

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.

GUIDANCE.

THERE are moments in every life when, in perplexity as to the right way, there is a consciousness of the need of guidance. While there is light and direction for every believer, it is obvious that all are not guided, for so many miss the right path. It is, therefore, a matter for serious inquiry as to whom guidance is given and how it is obtained.

The instances of guidance in the scriptures are both instructive and encouraging, and shew that, if certain principles are observed, guidance is given and the right path is found. One of the earliest examples is Abraham, to whom God had said, "Get thee out of thy country . . . unto a land *that I will shew thee.*" God undertook to be his Guide, but before Abraham experienced this he had to act in

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH,

for it is recorded that "by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out . . . OBEYED; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." How truly he was guided is proved by the abundant blessing of God that he experienced in that path.

It is not, therefore, surprising that Abraham's servant, who was sent to seek a wife for Isaac, should recognise his need of guidance and seek it from God, for he had been under the influence of his master. At that critical moment, when the great decision

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had to be made, as he stood at the well, he disclosed the spirit of

PRAYERFUL DEPENDENCE,

which was so pleasing to God that “before he had done speaking” the answer was given and Rebecca came to him. He acknowledged this afterwards by saying, “I being in the way, the Lord led me.” It is, perhaps, the most simple and yet the most important lesson to learn, if we desire to be guided by God, that if we are “in the way” of God’s will and pray with confidence in Him, we shall most assuredly secure His guidance.

* * * * *

When God had brought His people out of Egypt and they had to cross a trackless desert—which was nothing but a howling wilderness, without roads or landmarks—they were entirely dependent upon God for guidance. It was said, “They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in . . . then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble . . . and he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.” In another song celebrating His goodness it is said, “He guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.” They had the pillar of cloud which was to them the symbol of

THE DIVINE PRESENCE.

It made the path so simple, for when the cloud was taken up they journeyed, and in the place where the cloud abode there they pitched their tents; so “at the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed.” The secret of guidance for them was the single eye upon the cloud. Had any one of them left

GUIDANCE.

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the cloud and his brethren, he would have found himself in the desert without a guide and without any resources. To enjoy guidance it was necessary to keep with the cloud and in the company of God's people. This is a striking figure of how much guidance is connected with

WALKING TOGETHER

with God's people.

* * * * *

Another important principle as to guidance is found in the experience of Daniel. As one of the captive princes of Judah in Babylon, longing for deliverance, he realised the hopelessness of their position unless God opened a door of escape and guided them. So he began to search the holy writings to get the mind of God; then he wrote, "I Daniel, understood by books . . . and I set my face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes."

We cannot expect to find the way out of the world—the modern Babylon—with all its confusion and strife of tongues unless we, like Daniel, value

THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE

and set our face Godward. Then we shall prove that "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

* * * * *

We may, however, have to wait for guidance. It is not always the pleasure of God to give an immediate answer to our prayers. When the princes came to Jeremiah in chapter 42 saying, "Pray for us unto the Lord thy God . . . that the Lord thy God may shew us the way," and Jeremiah said, "I will pray

unto the Lord your God according to your words," "It came to pass *after ten days* that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah." It would be a time of testing for the prophet, for no doubt the princes would be impatient to get an answer. So we have to learn the principle of

PATIENT WAITING

for the word from the Lord.

* * * * *

What untold sorrow was caused by the princes of Israel in the days of Joshua because they "asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord," but acted, without guidance, in making a league with the Gibeonites. This calls attention to the solemn truth that human wisdom cannot be trusted, but that we must seek

DIVINE COUNSEL.

We need to judge our motives when asking for guidance, for it is so easy to make up our minds to take a certain course, and then pray about it, hoping thereby to secure the Lord's sanction.

Sometimes, however, it is not necessary to pray for guidance. If there is a clear and definite answer in the scriptures to the difficulty, then we can act on that authority with confidence. For instance, it would not be suitable to ask God to guide a believer as to whether he could enter into partnership with an unbeliever. The word of God is so clear that, instead of praying for guidance in such a case, the scripture should be obeyed without question, though it would be well to pray for courage and grace to do so.

If these principles are observed, we can count upon the fulfilment of the promise, "THE LORD SHALL GUIDE THEE CONTINUALLY, AND SATISFY THY SOUL."

F. S. M.

A WORD TO BACKSLIDERS.

ONE great evidence of life according to Genesis 1. 21 is *movement*. "Every living creature that moveth." Hence with those in whom God has wrought by the Holy Spirit this wonderful feature of life is seen. For we have been born again of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter 1. 23.) What follows on this in chapter 2. 4 is movement: "to whom coming, as unto a living stone." Our hearts have been attracted to Christ and led to follow Him.

This has to be maintained continually. For we read of those in Galatians 5. 7 who moved well, but were stopped. Satan, the enemy of souls, is ever seeking to prevent us from moving on, just like an enemy seeking to hinder the movements of troops on the battlefield. Having secured this, his first effort, he then finds us an easy prey to draw back again into the world. The thought of backsliding is very prominent in the Book of Jeremiah, especially in chapters 2 and 3. I would earnestly commend this book to every one who feels at all cold at heart towards their Lord, or who finds that the appeals of the world are gaining hold on them. But what I desire especially to draw your attention to is a well-known man in the Book of Genesis named Lot. For he illustrates in a very touching way a backslider.

Lot moved out with Abram in Genesis 12, and all went well until chapter 13 after they had gone down to Egypt in the time of famine. There is no doubt that Lot was a believer up to a point, for in 2 Peter 2. 7, 8 he is called a righteous man and just. His soul was vexed by the filthy conversation of the wicked.

But the test came when in Genesis 13. 10 he *looked* towards the well-watered plains of Jordan and pitched his tent towards Sodom. O fellow believer, beware of *looking* towards the world! The first thing Eve did in Genesis 3 was to *look* at the forbidden tree. Alas, everything in the world is arranged to catch the eye! Satan works on this member more than any other. "The lust of the eye" has overcome godly saints such as David. How important then that verse in Proverbs 4. 25, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." Job said he made a covenant with his eyes. Often a professing Christian has become a backslider through strong drink. Hence the warning in Proverbs 23. 31, "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

There never was a day when evil was so glaring and so utterly void of shame. Often the eye is caught by its very startling shamelessness. An imprint is received on the mind, and often before we are aware of it the flesh is feeding on it. How precious are two lines of a well-known hymn :

" Jesus, Thou art enough
The mind and heart to fill."

To return to Lot, he soon finds himself in Sodom and involved in its conflict, for depend upon it that inso-much as we dwell in the world, we too must come under its judgments. Hence the call in Revelation 18. 4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of *her plagues*." Lot is delivered from the battle by faithful Abraham. (Gen. 14. 16.) But, alas, he goes back again, and in

chapter 19 the crisis is reached ! God has taken account of the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah, and is about to visit them with destruction. Lot and his family are there, and faithful Abraham this time intercedes with God for the city. Chapter 19 is a terrible picture. Read it feelingly, and if *you* are a backslider may it melt you even to tears. Verse 9 is very sad, as shewing the way Lot had been drawn into the very heart of that wicked city. As the men say, "This fellow came in to *sojourn*, and he will needs be a *judge*." In verse 7 he even calls them brethren. Perhaps one is reading this who is keeping company with a worldly companion in hope of winning them for Christ. Take care, for they will most probably draw you into a false position where you will be like Samson shorn of his locks. And like Lot in verse 14 when he spoke to his sons-in-law, he was as one that mocked. He had not been able to control his own house, and his daughters that were married had evidently ungodly husbands, and they are left in Sodom to be destroyed. He even suggested in verse 8 sacrificing two of his daughters to the filthy lust of the Sodomites, so low had he sunk. But God intervenes, and Lot, his wife and two daughters are hurried out of the doomed city.

Yet this is not the end of the sad story. His wife has not learned full obedience, her heart is evidently in Sodom. She looks back and is smitten by the hand of God. The Lord Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife." (Luke 17. 32.) And even after Lot's merciful deliverance, his two daughters fall into disgrace. What a sad end indeed for one who commenced so brightly and boldly. For it is the *end* that counts. Abraham's course is onward and his end blessed. Then let us all take warning from this sad history of Lot.

I would just refer again to the Book of Jeremiah before closing. In chapter 2. 19 it reads, "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." Again in chapter 3. 13, 14, "Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God. . . . Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord." The well-known parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 is another beautiful example of how God receives one who has gone astray, and it also serves to shew the bitter sorrow the backslider brings upon himself in a course of self-will and sin. Let the language of any backslider be, "I will arise, and go to my father."

There is just one other point it is important to draw attention to. Proverbs 14. 14 says, "A backslider in *heart* shall be filled with his own ways." Do we not all need to search our *hearts* as to whether backsliding has not already begun there? And as before God we can say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart." (Psa. 139. 23.)

W. J. W.

"AS A TALE THAT IS TOLD."

(Psa. 90. 9.)

HOW few of us really feel that "we spend our years as a tale that is told." Yet it is so! Every chapter, every line, every word of our life's record has a bearing *upon the whole*. A continuous thread runs through it. It is not full of short stories! The whole tale will come out ere long—"We must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ." What kind of tale will be told *there* of our history *here*?

S. J. B. C.

THE BIBLE—HOSEA IV.-VII.

IN the prophecy of Hosea moral unfaithfulness and corruption are frequently used as the figures of unfaithfulness to God and spiritual corruption, as we have already noticed in chapters 1-3. (Compare James 4. 4.)

The main thought in chapter 4 is that because of this unfaithfulness and the lack of the knowledge of God, Israel would be rejected and no longer be a priestly nation to Jehovah. (Ver. 6.) In Exodus 19 we read that God had proposed that Israel should be a kingdom of priests, but this was only possible if they obeyed His voice. The tribe of Levi which, in contrast to the mass of Israel, proved itself faithful to God, was selected as the priestly tribe instead of all the firstborn of Israel. But now all links of that kind were to cease. God would reject the whole nation; it should be no longer priestly. There was the entire absence of what was right (ver. 1) and the presence of what was wrong and corrupting.

All were in a like condition; it was useless for one to rebuke another. The spirit of whoredom had caused them to err. God would leave them alone. Nothing could be worse than this. For a time there was yet hope for Judah (ver. 15), but in the next chapter Judah falls too. (Chap. 5. 5.) Beth-aven means house of naught or vanity. How different from house of God (Beth-el).

In such conditions another evil is developed. Instead of turning to God they had turned to man. (Ver. 13.) God would go away until they acknowledged their sin (ver. 15), His discipline would be for this end. (See also Song of Songs 3. 1; 5. 6.)

In chapter 6 the prophet voices a suited utterance for those whose hearts might be touched by his solemn message. But their state was not up to this ; their goodness soon passed away. God's words would be a judgment and would slay them. (Chap. 6. 5.) To be merely religious was of no account ; God desired mercy and the knowledge of God, as the Lord twice remarks in Matthew. (Matt. 9. 13 ; 12. 7.) God would have healed, but fresh discovery of iniquity prevented His doing so. (Chap. 7. 1.) And added to their corrupt condition was insensibility—"he knoweth it not" (chap. 7. 9), and in their pressure they did not cry to God nor turn to Him !

What a condition is presented in these chapters, 4-7. Israel is rejected from being a priestly nation ; the condition of departure was general ; God would leave them till they acknowledged their transgressions ; any move towards recovery soon evaporated ; God required reality. Their condition moreover was not only corrupt, they were totally insensible to their state.

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples : and they are written for our admonition."
(1 Cor. 10. 11.)

M. W. B.

OUR OUTLOOK.

(2 SAM. 6. 11-16, 20-23 ; ACTS 20. 7-12 ; DAN. 6. 10, 11, 19-23.)

IT is a great thing to be a gleaner to-day—to glean from the scriptures, also amongst the people of God. It was said of Ruth that her hap was to light on part of the field that belonged to Boaz. How we should love to be found gleaning in that part of the

field that belongs to Christ, that is, amongst the saints. You will notice that in each of these scriptures the word window or windows occurs ; and I would like to ask myself as well as my brethren, "What is our outlook ? "

In the first scripture we find that the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household because of the ark of God. What a blessed privilege is open to us to-day to invite the Lord into our houses ! One would covet that there may be found conditions with us that we might have the Lord in our houses. What blessing is in store for those who take up this exercise and give the Lord His true place there ! It is the ark of God that is spoken of here, and one loves to link it with Luke's gospel, where we see that lowly, humble Man moving in and out amongst men, Who coming into Zacchæus' house could say, "This day is salvation come to this house." It was told David that the Lord had blessed the house of Obed-edom, and he at once sets about to bring the ark home to its rightful place. With what holy joy his innermost being was moved as he sees the ark coming into the city of David ! It says, "He danced before the Lord with all his might."

But we find an element there not in sympathy with David's movements. Michal, Saul's daughter, looks out at a window and "despised him in her heart." It is a very serious consideration for us all that there is an element in us that would belittle Christ. Saul was the man after the flesh, the people's choice, and what we find is that there is no sympathy there for David or for the ark. The Spirit of God makes a point of drawing our attention to the fact that Michal the daughter of Saul has no child unto the day of her death. The Lord would not perpetuate that order,

so in the cross of Christ man after the flesh has been removed completely from before God.

One would like to connect the ministries of Peter, Paul and John with these three scriptures. As we all know, Peter in his ministry has the kingdom in view, so David brings before us the one who subdues every enemy and reigns supreme. It has been well said that there is only one will in the kingdom, and that is the will of God. If we exercise our own wills we shall surely be marked by the features of Michal, who could despise David.

In referring to the scripture in the Acts we find the disciples come together to break bread, and there sat at the window a youth named Eutychus, and as Paul was long preaching he went to sleep and fell down and was taken up dead. One would appeal to the young people among us to-day when there is so much attraction in the world. You may be breaking bread and be found amongst the people of God, and yet your eyes and your heart might be in the world. What a sad position for one to be in, in spite of the fact that there were many lights in the upper chamber. Much light, through grace, has been committed to us, and one would raise the question as to what use we are making of it. Thank God there was one there, in the beloved apostle, that could go down and with priestly hands embrace that young man and recover him! One would covet in these days to listen to Paul. It says, "He talked till the break of day." The day is about to break. Happy are they who give heed to Paul's ministry. The Lord's supper has been confirmed to us through him together with the truth of the assembly that our affections may be kept in living movement after Christ. You will remember when he was ship-

wrecked he said, "Sirs, you should have hearkened unto me . . . and not to have gained this harm and loss." He speaks in Timothy of some who turned away from him and made shipwreck of faith.

