the musical instruments of David at *the ascent of the wall*. What could the praise be likened unto when they reached the top of *the broad wall*, when they beheld the towers and reached even the sheep gate ? The fountain gate would lead to verdant pasturage, and the sheep gate gives liberty to the sheep to move in and out. How suggestive of David’s history ! Called from sheep-keeping to shepherd His people Israel, to lead them by green pastures. To lead them, to defend them, to feed them ; and also to go before the ark and dance with all his spiritual might before Jehovah !

The stairs of David, one would submit, are as of the steps which were David’s as the man after God’s heart. “ At the *ascent* of the wall *above* the house of David,” suggests that which is ours, and which even David could not reach—the Spirit not having yet been given to indwell His people—and yet so transcending is God’s grace, like a psalm of his reminds us, we “ go from strength to strength,” every one appears in *Zion before* God. Praise ascends as we ascend and grow in spiritual stature. How blessed for us in separation of heart to ascend and find delight in the breadth of the wall, and then, like the second choir, to stand still ; to offer, as they all did, great sacrifices, and to rejoice greatly, “ for God had made them to rejoice with great joy.” Households rejoiced too : “ the women and the children rejoiced.”

What rejoicing came to pass by playing on the musical instruments of David the man of God ! the

man who by his playing could calm the spirit of a Saul; or make his harp, an instrument of ten strings, vibrate for the delight of God—a type of Christ singing in the assembly. This at the ascent of the wall, above the house of David, even to the *water gate eastward*. May we rise to it! the place where the people heard with such deep joy the reading of God's holy law and received its blessed meaning. May we hear it! the place where their souls were refreshed from its blessed flood-gates. May we know it more! He would give us to drink of the fountain of the water of life freely. The sheep enter at the sheep gate, and go in and out and find pasture. And at the fountain gate what joy upsprings so that we may ascend in spirit. But what resounding praise at the water gate eastward goes upward, "for the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off"—eastward, in all the joy and delight of the sunrising of God's unchanging love.

May we know the joy of building the wall, dedicating it, and standing in the joy of triumph on it; and then to stand, thus morally constituted, in the house of God—as Israel returned from the captivity rejoicing with such joy that their praises were heard afar off. So may we give forth a testimony, and sound forth His praises in this our remnant day, delighting in the Lord, and in a spiritual way dedicating the wall of separation for Him.

R. E.

THE BIBLE.—EZEKIEL 33-39.

WITH chapter 33 we enter upon a new section of Ezekiel's prophecy. The detail of the chapter once more reminds us of a similarity to John's writings.

Individual conduct was to be the question, not that of the nation as a whole, just as in Revelation 2 and 3 the overcomer is spoken of when the church as a whole has failed. The present state of each man counted. Mere reputation as to what had been was of no account if the present state was wrong. Moreover, Ezekiel was a watchman.

At the news of the city being smitten, Ezekiel is no longer dumb. This is particularly to be noted as shewing the character of his prophecy. It was not a moral appeal to his contemporaries, as we have seen in chapter 24, but a solemn declaration of judgment to a rebellious people. The prophet's words, however, were like a lovely song; there was no real result. (Vers. 31, 32.)

In chapter 34 Ezekiel pronounces woe on the *shepherds*. They had merely considered for themselves, using their very position as a means of self-gratification. Their failure gives a dark background upon which stands out in relief the glory of Jehovah, as the One who would search out His flock and appoint one Shepherd over them, of whom David was a type.

In this connection mount Seir is judged. A perpetual hatred had marked mount Seir, which had rejoiced at Israel's calamity and which, therefore, would meet with corresponding judgment.

The next two chapters (36 and 37) tell us how God will come in for His own name's sake and recover His people Israel. As He had scattered them, so He would gather and bring them back to their own land (vers. 16-23), working in them and morally purifying their souls, giving them His Spirit. They would be His people and He would be their God. (Vers. 24-32.) It is this passage the Lord refers to when speaking to

Nicodemus. (John 3.) Needless to say that the fulfilment of this is still future. No past recovery of the remnant (though accompanied by great mercy in Ezra's or Nehemiah's day) answered to this. In fact the ten tribes were not restored then.

Chapter 37, under the figure of the valley full of dry bones, shews how God will nationally revive His people in His sovereign mercy, bringing them up, as it were, from graves. (Compare Dan. 12. 2.) No longer would they be two nations (that is, the ten tribes and the two) but one, with one King, one Shepherd, Jehovah's sanctuary being in their midst. (Ver. 28 ; compare Zech. 11. 7-14.)

When Israel is established in their land, recovered in the mercy of God, there will be a final effort of the enemy to destroy what is of God on earth. (Chap. 38. 8, etc.) It is important to notice that Gog and Magog (the enemy) come up after Israel is restored and in the land. This makes it quite clear that it is not the "Beast," the last representative of the Roman power, that is referred to. The Beast, together with Antichrist, persecute the remnant of the seed of the woman *before* they know deliverance. Here in Ezekiel 38 the enemy attacks *after* both Judah and Israel are recovered, and makes the last onslaught before the peaceful settlement consequent on Christ's return. Christ will first reign as David, conquering enemies, and then as Solomon, as king of peace. Here it is a northern enemy, that is, north of Palestine. (Chap. 38. 15.) What place will Russia have in this ? God's glory will be among the nations through His judgment. (Chap. 39. 7.)

M. W. B.

MOSES—DEUTERONOMY.

THE Book of Deuteronomy is unique in respect of its writer. The stately diction, the firm utterance, the flowing verse, come from the mind and pen of a man in his hundred and twentieth year, prime still in intelligence and vigour. The experience of a prince in Pharaoh's court, the long years of a desert, exiled life, the patient journey with the people of God through the wilderness has not elevated, distressed or discouraged him; yea, the very variety of the way of God with him has ripened his judgment, established his mind, and strengthened his heart in the knowledge of God; it has enabled him to estimate what is of consequence and precious to God.

In his haste and annoyance he had said, "Ye rebels"; but in the quiet repose of God's holy presence, in the acquaintance of what God thought of His people, he could say, "Yea, he loved the people, all his saints are in thy hand." Nothing trite, needless or stale is there in all that long rehearsal of the ways of God with His people from mount Horeb unto mount Nebo, the top of Pisgah over against Jericho. From his words did the Lord Himself quote, "It is written"; words incumbent on man, words of power over every intelligence in the universe. Satan by those words was defeated, and the fiat of God from the mouth of Him who lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God, silenced the adversary of God and man.

Deuteronomy, of the five books of Moses, was thus shewn to be the smooth stone selected by the true David, effective in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Wondrous consideration that man, the especial subject of God's creatorial power, into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life, should only truly live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God! And the Book of Deuteronomy shews the spiritually natural result in one who lives by that word.

What insight into the purposes of God is manifested by the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the sons of Israel! The patriarch Jacob had blessed his sons in view of the principles connected with the house of God, with which he was especially acquainted. Moses speaks of eternal purposes of blessing in the mind of God for man before time began, entered upon now by the power of the Holy Ghost, to find their display in the world to come, and their issues in eternity. His song celebrates God's power to carry into effect His will; his blessing the certainty of God's purpose being accomplished. His sublime poetry rises to its height in his acquaintance with the mind of God, in words comparable to the wondrous Epistle to the Ephesians by another man of God, the Apostle Paul. Beginning at Reuben, sonship, his prophetic verse flows in the divine truth connected with that wondrous eternal blessing.

In the light of the New Testament, how true the word, "There arose no prophet in Israel like Moses, whom Jehovah had known face to face." And Israel, having lost the place they had in God's favour, the words of Moses become the inheritance of the assembly of God, composed of Jew and Gentile.

L. O. L.

CAUGHT AWAY?

OH, the rapture of that moment !
Oh, the triumph of that morn !—
Hope held fast through deepest sorrows,
Faith beheld its glorious dawn !

Hearts that cling around His promise
Of that home—those mansions fair—
Count the rolling years but moments,
For His part and place they share !

HE the faithful word hath spoken
[How He draws our hearts along],
Is the supper not the token,
When He leads our triumph-song ?

“ I will come—not leave as orphans ”
All bereft—and keep the tryst,
Till the moment when I take you
Where the Father's joys exist !

Now He leadeth to the Father ;
Soon He'll come into the air,
Where the mighty number gather
Ere they see that home so fair !

Oh, the rapture of that moment—
Caught away to yonder air,
Gaze on Him, on Love Transcendent,
Joy and wonder past compare !

Him who bore with me so wayward,
Him who all my sorrows bore ;
Yes, for me He drank the wormwood,
Ransomed me for evermore !

Caught away ? Oh, wondrous rapture !
Come, Lord, come—oh, bring that day ;
All our hearts still more encapture,
Come, Lord, come—oh, come away !

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*What a moment ! But a moment !
Shall this year, Lord, pass away
Ere Thou bring'st that day of gladness,
When to Thee we're caught away ?*

R. E.