Now to touch briefly on the scriptures in Daniel, it says his windows were opened in his chamber toward Jerusalem. One would ask each reader, Are our windows opened towards Jerusalem? You say, What do you mean? I mean this, Are our affections large enough to embrace all that belongs to Christ on earth to-day? It may be said, "But Jerusalem was in ruins." So is the church publicly, but what one would hold to is the fact that in our affections we hold everything intact for God.

As we all know, John is the last writer. He writes after the breakdown, and his ministry is what abides to the end. He tells us that the new Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God. There is nothing lost with John, no broken nets, everything is preserved right through. Daniel is spoken of as a man greatly beloved, and similar words are used about John himself. He is spoken of as the disciple whom Jesus loved. The church's origin and character are heavenly. In Galatians we read, "Jerusalem above is free, which is our mother," then in Hebrews 12, "Ye have come . . . to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem."

One beautiful feature about Daniel is that he prayed as aforetime. He did not merely turn to God because he was in a difficulty, but it was his custom to pray. One loves to think of the blessed Lord in this connection, beloved. It says in Luke, it was His custom to go to the mount of Olives, that place of holy retreat, where He had sweet intercourse with the Father. The

secret of Daniel's confidence lay in the fact that he served God continually. The king says, "Is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" His answer is beautiful. He says, "*My God* hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths." He had that sweet and secret intercourse with God that kept him above all the trial he was passing through. One would desire to have a more intimate link with God and His beloved people, and that Christ might have His true place in all our hearts.

P. H. D.

THE FEET OF JESUS ;

THE HANDS OF JESUS ; THE HEART OF JESUS ; THE
SIDE OF JESUS ; AND THE HEAD OF JESUS.

(LUKE 7. 36-38, 48 ; 14. 15 ; 8. 54-56 ; 10. 33-35 ; JOHN 20, 19, 20 ;
(PSA. 21. 1-6.)

THE FEET OF JESUS is where we all must start to have to do with the Lord Jesus as a poor, guilty sinner, just as this dear woman did. Each one of us must start there. Should there be any here who have not known the blessedness of forgiveness of sins I would just like to linger over the feet of Jesus. This woman had heard something of Him because she comes prepared with a box of ointment. Her desire was to get to the feet of Jesus. She virtually says by her act, "How beautiful . . . are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings." (Isa. 52. 7.) She does not dare to stand *before* Him, but she does stand *behind* Him weeping, and washed His feet with her tears—pouring out her brokenhearted condition at the precious feet of Jesus.

THE FEET OF JESUS.

The Lord lets her do just as she likes. He allows her to wash His feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head. She then takes a box of ointment and anoints His feet.

Simon, who had been watching, says to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner" (ver. 39), but Jesus knew her and He would not drive her away. So if I am speaking to some here who have not yet come to the feet of Jesus, I can say you will find a welcome there. He knows all about you ; His heart is such that if you see yourself to be a sinner and take your place at His feet, He will say to you, as He did to this poor woman, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

It is a great thing to start right, and there is no better time to start than to-day. Jesus has come down for you, right into this very scene. This poor woman anoints those precious feet of Jesus, He who came into this world for her. You learn something of His precious feet if you start in the seventh chapter of Luke's gospel. That is where you start, and start well, by taking your true place as a guilty sinner, deserving only condemnation, but instead of condemnation you get blessing. One likes to go back to the moment when one first came to the parting of the ways. One felt that Satan was making an immense bid for one's soul, but that Jesus was making an immense bid too. Thank God for being able to refuse the world ! Start early in this pathway of grace by getting to the feet of Jesus, for there you will hear those wonderful words, "Thy sins are forgiven." There are millions of souls He has forgiven—ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Millions is not a

scriptural word, but thousands is. That is the first setting I wished to bring before you—the feet of Jesus.

THE HANDS OF JESUS.

The next two scriptures we read were connected with the hands of Jesus. One loves to think of the hands of Jesus going out to men who are the objects of His compassion. As He was about to enter the city of Nain He met this funeral procession of the only son of a widow. The heart of Jesus, full of compassion, went out towards her, and He touched the bier, and said, “Young man, I say unto thee, arise, and he that was dead sat up and began to speak, and He delivered him to his mother. In the next scripture I read He came into the house where the young maid lay dead, and He took her by the hand and said, “Maid, arise . . . and she arose straightway.” What I want to suggest is that as the Lord raised this young man and the young maid to life, delivering them from the power of death under which they lay, so He can do the same for every one here. Although He is no longer here “in flesh,” yet by the power of His hand He will raise you above this dead scene through which we are passing. The hand of Jesus is powerful enough to do this for every one that trusts Him.

I want specially to say in connection with this present scene, that the sentence of death is upon all that is around us, the whole world lies under it; but how precious and blessed it is to know the power of the hand of Jesus to support and raise you above the whole power of this scene upon which death lies. You can look the world in the face and say to it, “You have not got a pleasure in your world that is good enough for me; I have in Him a power that can

THE FEET OF JESUS.

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raise young men and maids into the sphere of life." Jesus can meet the case, whatever it is, and can hand the young man back to his mother. It was not sufficient to say, "Young man, arise." "He handed him back to his mother" is suggestive of having character formed. Character is taken from the mother, and I have no doubt that that dear mother cherished her son in a new and living way. She would look upon him with great joy; and her heart would be turned to the One who raised her son from the dead. Oh, the joy of heart of the parents who know that their children have had to do with Jesus!

THE HEART OF JESUS.

Now we will pass on to Luke 10. You do not exactly get the word heart there, but I am going to suggest that it comes in when you get the young man who fell among thieves. It was not that the priest and the Levite would not help him, it was because they could not help him. They could have told him that he should have kept the ten commandments, but that would not have done him the slightest good. "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, *and took care of him*, and on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said to him, *Take care of him.*" Have we not here the heart of Jesus shewn? Many of us have fallen among thieves, and our deadly wounds of distrust in God have been healed by the Good Samaritan, for that is what He came to do. The great work that He came to do was to undo the work of the devil in

instilling into the heart of man distrust of God. He did not say one word to the man as to his folly, but His heart went out to him and met him in this dire condition, and did for him all that was needed.

If you want a proof of the love of God, you will find it in God giving His own beloved Son. As you know, Satan suggested to our first parents that God was holding back something that was good for them, but the incoming of Jesus into this world is a definite proof that God was not holding back that which was good for man. I cannot say much as to my faithfulness to Jesus, but I can say something of His faithfulness to me. He has healed my broken heart, and has bound up my deadly wounds; He has taken me to the inn, and there by the Holy Spirit He takes care of me. The heart of Jesus is for you, and all that lies behind it—the love of the heart of God.

THE SIDE OF JESUS.

We have His side in the twentieth chapter of John's gospel. It is a chapter which is very well known. Why is it so well known? It is because of the side of Jesus. When the Lord appeared in the midst of His own on that morning and evening after He rose from the dead, He first of all meets Mary Magdalene, and then He appears to His own and shews unto them His hands and His side. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." Dear young friends, let me suggest to you, first of all the Lord would have you to know the sweetness of His precious feet that came to meet your need, and the power of His hands that were nailed to the cross, and the faithfulness of His heart that yearns for you. But that is not all, you can find a place at His side, which was pierced

by the spear of a soldier. If you love the Lord Jesus He would have you know what that side means. The side which was pierced for you, that you might know nearness to Him. It is very striking that John's gospel is the only gospel which records the side of Jesus being pierced. That is, the death of Jesus in John's gospel is not exactly His dying for guilty sinners, but the death of Jesus in John's gospel is the dying in love to God His Father, His dying in love for His own because He loved them. He loved God with all His heart, He loves you, His own if you are a believer, and would have you ever with Himself where no distance can exist.

HIS HEAD.

That blessed Person is now at the right hand of God. God has placed a crown of pure gold upon His head. Whose head? The head of Jesus. God has placed that same blessed Person at His own right hand in glory and crowned Him with glory and honour. That is where He is now. I know many true Christians who only seem to get as far as the cross. They cherish His death, and there they seem to stop. We have not only His feet, we have His hands, His heart and His side, and it is in order that we may be set free in our spirits to contemplate Him. Where is He now? At God's right hand. I am sure every heart that loves Him says that He is worthy.

Before I conclude, I do not think the word would be complete without reminding you that before His feet could be for me, those feet were nailed to Calvary's cross; before I could know anything of the power of His holy hands, those hands were nailed to the cross of Calvary. When you think of His heart, you hear Him say, "Reproach has broken my heart." When

you think of His side, think of how the soldier took his spear and plunged it into the side of Jesus ; and then you think of His holy head which man crowned with a crown of thorns. Never again will those feet or hands be nailed to Calvary's cross. Never again will Jesus have to say, "Reproach has broken my heart," and never again will man be allowed to crown the holy head of Jesus with a crown of thorns. God has now placed Him at His own right hand in glory and has crowned that holy head with a crown of pure gold—glory and honour.

An incident happened when I was in the house of a dear brother. His little daughter was very interested in Christ, and one day I happened to pick up a little note-book belonging to her ; "May I look at this ?" I asked. She did not answer, so I opened the book and began to read. Great was my joy when in it I read, "His feet, His hands, His heart, His side, His head," and underlined in red ink were the words, "and all for me." Dear friends, His feet are for you ; His hands are for you ; His heart is for you ; His side is for you, that you may contemplate with joy the preciousness of the Lord whose head is now crowned with glory.

G. S.

THE NEW YEAR.

THE New Year lies before us—
 Like a sheet of trackless snow,
 Lord, make us wise to tread it,
 For every step will shew !

S. J. B. C.

HOPE

HOW wonderful is the assurance of eternal bliss in God's coming world of glory which is possessed and enjoyed by those who have faith in God! What a contrast there is between the outlook of a believer in Jesus, who can look into eternity with the joyful and certain anticipation of blessing with Christ in heaven, and that of an unbeliever who is "without Christ . . . having no hope, and without God in the world," to whom the thought of the future can only be "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation."

But God has revealed Himself as a Saviour-God; and in the death of Jesus, His beloved Son, God's love has been expressed and His righteousness declared; so that those who have believed in Jesus have this certain hope, based on the authority of the word of the living God Himself.

The apostle could, therefore, write to the Christians in Rome, "Now *the God of hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may *abound in hope*, through the power of the Holy Spirit."

There are many beautiful features of the Christian's expectations, of which perhaps the most significant is that it is a

SURE HOPE.

The blank despair of the unbeliever without hope in the presence of death, and the dread of "after this the judgment," are displaced by the quiet assurance known by those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold

upon the hope set before us : which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil ; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.”

It is well that each should challenge his heart whether this sure hope is possessed. Is your eternal future all bright and certain ? Can you face eternity with its tremendous issues in the knowledge that Jesus the Forerunner has entered in for you ? The greatest hope that a person without God can cherish cannot reach beyond death, and is, therefore, of little value ; for hope that is death-shadowed can give no true satisfaction.

On the contrary, a Christian, even standing by the open grave of a loved one, “sorrows not as others, which have no hope,” notwithstanding that all earthly hopes concerning that one are ended. He can even say, “Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,” as the certain hope of resurrection sustains his spirit.

Death cannot hinder the realisation of the believer’s hope, which is based on the word, “Now is Christ risen up from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” It is the pleasure of God that His children should be the possessors of

LIVING HOPE

in contrast to the dying hope of the ungodly, so that the Christian says in an outburst of praise, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which . . . hath begotten us again unto a lively [or living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

The children of God are not filled with the dread of

judgment, nor the fear of an uncertain future, but in calm enjoyment can say, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . and *rejoice in hope* of the glory of God."

A trustworthy promise inevitably produces hope, and there is no promise more sure than the closing words of the Lord Jesus when He spoke to His own from heaven, "Surely I come quickly." Many who love Him to-day are waiting and watching for His return and are "looking for that

BLESSED HOPE

and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." This is the joyful outlook for all those who believe, for Jesus is coming to gather His own to Himself, not by death, but by that quickening shout which will raise the dead in Christ and change the living believers into His own likeness.

The effect of this upon the life and conduct of those who are watching for Jesus is very manifest, for "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." This

PURIFYING HOPE

will produce true separation of heart and ways from evil and defilement, so that we may "not be ashamed before him at his coming."

O may this hope our spirits cheer
 While waiting for our Saviour here,
 He'll quickly come again !
 O may our hearts expect that day,
 And to His word responsive say :
 "Come, Jesus, Lord, Amen."

F. S. M.

THE LORD OF GLORY.

(PSA. 19 ; MATT. 25. 1-13.)

WE were singing this afternoon of the Lord Jesus as the Lord of glory—"Lord of glory, ever on Thy household shine." I would like, the Lord helping me, to say a little about the Lord of glory ; we each one need to know Him in that way, especially in these closing days, for we are not at the beginning but at the end. God in His mercy has given His people certain landmarks so that they can understand when they are coming to the end of their journey. The parable in Matthew 25 speaks of a special moment in the church's history that the Lord described as midnight. Before that time it says they *all* (the wise as well as the foolish virgins) slumbered and slept. It is a solemn word to take home to our hearts ; no one is left out of that ; the real and the unreal, mere professors and true Christians, are included in that word *all*.

In that condition of things the midnight arrived, and the cry went forth, "Behold, the bridegroom." I understand the word *cometh* should not be there ; it is not found in the best manuscripts. It is perfectly true that He is coming, but if you read it in that way, "Behold, the bridegroom," your attention is centred upon the Person. He is coming, but the Holy Spirit would have you look to Him as the Bridegroom. The Holy Spirit has depicted a certain landmark in the history of the church, and that landmark has passed. You and I have come to the day when that cry has gone forth, "Behold, the bridegroom." If that cry had not gone forth, we should not be here together. That cry awakened the virgins and gathered Christians out from what is Babylonish and is coming under

judgment. We have to do with the results of that cry. It makes the Lord's coming very imminent, and I have no doubt that at the present time the Lord intervenes in a special way. When men fail and break down the Lord Himself takes things up.

We see how that comes out very much in the Gospel of Matthew, which deals with the Lord's governmental ways with His people. Matthew 18 speaks of a man who owed his lord a great debt, but he humbled himself and his lord forgave him. If you consider that scripture you will see that it refers to governmental forgiveness, not eternal forgiveness that we receive on conversion. It refers to the Lord's mercy and compassion. He had commanded that servant to be sold and all that he had, but on his humbling himself he forgave him. But what happens is that the man who had been forgiven shews no mercy to his fellow servant, and we find that others are distressed at the situation and they tell their master. That is a picture of the present moment. The time has come to turn to the Lord where men have failed in what has been committed to them. Thank God, He presents Himself as the One who has never failed, the One who abides faithful, and the One to whom all power belongs! And so the way in which He has revealed Himself in these closing days is as the Bridegroom, and if you come to consider the Bridegroom, it will help you to understand the Lord of glory.

Psalm 19 is very beautiful. What a contrast to the earth the heavens are; what a witness they are to the power of God. We see confusion coming in more and more with men on the earth. We see men breaking down and failing, but "the heavens declare the glory of God." There is no deviation or breakdown there.

The heavens are a solemn witness to men of God's faithfulness. Men can prepare their almanacs and tell you the exact minute when an eclipse of the sun will occur ; they can tell you when the sun will rise and set ; it is all perfectly true and regular, but how uncertain the things committed to men are, and how dark. It is the heavens that declare the glory of God, and the material heavens are only a figure of something spiritual. When the Holy Spirit speaks of a tabernacle for the sun, He would not occupy us with the material sun only, but He would occupy us with Jesus, God's own blessed Son ; He is the Bridegroom, the One who goes forth as a strong man to run a race. There is no weakness, failure, or breakdown with Him. "Behold, the bridegroom." That is what has gathered people out. We know men have failed in the gospel testimony and weakened it down just to meet the need of man and make people feel comfortable, but there is the Holy Spirit's work and that work is to call attention to the Bridegroom. "Behold, the bridegroom, go forth to meet him."

The Bridegroom is the One who has the bride. It is beautiful to see in John's gospel how John the Baptist is presented as a pattern servant. There was failure with John the Baptist as recorded in the other gospels, but in John's gospel he is shewn as a pattern servant—a pattern of one who is under the blessed guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit. In fact, he sets forth the way in which the Holy Spirit has come in divine love for the glory of Christ. And so he says when they come to him expecting him to be envious because all men were going to the Lord Jesus, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom ; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth

him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." It is the Bridegroom who has the bride. Everything is committed to Jesus. He is the only One worthy to receive those things. They speak of it in heaven; they say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." All those things men have sought after and fought for, and how they have proved their unworthiness to receive them. All belongs to Jesus now. The Holy Spirit has come in that wonderful way directing our attention to the Bridegroom. It is all for the glory of Christ, for His delight and satisfaction. And so John says, "He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." That is the true servant—one who is going down and passing off this scene. If you trace the history of the true servants of God, you see those who go down; they suffer and they have to pass out; their work comes to an end.

But then, what a wonderful thing, "Behold, the bridegroom." The one who has the bride is the Bridegroom, and we know that those who serve, rejoice not only in hearing the Bridegroom's voice and in being displaced as servants, but they rejoice in having their part in that which God speaks of as the bride—that which is for Christ. And so we see that the Holy Spirit speaks of a tabernacle for the sun which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoices as a strong man to run a race.

How do you stand with Him? Have you had to do with Him as Saviour? Have you received the

report ? When the day comes when the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in His wings, it will be too late if you have a vessel with no oil in it. God's testimony comes to us in the night-time—the night of the betrayal of Jesus—the time of His rejection. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of grace, has come, and what is the result ? There are those who are wise ; they have oil in their vessels ; they are not relying on themselves, because they have received something from God. The oil is that which sustains a light in this world—a light which is suitable for the coming of the Lord. What is that ? Love in movement ; that is what light is—active love—that which never fails and can never break down. The foolish virgins had light, but they could not sustain it. Light can only be sustained in the power of the Holy Spirit. Have you received the Holy Spirit ? Have you had a transaction with Christ ? The foolish virgins went to buy but it was too late. It is solemn to consider that there will be some sort of awakening which will be too late, but it is not too late now. It is the day of grace. And so we see how the Holy Spirit presents the blessed Lord Jesus as the Bridegroom in all His glory, strength and greatness.

C. M.

(To be continued.)

THE SHEPHERD—THE STONE.

“Thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel.” (Gen. 49. 24.)

THE thought of strength is associated with the shepherd. The shepherd and the stone are found together in the blessing of Joseph. Joseph was a shepherd, and became the firm support of his people. He was thus a type of Christ. Moses also led his flock to

the mount of God—to Horeb. The shepherd and rock are again found together. The flock would be secure and sheltered in the shadow of that great rock. Here the great sight of the burning and never-burnt thorn-bush was granted to Moses ; and the unconditional promise assured to him of the full salvation of his people.

Again, in David we have the thought of strength in his destroying the lion and the bear, and finally the overthrow of Goliath—this too with a stone.

A stone, unhewn with hands, strikes the feet of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, demolishes it and becomes a great mountain.

Peter had experience of the strength of the Son of the living God when sinking in the surging waters, he was grasped by the hand of Jesus, Omnipotent to save. Peter in his epistle speaks of the Shepherd of our souls ; the Stone, elect, precious, chosen of God. And the Son of God as He stands fearlessly facing His foes and tempters, speaks of Himself as the good Shepherd out of whose hands none should seize a single sheep. His Father had given them to Him, and no one could seize them out of His Father's hand. Being Man, He was the Shepherd, the strength of His sheep, He was able to take care of them. His Father, He being in manhood, was relatively greater than He ; yet He and the Father were one, not simply one in Godhead (as they were ever), but in will, purpose and action. From the hands of divine Omnipotence, who could seize one sheep given by the Father to the Son ?

Thus the thought of shepherd and stone go together, and finds its full expression in Jesus, the Son of God.

L. O. L.

GIDEON'S TWO SIGNS.

(JUDGES 6. 36-40.)

“**L**ORD, if Thou wilt save Israel by Thy servant,
Let there be dew upon the fleece alone ;
Set now Thy seal, Thy holy seal, upon me,
Send down Thy dew and claim me for Thine own.”

And it was so ; when he arose at daybreak,
Hasted to see if on the fleece were dew,
Thrust it together, wringing out the water,
Learnt from the sign what God would have him do.

“ Let not Thine anger, Lord, be hot against me,
Let me now prove Thee with the fleece once more :
May it be dry upon the fleece, I pray Thee,
And let the dew fall on the threshing-floor.”

And it was so ; once more Jehovah told him
That He would save His people from their foes,
Pour out a blessing, give them back their freedom,
Comfort their hearts and take away their woes.

Then, thus encouraged, Gideon went forward,
Learning by this more of the ways of God,
Never would he forget the solemn lesson,
Dry was the fleece when dew was on the sod.

What does it mean ? I hear some voices asking,
Why should the dew fall on the fleece alone ?
How could it be so very full of water,
When all the ground was dry and parched as stone ?

Come ye to Jordan, hark to John the Baptist !
Mark what he says, “ Behold the Lamb of God ! ”
See how the Spirit on that One descendeth—
Dew on the fleece, but dry upon the sod.

Jesus, the meek and lowly Man of Sorrows,
Hated, rejected, bruised and wounded sore,
He was the Lamb slain from the world's foundation—
See, see the fleece upon the threshing-floor.

THE SHINING TREES.

31

God's judgment fell upon the head of Jesus,
 There on the cross He bore the curse for all,
 Leaving for us the cup of endless blessing,
 Taking, Himself, the awful cup of gall.

Thus there is naught but blessing to be offered,
 Then why not come to Christ, who is the Door?
 He was forsaken when He bore sin's judgment,
 Dry was the fleece, and dew was on the floor!

G. D.

THE SHINING TREES.

JUST recently I was travelling by bus into the country on a stormy afternoon. It had been pouring with rain, and the countryside was shrouded in mist and gloom. Our road skirted a high ridge on which was a belt of woodland. I was gazing idly at the trees as we passed along, when suddenly their dull brown foliage was changed to living fire, and the whole belt of the wood shone with a golden radiance. The sun was hidden, but from somewhere up above a shaft of golden light had penetrated the clouds, and striking the ridge lit up the trees in this amazing manner.

Filled with wonder and pleasure at the sight, I was borne on my way thinking what a picture of the Lord's own people in this dark world. All around the gloom of sin and the clouds of ignorance and distrust of God, while Christ—our Sun—is hidden from sight. But we, like the trees on the ridge, have been illuminated with the light of His love, and should be luminous with "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." As Paul Gerhardt puts it:

"The sun that shines upon me is Jesus and His love,
 The fountain of my singing is deep in heaven above."

H. J. L.

JOY.

HOW attractive this sounds to every one. Whether young or old, male or female, all want to be happy. The world appears to offer joy to those who seek it, but, alas, it is not genuine! As it says in Proverbs 14. 13, "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Solomon sought most earnestly and diligently everywhere under the sun for joy. He says in Ecclesiastes 2. 10, "I withheld not my heart from any joy." Then in verse 11 he looks upon it all and says it is all vanity and vexation of spirit, or as it can be rendered, pursuit of the wind. There is *no* profit on this line under the sun. So that it is not a question of home life or national environments. Solomon tells us it does not exist *under the sun*.

On a placard in large letters the writer saw a little while ago the following words, "Wanted a recipe for happiness." This poor world has been planning, scheming, inventing and seeking in every possible way to devise a system yielding real joy, but after nearly six thousand years they have to own they are as far off as ever.

Yet the very first utterance from heaven—above the sun—to men in Luke 2 in heralding this wonderful dispensation in which we live is, "Good tidings of great joy," and it is to all people. Here, then, is the solution. It is to be found alone in Jesus, the Saviour. God's wonderful gospel presents Him to you. Have you trusted Him yet? My desire is to indicate from Psalm 32 some of the sign-posts along the path of true joy as set out here, for they all find their answer in those who are simply trusting in the precious Saviour and

the blessed God who gave Him. First we get in verses 1 and 2 the

JOY OF PEACE.

As it says, "Blessed [or happy] is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." God would give us all a good start on this road to happiness by clearing us once for all from the guilt of our sins and from their eternal consequences. Through the finished work of Jesus upon the cross, when His precious blood was shed, the claims of God have been fully met. God can now *righteously* justify all who believe. He has raised Jesus from the dead because the judgment of sin has been borne, and death could not hold Him. He was raised again the third day. So that He has not only settled the question of sin, but also of death, and a new life is now available in Him the other side of death. If God is satisfied with Jesus, what need can there be for any doubt or fear on the part of the believer in Him. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access . . . and rejoice." (Rom. 5. 1, 2.) Secondly, in verse 6 of the psalm before us we have the

JOY OF PRAYER.

We not only turn to God at the commencement for justification and peace, but we learn next to turn to Him *always*. This is prayer; the simple breathing of the heart to God. What joy this brings. All the trials and difficulties which once used to weigh us down and make us more miserable, now can even be used to increase our joy in God, for the believer walks by faith and not by sight, and when things are seemingly against us, there is more need for the exercise of faith,

and we feel even safer than when everything was pleasing and when no troubles were before us.

This verse tells us that even in the floods of great waters, our resources are in God. That is not only little troubles, but extreme pressure on every side. Then let us each make use of this wondrous resource in prayer ; not only morning and evening, but let the attitude of our heart be always in dependence upon God, although we cannot always get on our knees. Thirdly, in verse 7 we get the

JOY OF PRESERVATION.

“Thou art my hiding place ; thou shalt preserve me from trouble ; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.” This verse tells us of troubles we are preserved *from*. There are many things we are carried victoriously *through*. How often we seek things because they please us naturally. Our wills are at work, and the result is we bring trouble and sorrow upon ourselves. For the Lord loves us too much to allow us to go on in such a path without speaking to us. But if we are in the good of the joy of prayer and seek the Lord about everything, we are then brought into the good of this verse, and songs of deliverance will be ours. Songs are an indication of joy, and we would each have our own experience on this line.

Lastly, I wish to draw attention to the

JOY OF PROGRESS.

This is seen in verse 8. I do not mean natural pride or elation, or that we should go about telling others we were getting on well, but I believe the Lord would give us a sense in our souls of what this verse speaks, namely, divine teaching and guidance. We are living in days when much evil teaching is abroad, and many

HOUSEHOLD FIDELITY.

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are being caught by it. But for the simple soul who turns to God, He will teach us all things. The Holy Spirit is given to this very end. There is no question or exercise you may have to face but the solution is to be found in the Lord. What joy this is! How we can lift up our heads; not in pride or arrogance, but in the meekness of wisdom from above! Then, too, how great the joy of being divinely guided throughout our journey here! As it says of the children of Israel in Exodus 13. 22, "He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night." They did not always want to follow it, but there it was, a sure token of divine guidance.

The result of this path is found in the last verse of the psalm, "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." The three expressions indicate how our joy should increase: Be glad; rejoice; and shout for joy. We are not emotional enough. If we are a happy people, and we surely are if we are right in our souls, let us not be afraid of expressing it.

W. J. W.

HOUSEHOLD FIDELITY.

(JOSH. 24. 15; 1 CHRON. 17. 23-27; ACTS 16. 15; 1 COR. 16. 15.)

IN the four households of which we read in these scriptures we get a very definite attitude on the part of each regarding the claims of God. What a challenge we get in the words of Joshua, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." What an answer to it does Joshua himself give, "As for me and my house, *we will serve the Lord.*" These were no light words. They came from a true heart; from one who from the outset had set himself definitely in sympathy

with the rights of Jehovah in relation to His people ; one who had been governed by divine principles, the maintenance and continuation of which amongst the people of God was his great concern. He would lift up the standard against all that had, and would come in, in whole-hearted devotion to the Lord remain faithful *with his house*. Others may go after the gods beyond the river, may love the world and the things in the world, but here in this household was a clean spot where God's claims were recognised and the Lord would be served.

Then in David we have one who desired the blessing of God upon his house. David "sat before the Lord." And what wonderful impressions he got there, and he gives expression to the desires of his heart for his house, which is summed up so beautifully in those wonderful words, "With thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever." How the Lord delights to answer such desires with "the blessing of the Lord which maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow."

Then in Lydia we have one whose heart had been opened to receive the heavenly message brought by Paul, and she opens her house. In doing so she says, "If ye have judged me to be faithful," etc. She would be consistent with the character of the blessing she had received. She had been baptised *and her house*, and all now would be held in relation to the testimony. "Come in and abide"—permanent identification with the testimony is her one thought. What a stronghold that house would be !

Then in the house of Stephanas, what a wonderful example we have of devotion to the saints for service. No wonder the position at Corinth was held, in spite of all the inroads of the enemy, with such a household

SUDDEN CONVERSION.

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as that of Stephanas there. What a power for God such a household would be. There would be no party spirit formed there, no lowering of the standard, no compromise with evil. "Devoted themselves *to the saints* for service." Love to *all* the saints would mark them. What possibilities there are open to us on these lines. In a day of departure and outward ruin, to be set in whole-hearted relation to the testimony which has behind it to-day, as ever, all the power of God.

May we be set for it, and surely our desire is that we may know something of that which marked these four households of which we have written: first, the definite attitude and purpose of heart as seen in Joshua; secondly, the desire for the full and continuous blessing of the Lord as seen in David; thirdly, the complete identification with the testimony as seen in Lydia; and finally, the happy devotion to the saints (all the saints) for service that marked Stephanas.

L. E. S.

 SUDDEN CONVERSION.

HEARING of the serious illness of a young man whom I knew, but lived some distance away from, I felt impressed to go and see him. On reaching the house his sister took me to his room. He was greatly changed; I hardly knew him. Looking up he said, "Oh, what brings you here?" I replied, "I heard you were about leaving us and thought I would like to know if you were ready for the change." "Oh," said he, "I must stand the same chance as other people." "Well, you know," I said, "many other people will stand a very poor chance, don't you think it is a great thing to have the blessed assurance of

being with Christ, which is far better ? ” He said, “I don’t believe any one has that.” “Well,” I replied, “I have told you many times that I have that assurance.” “Yes,” he said, “but I never believed you.”

Seeing a Bible on his bed I said, “If I can shew you from your own Bible how you can get that assurance, would you believe it ? ” He said in a very doubtful manner, “If you *can*.” So turning to Romans 10. 6–13 I commented upon verse by verse, until coming to verse 13. Then I said, “John, have you ever called upon and said, ‘Lord, save me ? ’ ” He said, “Dozens of times.” “Well,” I said, “here is the answer : ‘Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ ”

He raised himself up on his bed and said, “Is *that* in the Bible ? ” I said, “Yes.” His reply was, “Read it again.” I did so at his request three times. He lay back on his pillow and said, “Now I can see it as plain as I can see that paper on that wall.” I said, “What can you see.” He said, with tears in his eyes, “That I am a saved man.” I said, “Who told you that ? ” He replied, “God,” and he repeated again and again, “It is wonderful ! ”

He thanked me many times for coming, we had prayer together and I left him praising God. In a few days he went home.

W. J. H.

THE AMEN.

(REV. 3. 14.)

IN creation God spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast. He created all things by Jesus Christ.

In redemption One great enough was needed to

THE AMEN.

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effect the work. The question was raised, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The willing answer came from Jesus, "Here am I; send me."

When Jesus was here in this scene, God found all His pleasure in Him. All that He could desire in man He found in Jesus. All His will was accomplished by Jesus. All the glory of God safely hung upon Jesus. God desired the eternal settlement of sin. Jesus made one sacrifice for sins for ever. He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. God desired to be fully known by man. Jesus, the only begotten Son, has declared Him. God desired that man should be recovered and brought home to Himself. Jesus restored that which He took not away, and He died that He might bring us to God. God desired a world of bliss in true and happy accord with His own great heart of love. He will finally secure this through the finished work of Jesus.

At this present moment Jesus is filling the presence of God, and He will fill the heart of God with delight throughout the eternal ages. In the midst of the church He sings praise to God. There is perfect response to God even now, because it is sustained by Jesus.

It is in these Laodicean days of lukewarmness and failure that the Lord is presented to us as the Amen. He is the faithful and true witness. There never could be any failure connected with Him. May our eyes be fixed upon Him, and may we see how everything is secured and maintained for the glory of God by Him.

"Now all is Yea, and all Amen,
In Him for evermore."

C. A. A.

“THE WHOLE LOAF.”

“TIMES were bad with us,” said a poor christian woman—“husband out of work—no money, no food in the house ! ”

“Mother,” said little Ada, “I’m hungry.”

“I have no food, darling,” I sobbed, and then fell on my knees with my child and prayed.

When I rose I can never forget the look on my little one’s face as she said, “Perhaps God is cutting the bread now.”

My husband down the street was just then talking to a christian man, who asked about his circumstances. He burst into tears, and told all !

In less than an hour a large basket, filled with provisions, came to our door, and on the top was a big loaf, which was the first thing Ada saw.

“Oh, mother,” she cried, “God didn’t cut the bread—*He sent the whole loaf.*”

S. J. B. C.

PAST ! PRESENT ! FUTURE !

MY *Past* ! how depraved ! A soul still unsaved,
A conscience oft roused, yet fettered by sin,
A will unsubdued, though heart and mind craved,
And sighed to have filled the dark void within.

My *Present* !—All changed, thro’ trusting in Christ
My conscience is purged, my will is at rest,
My mind is renewed, my heart is sufficed,
My soul grace has saved, enfranchised and blest.

My *Future* ! ’Tis bliss ! what prospects are mine !
“Caught up ” with Thine own—with Thee to appear.
And reign when both earth and heaven combine
Thy praise, Lord, to swell throughout every sphere.

S. J. B. C.

THE MAINTENANCE OF GRACE.

ADDRESS BY J. T.

(LUKE 23. 34 ; EPH. 4. 32 ; DEUT. 19. 1-4, 8-10.)

THESE scriptures treat of *grace*. Grace is intended to characterise the whole period between the coming of the Holy Spirit from heaven, and the coming of the Lord for His people. It will be a great triumph (and I believe we may expect this), if it ends up with the maintenance of grace. If it is to end thus, the church, at least in principle, must be in evidence. And so in the Book of Samuel, which is typical of what I am speaking, we find that feature of the church in type in Abigail. She is introduced after the death of Samuel as one "of a good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance," and who in a crisis maintained the position in the prevention of punitive judgment. The time of vengeance is not yet, though it soon will be. And so Abigail stands in the way of that ; she prevents in grace, tactfully and with humility, the act of vengeance which was in David's mind ; she prevents blood-shedding.

Now that position in 1 Samuel 25 indicates how matters stood at the outset. The church is seen as understanding the dispensation, and as possessing by the Spirit come down from heaven, the means of meeting anything that would mar the dispensation. That is what I have in view. The Epistle to the Ephesians is that which treats of the church position in this respect, as in other respects also. It is here you specially get the feature of *superlatives* employed by

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the Spirit, as depicting the dispensation; or the endowment, or furnishing, of the church. So that we get such an expression as "the glory of his grace." Think of the *glory* of it! David's intention of smiting Nabal would not be the glory of divine grace!

And then we have the expression, "The riches of his grace." Ephesians gives things in their fulness; it rises to the altitude of the gospels, and nothing can exceed that. But the design is that the work of God should culminate in what is equal to that; of course Christ must ever be supreme, "He must have the pre-eminence in all things," but what is in view is "the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ." That great result is designed for the church; so we have rich superlatives as describing grace, or love, or counsel as applying to her. Ephesians gives you *fulness*; so that, as I said, we have such expressions as "The praise of the glory of his grace," and "the exceeding riches of his grace"—marvellous thoughts! That is what is to be displayed. As we shall be "in the heavenlies," we shall be to the praise of the glory of God's grace, and the exhibition of the exceeding riches of His grace. So you see what is in the mind of God, and what He would have maintained correspondingly in us now.

I therefore read Ephesians 4. 32, which refers to the *kind* of forgiveness with which we have been forgiven, not by, but "*in Christ*," that is, on that level. It is a great thing, dear brethren, to study and experience spiritual altitude. It takes a strong heart, as in natural things; but what strength of heart is obtainable, as we find in this same epistle. We are to be "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that the Christ may dwell, through faith,"

in your hearts. It is to be obtained on the principle of *bowing the knees*. "For this cause I bow my knees," says the apostle ; the thing is so great and blessed that we must not come short of it. If the Ephesians were not bowing their knees, the apostle was. That is how it is obtained ; and then it adds, "To him that is able to do far exceedingly above all which we ask or think, according to the power which works in us"—it is something that is here, "the power that works in us." It is in regard of such the prayer is. It is that we might have strength of heart for the great position this epistle contemplates ; that we should not be on the level of religious man, but on the moral elevation indicated here.

The kind of forgiveness and feelings that mark the saints are to be like those that are in God, that is, God in Christ. "God in Christ has forgiven you" ; which is the level, as indicated in the gospels. And so I chose what I apprehend is the supreme expression of grace. No one who loves Jesus can read Luke 23. 34 without being touched by it. It is the supreme expression of grace in the presence of all the power that Satan could marshal against Him. The opposition of the world under Satan was there in all its force, not in any detached or promiscuous way, but in an ordered way, for the Prince of this world had come ; the position was a military one. Satan had come with his forces and was acting against Christ, and then the supremacy of grace shines forth, as He says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The more you look into it, the more it affects you ; it is the moral greatness of Christ in the presence of wave after wave of bitter opposition and hatred. He rises above all and prays for His persecutors : "Father,

forgive them, for they know not what they do." He is preparing the way for the cities of refuge; establishing the principle of them.

If we compare Ephesians with the early chapters of the Acts, it enables us to understand how the assembly, as formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, became the residence of that grace. It was not to go back to heaven with Him who brought it. The idea of Christ coming in, in that sense, is to leave here His fulness. The church is the fulness of Christ. The church was to be the residence of that which He set out in those few words, charged with such deep meaning, "Father, forgive them." It was supreme grace. It is not simply in one person now; grace shone in Christ in *all* its fulness, "We have contemplated his glory," says one who loved and revered Him, "full of grace and truth." (John 1. 14.) He was full of it! Grace first, and then truth. What a wonderful combination! It is said of Him, "In whom all the fulness was pleased to dwell"—who can take in such a thought? It is an expression conveying the greatness of His person. It is that Person who is described as "full of grace and truth."

And then the same writer says, "Of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace"—that is one wave after another. James says, "He giveth more grace." It flows from that reservoir, but with us it is a question of capacity, and the word comes to us as in Hebrews, "Lest any one fail of the grace of God."

Hagar is a type of one that failed of it. It is in connection with her that the idea of a well, representing the system of grace, is first seen in the scriptures; it rises above man's will. It says the angel found her by the well; he *found* her there, and she saw God there.

In Genesis 21 she has a son, they were both outcasts, but grace followed them. There came a voice from heaven, "Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." And what a lad he was! Typically, he was a persecutor of Christ, and yet the grace of God was by them. Hagar's eyes were opened, and she saw a well of water and gave the lad drink; she partook of the grace, but she failed of it. She went to Egypt to get him a wife, she went to the world.

That is how the matter stands; they failed of the grace of God. To say the least, going to the world places your position in doubt; for how can any one speak of you as an example of grace if you are going to the world for a wife for yourself or for your son—or are seeking to provide for your children on that line? Ishmael had an Egyptian wife, and it was some of his posterity that purchased Joseph as a slave. He became an archer; which implies long-distance fighting, conflict which has little sympathy or heart. The archers, it says, shot at Joseph. Thus as a sure result of failing of the grace of God, we become persecutors of Christ.

I wish now to shew from the type in Deuteronomy how all this works out. We see it in the manner in which the subject of the cities of refuge is introduced here. The thought is mentioned elsewhere, but the presentation of it in Deuteronomy serves me in what I am seeking to bring before you; that is, our qualification to be the residence of this grace, so that we may answer to the dispensation, and not be below the position set out in Ephesians. In Deuteronomy 19. 1 we see the circumstances under which these cities should be selected: "When the Lord thy God

hath cut off the nations . . . and thou succeedest them and dwellest," then "thou shalt separate three cities for thee." The explanation of the unforgiving spirit that is so often apparent with us, is the want of understanding and enjoying the position that God has given us. That is to say, there is hardness of spirit and unforgiveness, because of spiritual poverty. We are not, in that sense, great enough to forgive.

The principle of grace is that it rises above whatever there is in man. It takes us up whether good or bad, whether we are big or little sinners. The exceeding riches of grace rises above the worst kind of man or woman, rising above their guilt and subduing them, making them exponents of it, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus. As I have shewn, the Lord was superior to the whole tide of evil in the expression of grace as He says, "Father, forgive them." There was one man by His side, a thief, who was touched; the light of grace shone into his soul, and he said, "Remember me, Lord, when thou comest in thy kingdom." He was alongside the flow of grace; it was there, and it flowed into his soul and subdued him. Though he was persecuting before, for it says he "cast the same in his teeth," grace overwhelmed him, and the Lord answers his desire: "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise"! The man was lifted into the supreme place of blessing with Jesus—He says, "with me." Who can express the depth of feeling in the Lord when He said, "with me in paradise"? It is the triumph of grace!

What maintains us in this richness of grace? "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye by his poverty might be rich." It is rich

people, in that sense, who become collectively the residence of this grace. And thus the dispensation is maintained at its proper level ; the level of that wonderful passage in Luke 23.

So in Deuteronomy, in the type, Moses is instructing the people who are going into the land ; it is his exercise that they might be in it like God, for they were the "sons of Jehovah." He was himself a very old man, and in this book he speaks of that land in which he himself fain would be—how he would grace it ! Indeed, he was in it later, on the mount of transfiguration, and he was talking with Jesus. It was Moses speaking to the Lord, "with him," as if to call our attention to the fact that he was great enough to do such a thing. Think of the glory of that Person as He was transfigured before them ! (Luke 9.) The fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment white and glistening ! And Moses and Elias were speaking with Him. Moses saw that goodly land, and Lebanon. He could not go in then, but he entered in now in this glorious fashion.

Here he says, "When the Lord God has cut off the nations," etc. Israel have the cities and the houses ; they are set up in wealth in the land. We understand the land, typically ; it is God's *best* for us. God waters it with rain from heaven ; it is a land of water-brooks ; the beauty of all lands. God expatiates on the richness of that land, and they were now in it. Their enemies are contemplated as being cut off, and they are set up, as we may say, in heaven ; not literally, of course, but heaven as it is realised now, which is what the type sets forth. They are set up in it in dignity, for they were sons of Jehovah.

These things must be understood spiritually ; the

saints are thus contemplated as in possession of God's best. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him." It is on that level, and refers to the most blessed things, all brought in for us by the Spirit, who is "the earnest of our inheritance." We are supposed in this type to be in this position and status of wealth. The church is to be the residence of grace.

The subject of the cities of refuge is not presented here as elsewhere, but in keeping with this book, so that we may understand that this principle of grace is to be present; there is to be the existence of it in "three cities." He mentions three first, which is peculiar to Deuteronomy. It says, "Thou shalt separate three cities . . . and thou shalt prepare thee a way." We have the cities in the land in all this richness; now he says, "prepare thee a way." There is the possibility of a man slaying another unintentionally. As the Lord Jesus said, "for they know not what they do"—it is not regarded as deliberate. The land is to be divided up so that these cities may be within running distance of the manslayer. In other words, we are to consider them. Due care in this respect is to characterise Christians as forming the assembly.

It is worthy of note that the death of the high priest is not mentioned in Deuteronomy; you are not to put *anything* in the way of the manslayer reaching the city of refuge. You must put the city so that he can run into it, even if it is a long way to go. In the antitype it is not literal, but how many have been turned aside by accident. The axe-head flies off; it is the defective instrument used. The Epistle to the Romans is intended to make us good instruments;

we are to be “instruments of *righteousness*.” None such will have a head, so to speak, that will fly off and kill a man. If we take care of our instruments, no one will suffer.

The chapter is dealing with grace, and while the killing is not intentional it is most solemn, for the man is killed ; his wife and children have to be taken account of. Still grace prevails, for every facility is afforded the manslayer to reach the city of refuge. The Holy Ghost says, “Thou shalt make thee a way,” —a way so that he can easily get there before the avenger of blood overtakes him. You can see how this enters into our relations in the assembly. We are to move on the level of Ephesians : “Even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven us.” There must be no obstacle. The same applies to the sinner ; God has made a way, as it is said, “There is forgiveness with thee.”

Then there are the additional three cities ; they contemplate expansion. “If the Lord enlarge thy coasts . . . thou shalt add three cities more.” (Ver. 8.) I have no doubt in the dispensational sense that refers to the extension of the testimony in Paul. The first three would be what existed at Jerusalem, “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” That would refer to the cities of refuge ; they were there ; grace was residing there according to the early chapters of the Acts. Then later the Apostle Paul always went to the Jews *first* ; this would be in keeping with the other three cities ; full room was made for the Jews even in Rome. They went away and missed their opportunity, but there it was. Thus, dear brethren, if there is to be expansion, if there is to be increase, we must not let this principle be wanting,

the principle of grace. We must keep pace with the work of God. There is abundant evidence of anything ; twice three in the case before us is the superabounding grace of God. The more we are brought into the inheritance, the more the grace, and thus the dispensation is carried on at its proper level until the end.

THE LORD OF GLORY.

(Continued).

(1 COR. 2. 7, 8 ; JAMES 2. 1-9 ; 5. 1-3, 7-11, 17-20.)

WE get a beautiful expression in 1 Corinthians 2 in connection with the wisdom of this world in contrast to the hidden wisdom ; we read there that none of the princes of this world knew that wisdom, "for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." What a beautiful expression that is, but what a solemn condemnation of this world. It is put in that way upon the princes of this world, that they crucified the Lord of glory. Men would seek to put it on to the Jews only, but the Holy Spirit says, "the princes of this world . . . had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." This wonderful expression, "the Lord of glory," takes us away from the cross and its shame, and we see Jesus risen from the dead and exalted at God's right hand.

When we come to the Epistle of James we find that He is presented as the Lord of glory. A beloved servant of the Lord used to say we cannot understand the teaching of the epistles unless we see the way Christ is presented in each epistle. In the Epistle of

James He is presented as the Lord of glory, and so James speaks of the end. He would turn your special attention to the Lord Jesus as the Lord of glory, and in that connection he would remind you of His nearness, "Behold the judge standeth before the door." He is presented as very near; His coming is imminent. "Be ye also patient . . . for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

If you look at this epistle you will see how very much it corresponds to the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus is presented as the coming One in that gospel, not as some one who will come, but as some one who is coming. Before the transfiguration He says to His disciples, "There are some of those standing here that shall not taste of death at all until they shall have seen the Son of man *coming* in his kingdom." What did they see? His face shone as the sun. If you think of the sun, "there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." They saw the Son of man coming in His kingdom, and then when they were in the ship, tossed with the waves, "Jesus went unto them walking on the water." We need to see the Lord as the coming One. All that He is doing at the present time is in view of His coming. Why has He revived the truth of the church? Why is He bringing before us the necessity for church order? Because He is the coming One; it all means that Jesus is coming, and He is the Lord of glory.

James gives us a warning, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." If we are not in the light of the Lord of glory, our eyes will be deceived by the glory of this world. It is a serious thing to be asleep. Sleep is very like death, and I have no doubt it is a figure of death. Every time we go to sleep and wake again

God would remind us in that way of death and resurrection. God would not have His people asleep. "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee." (Eph. 5. 14.) When we get the light of the Lord of glory we see things in their true light. In the words of the hymn, "This world's glory waxeth dim."

We are not to have the faith of the Lord Jesus in respect of persons. There is a solemn warning concerning the rich in this epistle. We need to take it to heart, because although we may not be rich, yet the thing may have a hold on us. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare. . . . For the love of money is the root of all evil ; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." The thing holds them ; they bow the knee in that way to Mammon. They may not get the prize that Mammon offers, but there it is.

But there is another kind of rich man in this epistle : one who is truly in the light of the Lord of glory, and he is rejoicing because he is brought low. The poor man rejoices in being exalted, and so the Lord is honoured in each. In His governmental ways, He may cause one to be rich and another poor, but if the rich man is in the light of the Lord of glory what marks him in a special way is humility. Thank God, we can see it and rejoice in the way the Lord is working.

There is a solemn warning as to this world and its glory. What characterises it is that there is the despising of the poor man, and that ends in murder. It says of the rich, "Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you." The Lord of glory is the remedy for the complete breakdown and

failure that has come in. In the light of the Lord of glory we see all that this world trusts in and boasts in wither up. Rich men have heaped up treasure for the last days, but it is all corrupt, moth-eaten and worthless. If we are in the light of the Lord of glory we have come to the last days. How solemnly God speaks to men. He has only to withdraw His hand for a short time to shew us something of the last days. We see it at the present time in Russia. I remember during the great war hearing of people who were starving, and they said of money, "We don't want that rubbish, we want food." The last days had come for them. We need not wait for that experience. Thank God, if we belong to the Lord, if we are keeping the word of His patience, He will keep us out of the hour of tribulation. He would have us in the light of the last days, and to see that everything man trusts in is withering up and worthless; on the other hand, He would have us to see the Lord of glory.

In the Epistle of James the Holy Spirit gives us wonderful examples of those who knew the Lord of glory. There is the faith of Abraham set forth by works—"justified by works." What does he do? He offers up his only son. Love is so operative in his heart that he surrenders to God in secret. That is the foundation. God saw what Abraham did, and he was called the friend of God. Of Rahab it is said that she received the messengers and sent them back another way; she did not send them the way they came; she has the glory before her. If we use our homes and our possessions for the Lord, we have the Lord of glory in view—another way. The messengers are on the way to the glory. Rahab was justified on the principle of works. Then there is the patience of Job,

which carries us right through to the end—"the end of the Lord." "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." There is His compassion, His pity, and then there is the glorious end. Then there is Elijah. You may say, Elijah was such a wonderful man, I could never come up to him. But he is not presented in that way here. There are things about him that are unique, but he is presented here as a pattern—a man of like passions to ourselves—with those weaknesses that you experience. What did he do? He prayed; that is the point with Elijah. What did he pray for? He prayed first of all that it might not rain and it did not rain for three and a half years. If we are going to appreciate the blessing we must be brought down. What a test for Elijah to go through those three and a half years. How he felt it in his spirit. But he did not stop there, because he knew God. If you have to do with God you will find out that He never stops at death and judgment. He is the God of resurrection and the God of glory. Elijah prayed again. I like the second times in scripture—to see what comes in the second time—God's triumph. Elijah prayed again and then the rain came, and so we are encouraged in that way. There is the thought of recovery at the end of James—converting a sinner from the error of his way, saving a soul from death. What a wonderful work. The secret of it is the Lord of glory.

The Lord Jesus is in the place of power—He is coming. If you take that in you will not go to sleep. How could you go to sleep if you knew Jesus as the coming One? If you think of His coming as a long way off, like the wicked servant in Matthew 24, you

THE LORD'S TABLE.

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will begin to settle down here and enjoy yourself. What is the end of that? Smiting your fellow servant. The wicked servant said in his heart, "My lord delays to come." He had the truth in his lips. What a difference it would make if we knew Jesus as the coming One. Think of the way the midnight cry has gone forth, and the activities of the Holy Spirit in connection with the coming of the Lord—"The coming of the Lord draws nigh."

May these things affect our hearts so that we are found here as those who have been awakened out of sleep—those who have the oil, whose lamps are trimmed and whose lights are burning, ready for the coming of the Lord.

C. M.

 THE LORD'S TABLE.

IT is clearly the pleasure of God that all His people should be "partakers of the Lord's table," which is really the fellowship of Christ's death. The partakers are identified with this fellowship and therefore should be true to it; for all that is in the world is not consistent with the death of Christ.

In the Lord's *supper* there is the coming together for the collective remembrance of Christ's death, but the Lord's *table* is rather the fellowship with which each one is identified at all times, than the gathering together.

Are you a partaker of the Lord's table? The question should be faced by every one who has confessed Jesus as Lord. It is a matter of greatest interest that the Lord has a table here to-day which involves much privilege, but also calls for faithfulness to Him and to those who are in the fellowship of His death.

The consideration of the "tables" mentioned in the Old Testament may help in the apprehension of this important theme.

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JOSEPH'S TABLE was the proyision of his love—it was a

CIRCLE OF AFFECTION

for his brethren. (Gen. 43. 16–34.) "When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men *home*, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon." The fellowship which is based on the death of Christ is a circle of true affections.

Joseph's knowledge of them made them marvel, for "they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth." The Lord Jesus knows each one of us perfectly, and has in His loving consideration provided a place at His table for the youngest as well as the eldest. How encouraging this is for those who have hesitated to commit themselves to the fellowship of the Lord's death.

The principle that a table involves *identification* with those who partake of it, was evidently understood by the Egyptians, for they "might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians." They were not unfaithful to their own table or fellowship.

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DAVID'S TABLE, to which Mephibosheth was brought from Lodebar, was the expression of the kindness of God in giving him a

PLACE OF PRIVILEGE,

for David said to him, "Fear not : for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake . . . and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." David also said, "He shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons." (2 Sam. 9. 7-11.) The privileges and liberty of sonship were to be his continually, as he would dwell in the king's favour, enjoying his presence and be a partaker of his provision.

No wonder Mephibosheth remained true to David, and to his table, all through the absence of David, while the usurper, Absalom, reigned. His loyalty was fully rewarded when David returned, for he continued to eat bread at his table, content that his lord "the king had come again in peace unto his own house." How beautifully this incident emphasises the favour of the Lord's table, where each partaker can eat "as one of the king's sons" !

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NEHEMIAH'S TABLE was an important feature of a dark and difficult day when open opposition had to be faced and subtle intrigue resisted. It was

FELLOWSHIP IN ADVERSITY.

Nehemiah said, "All my servants were gathered thither unto the work. Moreover they were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us." There was ample daily provision for them at his table, but it tested their fidelity.

Who would countenance any one that sat at Nehemiah's table and received of his provision, rising up to go to sit with Sanballat, Tobiah or at any of the tables of the enemies ? To be associated with the governor's table would commit each one to faithfulness to him and to the interests of God.

Thus the recipients of the provision that God has made in "the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord," could not consider being associated with those who conspire against Him and despise His name. May each of us be kept loyal to Christ and to the fellowship of His death !

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THE SHEPHERD'S TABLE, of which the Psalmist wrote, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" (Psa. 23. 5), is a remarkable expression. To quote the words of another, "There is no higher task of the shepherd in the East than to go from time to time to study places, examine the grass and find a good and safe feeding-place for his sheep. All his skill and often great heroism are called for. There are many poisonous plants in the grass and the shepherd must find and avoid them. Then there are vipers' holes, which the shepherd must seal up. Round this feeding ground are many wild animals, and the bravery and skill of the shepherd are at the highest point in closing up their dens or slaying the wild beasts."

The Lord, our Shepherd, has with heavenly skill prepared His table, and His sheep partake of their food in safety, with profound thanksgiving to Him who has prepared it at the cost of His own life !

* * * * *

SOLOMON'S TABLE was distinguished by the wealth of its provision. It was the

EXPRESSION OF ABUNDANCE,

for "when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat

“HE THAT BELIEVETH SHALL NOT MAKE HASTE.” 59

of *his table* . . . there was no more spirit in her.”
(1 Kings 10. 4.)

Solomon’s *provision* for one day was “thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow-deer, and fatted fowl.”

“They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house,” said the Psalmist, who had a great consciousness of the liberal provision of our God.

* * * * *

Surely by the provision of the Lord’s table He has answered the challenge, “Can God furnish a table in the wilderness ?” And He has done it so abundantly that His people say, “Blessed be his glorious name for ever.”

F. S. M.

**“HE THAT BELIEVETH SHALL NOT MAKE
HASTE.”**

HOW often in the Psalms does the singer pause to give weight and reflection to the experience of his soul expressed! “He that believeth shall not make haste.”

There was haste in leaving Egypt, but the whole company had to halt at the Red Sea to stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah. Moses’ song celebrated the full journey and triumphant entry into the place that Jehovah had made His dwelling, yet there were the fourteen months of desert life essential to that entrance. It was the passage into the wilderness that Jehovah calls to remembrance in Jeremiah

2. 2, and in soul-progress we do not reach the land other than in the divinely appointed way.

There is for all believers, where conditions are right, and scriptural ground occupied, an enjoyment of the land flowing with milk and honey, for this is found in the assembly. Here the result of pure meditation on the word (milk, 1 Peter 2. 2), and the sweetness of unity under the headship of Christ (honey) is found, so that even the young may anticipate what is their portion in maturity of divine affections.

But the wilderness with its essential lessons must be learnt, lessons that only love to Christ, our true Moses, can fortify and energise the soul to learn.

There God is known :

“ In the desert God shall teach thee
What the God that thou hast found,
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
All His grace shall there abound.”

The Lord Himself is our Leader, baptised to Him, unto His death ; as the children of Israel were to Moses. He leads us like a flock into the knowledge of God, as in type Israel by the hand of Moses and Aaron. (Read Psas. 76 to 81.)

It was eleven days' journey from Mount Horeb to Kadesh-barnea by way of Mount Seir ; and it was in the second month of the second year that movement was made from Horeb, the mountain of God, and the spies sent to search the land, shewing the necessity of the first year in the wilderness before proceeding.

L. O. L.

THE WAY OF LIFE.

IT is evident that God's thought for the creature is *life*. Having created man, He breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul, one capable of enjoying life in relation with God. God being what He is delights in the happiness of the creature. Then He created a garden with everything to sustain him in life, everything to satisfy his desires. In the garden He placed the *tree of life*, thus proving that His thought for man was *life*. This no doubt will be realised in the fullest sense in the glory. (Rev. 22.) The tree of life is in the paradise of God. God's thought is never defeated, but being at the first connected with the responsibility of the creature was lost for the time being. Man by sin forfeited life, and came under the penalty of death. "By man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." The way of life was closed to man. So then if God's thought was to be realised, *Christ must die*, thus only could sin be expiated, and the way of life be opened to men. In dying He has annulled death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and He has opened up the way of life, which had been barred before. He is the resurrection and the life, the last Adam, the life-giving Spirit. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." "This is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son, and believes on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Here we may raise the question, *What is life*, subjectively, in the spiritual sense? It is the capacity

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to know and enjoy what is revealed of God, and to respond to His love. "We have known and have believed the love which God has to us. God is love, he that abides in love abides in God, and God in him." "We love, because he first loved us." "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." In the eternal state this will be universal in the whole creation. God will be all in all. But His desire is that we should enjoy this life *now*. It is the present blessing of God. He has given us the Spirit as the power to enjoy this life. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." We are really happy as we respond to the love of God, and love one another.

With many of the children of God how little is this life known experimentally. The secret may be found in the Lord's words in Matthew 7. 13, 14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat: because *strait* is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it." The broad way is the way of the world, it is the popular way, yet how many Christians are found walking in that way. Life is not to be found there. It is not in the riches, or pleasures, or religion of the world. The best things of the world are but vanity, death is on everything here. It all ends in destruction. We know that God in sovereign mercy will finally deliver every true believer from ultimate destruction. But as far as the present enjoyment of life and testimony is concerned, the way is destructive. Life is not to be found in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life; these things constitute the world.

Life is only to be found in the *narrow way*. The narrow way is the path of *separation*, the way that Jesus has marked out for us, the way in which He walked. He has left us an example that we may follow in His steps. This way has never been popular, "few there be that find it." The strait gate is *the cross of Christ*. In it God has exposed and condemned the flesh in every form. If we accept the teaching of the cross, it means the putting off the body of the flesh, that is, the flesh in its totality. So that before we can enter by the strait gate, we have to be *stripped* of everything which gives us any importance in a natural way, as Paul said, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Naturally we are too big to enter in by the strait gate. There must needs be a reducing process, as the Lord said to the disciples, "Unless ye are converted and *become as little children*, ye will not at all enter into the kingdom of the heavens." This way of life is not congenial to the natural man. So that it takes some finding. It is the only path of real satisfaction and happiness. What is really life is to be found nowhere else. Death is on everything in this world. The world passes away and the fashion thereof. But life is *eternal*, it is beyond the power of death. If souls are in earnest they will find this way of life. It is a divine principle that "he that seeketh, findeth." "He that hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal."*

F. H. B.

* In John 4 the Lord spoke of giving that which would be in the believer a fountain of living water, referring to the gift of the Spirit as the power of life as shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts. This fourth chapter is the complement of chapter 3. 14-16.

THE CRISES OF LIFE.

WHILE some lives are comparatively uneventful there are, in every one, moments of importance which become landmarks in its history. The records in scripture of the remarkable crises in the life-history of saints of God are worthy of our careful consideration. The first real crisis in a life is

THE SOUL'S AWAKENING,

when God is pleased to bring to the conscience the reality of eternal issues. The ways of God to effect this are varied, for He is pleased to use an earthquake in one case ; in another He will cause that a little child shall lead them.

Perhaps the outstanding instance of a great awakening recorded in the Old Testament is that of King Manasseh. After a life of appalling wickedness, he was taken among the thorns, bound with fetters, and carried into Babylon before his soul awaked. Then "when he was in affliction, he *besought* the Lord his God, and *humbled* himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and *prayed* unto him." What a crisis to reach ! Yet how graciously God pardoned his iniquity, and brought him again to his kingdom ! (2 Chron. 33.)

Is not this a voice to every one who has never turned to God in repentance ! He would have you experience the same welcome that He gave to the returning prodigal when He ran to meet him and covered him with the kisses of forgiveness. He is a just God and a Saviour and still says, "Look unto me and be ye saved."

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The next great crisis arises when the soul is brought to

THE CONFESSION OF CHRIST,

which is so intimately connected with salvation, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Joseph of Arimathea reached this great decision at the most remarkable moment in the history of Christianity. He was "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews." He had not yet confessed Jesus as his Lord; but at the moment when the whole world had combined against Christ and Jesus had died, Joseph came out boldly and "besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus."

A secret disciple cannot be completely happy, nor does he enjoy salvation practically. Hence it is of great importance that this moment should not be delayed. Let Christ have the honour due to His name, and confess Him with your mouth before men!

* * * * *

Another great crisis is experienced when

ENCOMPASSED WITH FAILURE

we find ourselves in a position of peril. It was thus with king Jehoshaphat, who, though a God-fearing man, had in unfaithfulness to God joined affinity with Ahab, saying to him, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war." The battle had scarcely commenced when Jehoshaphat found himself in a most perilous position, for the captains of the chariots compassed him about. It was a moment of great fear, but he cried out and the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him. (2 Chron. 18.)

GOODLY WORDS.

How gracious of our God to deliver us even though we are in danger on account of our folly ! The Psalmist said, "they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses." Let those who may be passing through such a crisis be encouraged that our God will hear their cry, for "there is no other God that can deliver after this sort," and He will grant recovery.

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Many too are the crises that arise in the life of a Christian in the

EXPERIENCES OF BUSINESS,

but it is encouraging that in that sphere it is possible to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Daniel's experience in the business of the court of Babylon is most edifying, for it proves how the support of God is given in the most testing circumstances. He was preferred above the presidents and princes, yet the whole of his colleagues sought to find occasion against him.

It is not unusual for a follower of Christ to find himself the object of scorn or hatred, called to stand alone against opposition. It will be well if he perseveres in prayer, as Daniel, and proves God's great support and deliverance. Prayer is the great resource of the business man, for God honours those who trust in Him.

* * * * *

But the greatest of all our crises in life are those moments of sorrow and bereavement when the

SHADOW OF DEATH

falls upon the spirit. It was through this experience that the sisters in Bethany passed when Lazarus

THE BLACKSMITH'S LEATHERN APRON.

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died, yet they knew how great their resource in their knowledge of the love of Jesus. Mary, when she heard that Jesus had come, arose quickly and came to Him, and when she was come where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell down at His feet. This is the sweetest story of sympathy ever told! It has been the comfort of His own through all generations that have been called to pass through this vale of sorrow, that "Jesus wept" at the grave and walked with them every step of that path of grief.

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Such crises can only bring the soul to one great conclusion—that JESUS is indispensable to His own and there is no crisis beyond His wisdom, love and power. Well may we sing :

" Jesus ! Thou art enough
The mind and heart to fill ;
Thy patient life—to calm the soul ;
Thy love—its fear dispel ! "

F. S. M.

THE BLACKSMITH'S LEATHERN APRON.

SUCH was the strange standard of ancient Persia. Far back in the past dim ages when the old empire was still in its swaddling clothes, a certain blacksmith, whose seven sons had been slain by the reigning tyrant, raised the standard of revolt and liberty.

Rushing from his forge, he tied his rough apron to a pole and shouted, "Death to the tyrant!" and the tyrant was slain.

Immediately the smith's apron was adopted as the national flag; and for years this odd and uncouth

banner, beautified and studded with costly gems, led the Persian hosts on to victory.

The cross—the *real cross of reproach*, which crucifies me to the world and the world to me—is the Christian's standard, yet what was and what still is more contemptible in the eyes of men? Yet what triumphs has Christianity won under its shadow, and how adorned and begemmed it has become by myriads whom its conquering and redeeming power has rescued from sin and misery. Let us never cease to glory in it. The greatest gift and apostle and soldier of the church said: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is not a cross of iron or gold swinging from the neck or belt of the ecclesiastic, or worshipped as a superstitious crucifix, but the self-crucifying and world separating cross that Paul gloried in and preached.

When the old Persian empire was overthrown by the Arab Islams on the fatal field of Kadesiyeh, the blacksmith's famous apron fell into the enemy's hands.

But the banner of the cross can never be vanquished! It shall wave victorious till every foe is subdued and Christ triumphant reigns supreme throughout the universe. Yea, it shall eternally celebrate the victories of that love and power, of which it is the imperishable ensign and glory.

Friend, have you enlisted under it? Are you "fighting the good fight of faith" under it? Are you "a good soldier of Jesus Christ," contending under it for Christ and "the truth of the gospel"? Can you say, "The preaching of the cross is unto them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God"?

S. J. B. C.

“OUTSIDE THE GATE BY THE RIVER.”

(ACTS 16. 13, NEW TRANS.)

THERE is a wonderful spiritual dignity in the way in which Paul and his company move in relation to Philippi, as seen in this chapter. The Spirit of Jesus (ver. 7) guided them, the Spirit of Him who was here so perfectly for the will of God.

“Unmoved by Satan’s subtle wiles,
Or suffering, shame, or loss.”

This is a chapter of mighty achievement, resulting in the establishment of the assembly at Philippi, which was one of the greatest living expressions of Christianity upon earth. We do well to take account of the spirit of prayer and dependence which marked those who were so signally used of God in that place. God comes in in *power* where there is a true spirit of *prayer*. How many instances we have of this in the holy scriptures, and is it not so to-day? After having come to Philippi, it says they tarried in the city certain days, and then on the sabbath day they went *outside the gate, by the river*. This is very suggestive; this move is followed by positive results. Outside and apart from the activities of men, they reach a spot marked by an atmosphere of dependence upon God, by *prayer*. How quietly and effectively is the work of the Lord accomplished in such an atmosphere; it says of Lydia, “whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things spoken by Paul.” There is no earthquake needed on this occasion; here was one who had been quietly prepared for the heavenly message that Paul brought, and there, by the river, that which speaks of peace, of life, of blessing as flowing out from God—there, where prayer was wont to be made,

begins a movement which was to have its climax in the city. Lydia opens her *house* as the response to the Lord having opened her *heart*, and thus the testimony finds *definite* lodgment in that city, "come into my house and *abide there*."

Now we see how the enemy, ever ready to oppose the blessed activities of God, stirs up opposition, first in his subtlety, through the damsel, applauding "these men," but ignoring the claims and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul, true servant of that glorious Person, is grieved, dealing finally with the situation in power, and the enemy loses ground. Then he changes his attack, and as the roaring lion would devour them. They are arrested and thrust into the inner prison; the jailor, having been charged to keep them safely, makes their feet fast in the stocks. At midnight they pray and sing praises, the melody of heaven is heard in that prison; it says that the prisoners *listened* to them. The hearts of Paul and Silas were in tune with heaven, although so buffeted upon earth. In spirit "outside the gate by the river," filled with peace and joy, as being in touch with that city above, whose walls are Salvation, and whose gates are Praise.

In Philippians 4. 5 we read, "Let your gentleness be known of all men. *The Lord is near*." What a striking example we have here of this; the Lord was indeed at hand, and demonstrates His power to support the testimony! There is a great earthquake, the foundations of the prison are shaken, the doors are opened, and the prisoners are unbound. What about the jailor's charge now! For him it was a hopeless situation, and he is about to kill himself, when Paul's voice rings out. It is a good thing to hear

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the voice of Paul ; how strong and encouraging it is at this awful midnight hour. The voice of Paul brings order out of chaos, as it did on another occasion. When the ship was going to pieces, when all hope is gone, his voice brings good cheer, telling of life and salvation. Here is a man who is in living touch with God, and such an one is master of the situation, however hopeless it may appear to sight and sense. So he tells of salvation to one who is lost, and that magnificent answer to the heart-wrung cry of the jailor that night, is the one and only answer still, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

What a beautiful scene follows ! The jailor and his house come into the blessing of the dispensation, and the same hour *acts* in keeping with it. It is good to see what he *does*, how he ministers to them, having washed their stripes. Now, like Lydia, he is baptised, *he and all his*, another house committed to the testimony. A scene of holy joy follows, “And having brought them into his house, he laid the table for them, and rejoiced with all his house, having believed in God.” This is the end God had in view in causing the earthquake. It is good to have our earthquake now, so to speak, and to see everything here come tumbling down. Soon all here will come to an end. We read in Revelation 6 of a great earthquake, and of the terrors which will accompany it. There will be no blessing for those who are in *that* earthquake, for it will be followed by judgment. Then will the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, and the chief captains and the mighty men and every bondman and every freeman seek to hide themselves from Him that sitteth upon the throne, but all of them,

both small and great, will stand before that throne. So it is well to have the earthquake *now* and to be awakened to a sense of the instability of everything here, and turn to Him who can, and will, put your feet on solid, unshakeable ground, so that you may truly be able to say :

“ On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

And then how good it is to know something of what it is to be morally outside the gates of the city of man's building, and to know the blessed administration of that city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. So shall we be undisturbed by the break-up of things here, having seen the end of things in this scene of man's glory. We shall also be prepared to accept suffering and reproach here as sustained by heavenly peace and joy. In the Epistle to the Philip-pians Paul speaks much of suffering, but how very much he speaks of *joy*. “ Rejoice in the Lord always : and again I say, Rejoice.” And how he could commend to them the peace of God, which passeth all understanding ! This will be known increasingly as we are prepared to accept the reproaches of Christ, which one of old esteemed greater *riches* than all the treasures of Egypt.

May we be kept morally “ outside the gate by the river,” in present living touch with the gates of that city above, finding our joy in all the blessed administration of life and blessing to men which flows out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Thus, as we move about amongst men here, we might have power when we speak to them of the Saviour ; not as Lot, who “ sat in the gate ” and, when he spake of coming judgment, his words seemed as one that

LUKE 3. 1, 2.

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mocked. We need to be kept in true moral separation from the scene "where also our Lord was crucified," and attached to that scene where He is *glorified*, and thus come back into the sphere of our responsible life here, in all the freshness and power of the glad tidings as those who have been "outside the gate by the river." And the message we thus carry will be blessed and supported by all the power of God.

C. D—N.

LUKE 3. 1, 2.

WHAT a cluster of names—great names!—in these verses: monarchs, governors, religious leaders—men of renown; men doubtless greatly envied for their position and power, men holding the sway in their several spheres. How much such positions of power are sought for to-day. But God would take up a vessel fitted to speak His word—and then we see the true value of these things. *All* are passed over. The "word of God" came not to Cæsar's palace nor yet to any of his underlings—it passed over the palace of the high priest, and came to John in the wilderness. How significant! The one morally fitted and great enough to receive a communication from heaven is found outside every sphere of man's greatness.

Now is this outside place attractive to us? It is a spot untrodden by men, but trodden indeed by the blessed Lord (how great *He* is!) when here as Man. In a day when the greatness and glory of man is soaring to a fearful height, endeavouring, as energised by Satan, to engulf all that is of God, are we *content* with the outside place? The servant is found there, one fitted to speak His word as having received it,

as knowing too the greatness of Christ. How John could speak of that! It is known, beloved, in an atmosphere uncontaminated by thoughts of man's greatness. Would we be serviceable? Then let us in affection for Christ be found definitely outside the sphere where He is not.

The compensation is blessedly great. Caiaphas, the last name of earth's renowned ones, means "depression." What an ending to man's greatness and glory, but how true! In the wilderness names speaking of a blessed sphere are found. John is "grace of God," Zacharias, "the renown of Jehovah." How the contemplation of His grace and glory would completely eclipse *all* the passing so-called greatness of this death-shadowed, Christ-refusing age! F. A. H.

THE BACKGROUND AND THE SCOPE OF THE TESTIMONY.

IT is often said that we live in a day of small things. We may well admit it; and yet, whether we look at the history of Israel or of the church, at the people of God under the old covenant or the new, there have perhaps been few periods when the same could not have been said.

But if in our day we have to confess our smallness in spiritual power, and if we also feel the necessity of separating from much that bears the Lord's name but is mixed up with the world, it is all the more necessary that we should preserve in our souls a strong sense of the large and central character of the testimony of God. In other words, we must maintain the truth that, whether the things of God look big or look little

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE TESTIMONY. 75.

in the eyes of men, they belong to the God who made all things and for whom are all things.

The scriptures link up the gospel and the church with God the Creator of all things in a way which is very remarkable, though not always very much noticed.

In the Old Testament perhaps we naturally expect to find the word of God linked with His creatorial power. The truth that He created all things, and that all things are His, is brought in as the starting-point, the foundation, the background of His testimony to, and through, His people. To Abraham He says, "Walk before me and be thou perfect," but He prefixes this word with the simple but resounding assertion, "I am the Almighty God." Isaiah in particular is full of this truth as he announces God's promises of deliverance to the captive Israel. It will suffice to quote only one passage, that which is referred to several times in the New Testament in connection with the going forth of the glad tidings to the Gentiles: "Thus saith God, Jehovah, *he that created the heavens and stretched them out, he that spread forth the earth and its productions, he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein* : I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will take hold of thy hand ; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations, to open the blind eyes, to bring forth the prisoner from the prison, them that sit in darkness out of the house of restraint." (Isa. 42. 5, 6 ; and see Luke 2. 32 ; Acts. 13. 47 and 26. 17, 18.)

The gift of Christ as a covenant to Israel and as a light to lighten the Gentiles is here presented against the background of the creation of the heavens and the preservation of all men in life. Our view of the testi-

mony of Christ, and of the deliverance of man that is associated with it, is enlarged by such a setting.

In the New Testament the glad tidings and the church are presented in the same setting ; as if we were otherwise in danger of being cramped in our minds. Material things are small compared with spiritual, but the truth that the God "whose I am, and whom I serve" (Acts 27. 23) is the One who made all things, covers not only material but also immaterial things, "the visible and the invisible." We are not to think that spiritual things are, so to speak, unco-ordinated with the whole creation of God.

Observe how our Lord, in giving thanks in the face of His rejection by "the cities where most of his mighty works were done," rests in the thought that all things belong to God. "I praise thee, Father, *Lord of the heaven and of the earth*, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes." (Matt. 11. 25.)

The assembly at Jerusalem, similarly in the presence of surrounding hostility, found rest in the same basic truth in the beautiful prayer in Acts 4. 24-30 ; truly an anointed prayer ; to point out its beauties here would carry us too far ; our concern for the moment is to notice how it begins : "*Lord, thou art the God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them.*" It is from this starting-point that the prayer proceeds to refer to the testimony of God and "thy holy servant Jesus." If our thoughts and our prayers were shaped so comprehensively and so centrally, we should be helped to get all else into right proportion.

We may perhaps think it natural that Paul should preach to the simple and ignorant Lycaonians that

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they should turn from the vanities of idols to "*the living God, who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things in them.*" (Acts. 14. 15.) But this primary truth is still emphasised when we come to the church and the gospel in their highest relations in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "To announce among the nations the glad tidings of the unsearchable riches of the Christ . . . the mystery hidden throughout the ages in *God, who has created all things.*" (Eph. 3. 8, 9.) If we had been writing that, should we not have missed out those last five words ?

God is one, and He has created all things, "God is one, and the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be rendered in its own times." (1 Tim. 2. 5, 6.) The scriptures will not tolerate the idea of anything in God's world being left outside of, uncoordinated with, the testimony of God in Christ. "To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." "All things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 8. 6; 3. 21, 22.)

The truth is simple and strong; strengthening and enlarging.

J. B. C.

WALKING BY FAITH.

THERE is no one who reads this who is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ but must admit they had to begin their spiritual course by faith. You had to turn to the Saviour and put your whole trust in Him, and you found the truth of His saving power. This was faith, nothing material or that could be seen

by the natural eye could effect the salvation of your soul. It was faith alone in the wondrous Saviour—Jesus. The believers at Thessalonica were only very young, but they are commended for their faith in both epistles. (See 1 Thess. 1. 8 ; 2 Thess. 1. 3.) Whilst the Ephesians were among the oldest and most established, yet there again reference is made to their faith in the Lord Jesus. (See Eph. 1. 15.)

But the tendency with most, if not all of us, whilst admitting that we had to begin by faith, is to attempt to continue by works, or something that can be seen or taken account of. The Galatians were on this line and the epistle written to them was intended to counteract this error. As it says in chapter 3. 2, 3, “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ? Are ye so foolish ? having *begun* in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh ? ” These saints were turning from the line of faith and going back to works of the flesh ; things that could be taken account of in a natural way. They were thus losing all the gain of the Holy Spirit’s activities, who will only support upon the line of faith.

So then we have to learn the meaning of the verse in 2 Corinthians 5. 7, “We walk by faith, *not* by sight.” The moment we are governed by what we see, we descend to the level of ordinary men, and lose the support of God. In this same epistle (chap. 4. 18) it speaks of looking *not* on the things which are seen, which are temporal, but on the things which are not seen, which are eternal. The whole dispensation in which our lot is cast is in faith. (See 1 Tim. 1. 4, New Trans.)

Now let us just see how this works out in our daily pathway. We not only have faith in the Lord Jesus,

but also in God, for we know Him as revealed to us in Christ, the Son. Therefore every step onward can only be in the light of what we have started with, the simple trust of our hearts in God. We cannot shew any one our faith, although they will see it in our works, but we are very conscious of it by the Spirit. We *know* that there has been a definite transaction between our souls and the blessed Saviour God. As we go on, this established principle begins to operate in every detail of life. Like the young bird which begins to use its wings and finds it can fly, the more it uses them the stronger they become, until its only natural thing is to fly. But we find too that God is pleased to test us on this line of faith, for it is very precious to Him, yea, more precious than gold. (See 1 Peter 1. 7.) And these tests get more severe as we go on. But they only tend to bring out the reality of what is there, and to increase our knowledge of God, and so our faith is strengthened. We may fail sometimes and waver under the test, but this is only bringing up the dross, that the true gold may be seen. The tests may come in our circumstances or in our bodies, and how very trying both are. In most of our lives there is something allowed that we really cannot understand. We have no doubt prayed much about it, and yet it seems all dark and difficult. Yet we feel we *must* trust God. We are confident all is well in His hands, and this very exercise promotes a holier walk and a closer communion with God. The unsolved part of our life we know will all be seen clearly at the judgment-seat of Christ. Meanwhile it may please Him to shew us plainly now, when the test has done its work. The life of Abraham is very helpful on this line, for he is called the father of those who have faith.

He was passed through many tests, not knowing at the time the issue. But each test yielded a deeper knowledge of God.

Then, too, another point I would draw attention to is that faith only looks for the next step, it does not ask to see the whole course, or even the second step. It has been aptly put in a well-known hymn :

“Keep Thou my feet ; I do not ask to see
The distant path ; one step’s enough for me.”

This again is seen in Abram’s first move when God called him. It says of him in Hebrews 11. 8, “He went out, not knowing whither he went.”

Faith, too, must ever mark us in any service we do for the Lord. If we feel led to go to a place or take a line of activity, we must just act in faith, having the clear sense in our souls that it is of the Lord, and therefore right. It is wonderful how we shall be helped and used if we serve in this way. The opportunities will open up and the sphere of service expand, and we shall have the conscious sense that the Lord is using us. It may be we shall be tested by not seeing immediate results. Paul only preached three sabbath days at Thessalonica, and a church was established there, but he continued three years at Ephesus. He refers in 2 Corinthians 4. 8 to seeing no apparent issue, yet he went on, and so can we if we maintain faith. We may be tested too by others not quite seeing with us in what we are doing, but if we are acting before the Lord as our own Master, we are responsible to Him, and often the others come to it in time.

So then the whole pathway here and each moment of time must be on this principle of faith, and it says in Romans 14, 23, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” The proper normal christian state is “We walk by faith.”

W. J. W.

“ LITTLE . . . BUT EXCEEDING WISE.”

“**T**HERE be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise.” With these words Solomon indicates the value God places upon that which is insignificant in the eyes of men but marked by wisdom under His eye.

These four little things, which are mentioned in Proverbs 30. 24–28, are most encouraging to those who are suffering reproach for the name of Christ ; for the approval of God is secured by those who, though outwardly small, are wise in His account.

“The *ants* are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat [or, provide their food] in the summer.” Their wisdom is seen in the importance they attach to the provision of

FOOD ;

the diligence with which they store it ; and the value they attach to every seasonable opportunity. It is well known that every ant attends to its own work, and does it thoroughly, and that each one knows what to do and does not intermeddle with others. All may profitably “consider her ways and be wise.”

A wealth of spiritual food is within reach in this “summer” season. The word of God is unfettered ; the ministry of the word, both oral and written, is in great abundance, and for the most part God’s people are enjoying great liberty. It may be that those who value these favours and are taking advantage of them are not great in the world ; they are outwardly “little upon the earth,” but they are “exceeding wise,” for winter may come upon them when these

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opportunities are no longer open, and then their store of pure, soul-nourishing spiritual food will be invaluable. Hence the Apostle Paul exhorts his child in the faith to “give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.”

* * * * *

“The *conies* are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.” Their wisdom is seen by the importance they attach to

SECURITY,

for their houses are beyond the reach of their enemies. They have a place of refuge which is safe. The rock—which is suggestive of Christ—is their hiding-place, so that though “little” they are secure. Moses said, “The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him,” and the Psalmist could say, “The Lord is my rock . . . in whom I will trust,” and again, “Thou art my hiding place.” It is the pleasure of God that His children should enjoy a sense of security; even as the good Shepherd said, “My sheep shall *never perish*, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

* * * * *

“The *locusts* have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands.” How exceedingly wise they are! They move like a well-disciplined army; all pursuing the same line of march, as impelled by an instinct common to them all. One locust could easily be crushed or diverted, but a “band” of locusts become irresistible.

They have no visible leader or organisation, for they “have no king,” but there is great power in their

“LITTLE . . . BUT EXCEEDING WISE.”

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UNITY

of action. Of the early believers it is recorded that “they were of one heart and one soul: they had all things common.” Then was there “great power . . . and great grace was upon them all.” The locusts teach us the value of fellowship and to avoid independency; proving the importance of “striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

* * * * *

“The *spider* taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings’ palaces.” This somewhat obscure passage is alternatively translated, “Thou takest hold of the lizard with the hands, yet is she in kings’ palaces.” It would appear evident that her wisdom is in her

APPRECIATION

of that which is in the presence of the king.

Those who are conscious of being “little upon the earth” are wise when they place great value upon “the presence of the Lord.” It is good to “take hold” in true apprehension, and not allow the precious days to pass without enjoying the greatest favour of the believer in Jesus—His presence. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus”—this is true christian privilege and liberty!

What rich compensation then is there for those who suffer reproach for the name of Christ,” and though they are “little upon the earth,” they may express their wisdom by diligently providing their food; by enjoying the security that is in Christ by moving together with their brethren and by appreciating the highest privilege of the Christian—entrance into the holiest!

If the reproach of Christ should involve a position where but few fellow-believers are found together, it is a great encouragement to observe that through all the ages those who have been here for God and His interests have been outwardly "little upon the earth," and often comparatively few in numbers. It is not recorded that Enoch had any companions during those three hundred years that he "walked with God." Of Noah and his family, who were preserved in the ark, it was said that "*few*, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

When God took Israel to be a peculiar people to Himself, it was said to them, "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the *fewest* of all people." Again, the godly Jews who returned from Babylon were but a few out of the nation, yet they were encouraged by the word of the prophet, "Who hath despised the day of *small* things? for they shall rejoice."

In His words to the seven churches the Lord says, "Thou hast a *few* names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." It is contemplated in scripture that the Lord's people would be largely hidden, for it has to be said, "The Lord knoweth them that are his," though He graciously makes His promise available to even the smallest company. "Where *two or three* are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The Lord would thus encourage His own to "esteem the reproach of Christ" and to rejoice "that they are counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

F. S. MARSH.

THE BIBLE—HOSEA VIII.-X.

FROM the nature of the prophecy of Hosea, especially chapters 4-14, it is difficult not to refer in some detail to thoughts therein presented; for after the general view of chapters 1-3 the rest of the book is mainly composed of forceful appeals the details of which must be noted to be appreciated. However, as far as possible I will summarise the chapters rather than go into their detail.

Chapter viii. opens with a charge to Hosea to sound the trumpet of warning. No uncertain sound was to be his message. (See 1 Cor. 14. 8.) Judgment was impending. There would be a false plea on the part of God's professed people that they knew Him (ver. 2); but their conduct did not support their plea. (See Titus 1. 16.) The Lord in Matthew 25. 11-13 and Luke 13. 25 said He would not know such. There had been great activity, but without reference to God. (Ver. 4.) All kinds of temples and altars erected in Israel were a witness to their sin (ver. 11), for that part of the nation, that is, the ten tribes, had become apostate. And the buildings of "fenced cities" in Judah (ver. 14) was but an attempt to retain an orthodox position which was only tenable provided those who were in it were with God. Israel would be among the nations as a vessel wherein was no pleasure. (Vers. 8, 14.)

These principles are all applicable to us. The mere profession of the Lord's name is of small account if we are not subject to Him, and an attempt to defend a right position, as Judah was doing, is of small avail

unless we are really with God. And how often in such circumstances great activity is apt to mark us ; activity may be used, indeed, as a kind of cloak to hide our real state of soul. God will have reality.

How solemn indeed if God has to tell His people not to rejoice ! (Chap. 9. 1.) A worldling has a sort of happiness in his world of pleasure ; but the pleasures of the world can bring no real joy, and certainly not to one who is the Lord's. "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another." (Psa. 16.) God's people would lose their place of privilege : "They shall not dwell in the Lord's land." (Chap. 9. 3.) They would no longer be able to offer to God (ver. 4), for sacrifices are only acceptable if our state of soul is right. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. Then, too, those who spoke to them as from God would be deluded : "the prophet is a fool, the inspired man is mad." (Ver. 7.) He who should have been a watchman with God was but a snare, and God would visit their sins because of all their corruption—corruption such as in the days of Judges 20.

Chapter 9. 10 is another instance of the appeal the prophet makes by abrupt contrast. God had seen Israel as the first ripe grape ; but they went to Baal-peor. (These vivid contrasts are most striking.) Consequently God would come in and judge. There would be no fruit, and He would drive them out of His house and love them no more. This is the love of complacency. (Ver. 15.)

Chapter 10 shews the case to be even worse. As there had been fruit—apparent prosperity—they had been marked by a divided heart (ver. 2), and words uttered which seemed like repentance were not real.

(Ver. 4.) Idolatry had continued ever since* the time of Gibeah. (Judges 20. 9.) The prophet appeals to them to break up the fallow ground (ver. 12), for it was time to see Jehovah. Severe judgment was about to fall.

In all these chapters there is an expression of the deepest feeling. How God feels the way His people treat Him! His feelings as to their state necessitate that He should discipline them. Every little bit of distance that marks our hearts is felt by the Lord; any object that in any measure divides the heart with Him, and every departure in conduct must pain the Lord. If He felt Israel's behaviour, does He feel the assembly's any the less? Indeed no! Our greater privileges incur a greater responsibility; our closer relationship makes any departure more awful, and is more felt by the Lord. The Lord keep us near Him.

M. W. BIGGS.

TRIUMPH IN CHRIST.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

(REV. 1. 5, 6; 7. 13-17; 12. 10-11; 22. 14.)

THE Book of Revelation gives an account of the triumphs of Christ. A lover of Christ delights to dwell upon His triumphs. There are terrible things spoken of in the book, but these only give fresh opportunities for displaying the power of Christ, who is ever victorious. John, who wrote the book, was all through growing in his apprehension of Christ.

* The word "from" (ver. 9) may imply "more than in." See note, J. N. D.'s New Translation.

John *had* a previous acquaintance with Christ, but now he speaks of Him as "the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth," and while speaking of Him thus, his heart becomes so full that his emotions overcome him, and he breaks out in doxology: "To him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood . . . to him be the glory and the might to the ages of ages." Is it any wonder his heart should thus overflow? Note, the love of Christ is present, not only its past expression, but its present blessedness.

How often the sense of our own unworthiness hinders the outflow of praise. But it need not, for it is but fitting soil in which the worth of Christ can grow, and a priestly state produced, resulting in praise to Him who alone is worthy. There will come a moment when from end to end of the earth His praises will sound, everything that hath breath will praise the Lord. He gives us the opportunity of doing it now. What dignity is thus conferred upon us! May we not fail of this service. In Psalm 8 it is out of the mouth of babes and sucklings that He perfects praise, and by this He stills the enemy and the avenger. The enemy would crush the note of praise, and if he can only get a Christian occupied with his own unworthiness to the exclusion of the worth of Christ, he has gained his end; but God triumphs in the hearts of His people, and the enemy is stilled.

Observe in this scripture it is the work of Christ to wash us from our sins, while in the other scriptures read *we* wash our robes. Here it is His work, "washed *us* from our sins in his own blood," hence this part is divinely perfect, and where this is apprehended, there follows as a blessed consequence a response from

TRIUMPH IN CHRIST.

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the heart, ascribing to Him glory and dominion for ever and ever. What a portion is the believer's now, ascribing glory to Him on the one hand, and coming under His sway on the other, and experiencing the beneficence of being under His rule before the day of glory comes, as expressed so sweetly in that old hymn :

“ Oh, for a heart, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne,
Where only Christ is heard to speak,
And Jesus reigns alone.”

In chapter 7 we go a step further ; there we find a company (verse 9) who stand before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. But who are they, and whence came they ? This is just the question which one of the elders asks of John. “What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ?” John would appear not to know, and said, “Sir, thou knowest.” It is well to be an elder. An elder knows, for he has had experience of Christ, and a knowledge of Christ gives the key to every such question. Thank God, it lies within the reach of every Christian to be an elder, and able to say of Christ,

“ So faithful known,
Long proved in secret help
With Thee alone.”

So the elder tells him, “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” In chapter 1 it is Christ who washed from sins, while here it is they themselves who wash their robes ; a deep lesson, surely, for us. White robes are the result of our own act. The blood of the Lamb speaks of the

death of Christ, and white robes are the fruit of applying the death of Christ to ourselves all the way along. If you have come in contact with anything evil, or done something defiling, see that you wash your robe, you owe it to Christ to do so ; the cost to Him is felt by every true lover of Christ, producing a state which would shun everything inconsistent with His death.

Mark how He appreciates their fidelity, "the Lamb . . . shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." We owe everything to Christ, and if we are kept true to Him, we shall taste those springs of joy now. But if we fail, will He give us up ? Never. "He abideth faithful," our eternal security depends on Him. May the sense of this lead to more loyal devotedness of heart to Him.

In chapter 12. 10 the accuser of the brethren is seen. It is Satan in all his deep-seated enmity to Christ, accusing the brethren before God day and night. There may be that in us to which he can point as a justification of his charges, but his real point of attack is the honour of Christ. How is he to be overcome ? "By the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." The blood of the Lamb is the answer to every accusation, but note it is the brethren who overcame him. So that while in chapter 1 it is what Christ does by His blood, and in chapter 7 what we do by His blood so as to have white robes, here it is *we* who overcome, but by the same blessed means, "the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Ah, you poor doubting Christian, what is the answer to all the accusations of the enemy ? "The blood of the Lamb." Satan would seek to shake your very foundations by bringing forward your faults. There is one blessed answer, "The blood of Jesus

Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin.” We have nothing to say about ourselves, but we can say a great deal about Christ—“the word of their testimony.”

One word more, “Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and . . . go in by the gates into the city.” (Chap. 22. 14, New Trans.) Here it is not a question of sins, as in chapter 1, neither is it white robes as in chapter 7 nor is it overcoming the accuser of the brethren as in chapter 12, but washing our robes in view of tasting the tree of life. What fruit that tree bears—righteousness, peace, joy—all that will gladden our hearts for ever, but only entered upon now by those who wash their robes! They enter in through the gates into the city. The gates are of pearl; a pearl denotes purity. Everything that enters there is pure and holy, and if we are to enter upon those eternal joys now, it can only be in the measure in which we are morally in accord with what is there.

Thank God, the future is assured; we form part of that company that will be with Christ for ever, not only for our joy, but for His, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” May God grant *we* may know what it is to “wash our robes,” that we may have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city.

A. NEWLANDS.

THE KINGDOM.

THIS must always be a very interesting subject to every lover of Christ. Every true Christian is looking forward, intelligently or otherwise, to the kingdom when it is

GOODLY WORDS.

IN DISPLAY ;

that is, for the day of manifested glory, when we shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20. 4.) Then He will have His rights in this very world in which He has been crucified, and in which He is still rejected. After about six thousand years in which men have utterly failed to bring in happiness, He will bring in a scene of unparalleled joy and blessing and glory for God.

At the present time, however, the kingdom is

IN MYSTERY,

that is, it is only known to those who have been let into the secret of it. The kingdom is one of the biggest subjects in scripture. The Lord Jesus preached the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, the twelve apostles likewise preached it, and the last word we have about Paul in the Acts is that he was preaching the kingdom of God. (Acts 28. 31.) The kingdom in its present aspect, that is, in mystery, depends on two great facts which are unknown to the world, namely, the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit here. These facts, great and wonderful as they are, have not altered the outward condition of things in this world, so that as far as man is concerned it is a mystery, but very real and blessed to those walking in faith. The character of the kingdom is grace ; grace reigns now "through righteousness unto eternal life." (Rom. 5. 21.) That is, grace is reigning now, and we come morally under the sway of grace, because grace is on the throne. The consequence is that forgiveness, salvation, righteousness and blessing are dispensed to us. It is not the demands of an inflexible law, but a *moral sphere*, into which we are introduced,

and in which we are saved from the power of sin and Satan. Presently, when the kingdom is in display, *righteousness will reign*, and then every overt act of sin will be immediately punished (Christ will rule the nations with a rod of iron), but the result of grace reigning now is that men are subdued and brought into subjection to Christ, instead of being brought into manifested power and glory, as will be the case then.

We recognise His supremacy and authority, so that as coming under His direction and lordship there is no room for self-will. Naturally we are all selfish and self-seeking, but as coming under the sway of Christ as Lord we learn little by little what righteousness is in a practical way. We are taught what is due to God and what is due to man. We become acquainted with what is pleasing to God, for it is God's kingdom; and as we are thus formed by the principles of His kingdom, we become sons of the kingdom. (Matt. 13. 38, New Trans.)

The kingdom has been established in power. Every enemy has been subdued and Christ is triumphant. All authority has been committed to Him. The powers of darkness can only go just so far as He in His wisdom permits them. He could say, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28. 18.) The prince of this world has been judged.

It has often been noticed that some scriptures speak of "the kingdom of heaven," whereas others speak of "the kingdom of God." Although the same kingdom it is looked at in two different aspects.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

embraces all who professedly come under the rule of

heaven, that is, all those who in an outward way have adopted Christianity, real and unreal. This is the dispensational aspect of the kingdom, which the Gospel of Matthew mainly presents, but, alas, at the end of the dispensation there will be a severance of the wicked from among the just! (Matt. 13. 49.) Meanwhile both go on together—"grow together until the harvest."

THE KINGDOM OF GOD,

however, includes only what is of God; there is no unbeliever in the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God presents this great truth in its moral power. David typically presents this view of the kingdom. He took up a position outside Saul's kingdom morally, and it says that every one that was in distress and in debt and discontented gathered themselves unto him, *and he became a captain over them.* (1 Sam. 22. 2.) That is, we come into the kingdom morally and really by coming under the control of the Lord. We are glad to recognise His authority, to recognise that He has a right over us. God has given Him the supreme place in the universe, and we accord Him that place in our lives and affections now. If we are truly in the kingdom we love to do His will, and that delivers us from our own wills. Thus we become subdued, and we delight in His authority, because behind the rule is all the love of His heart.

There is not only His authority, great as that is, but all

THE BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM

are administered to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the great administrator of all that is in the heart of God for the blessing of men. Like Joseph,

SET AN AMBUSH.

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when he was exalted, they not only had to bow the knee to him, thus owning his authority, but all the granaries of Egypt were under his command and administration. When the people wanted grain for seed or bread, Pharaoh said, "Go unto Joseph . . . and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians . . . and all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn." (Gen. 41. 55-57.) I think we little realise the wealth of heaven that is in the hands of the Lord. Everything has been secured by His death, and as exalted and glorified at the right hand of God, He is dispensing this bounty of heaven. Hence in Romans (chapters 3-6) and in other places in scripture, christian blessings—positive blessings—are presented to us as coming "through our Lord Jesus Christ," which is His title as the great administrator as Man exalted and glorified. These blessings are summed up for us in one verse in Romans 14. 17 as "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

H. W. ELLIS.

SET AN AMBUSH.

(JOSH. 8. 2.)

WE have in this scripture the divinely appointed strategy by means of which defeat is turned into victory for the people of God, and the lesson we have to learn from it can be applied to our spiritual warfare to-day.

The place where Joshua hid his chosen warriors was holy ground, for it was there that Abram built an altar to Jehovah, and called upon Jehovah's name (Gen. 12. 8), and from that place of secret communion with God they went forth to victory. And so to-day it

is those who are going on with God in secret (Matt. 6. 6) whom He uses as overcomers.

We see this principle illustrated again and again in the history of God's people. A noticeable instance occurred at Gibeah (Judges 20), where, after Israel had been twice defeated, an ambush saved the situation. So in David's day, when even the ark of God had been lost, we see in the secret exercises related in Psalm 132 the beginning of David's unbroken course of victory. And in the final conflict with the powers of evil it will be the One now *hidden* in the heavens who will come forth at the appointed moment, the Root and Offspring of David, to destroy every enemy of God and His people.

Defeat is a terrible thing, and we see how Joshua felt it. Its cause must be searched out and dealt with, and then the way to victory is set before us.

In Elijah's day there were seven thousand of God's hidden ones, of whose existence even Elijah was unaware, but we see that seven thousand were sufficient to defeat Benhadad, and the thirty-two kings who helped him. (1 Kings 20. 15, 16.)

Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, and it is for us to cultivate secret communion to-day, when, more than ever, those are needed whom God can take up and use to defeat His enemies. He took up Moses from the backside of the desert, and David from the sheepfolds of Ephratah, and many another, at various times, of those who were waiting upon Him in secret. The Lord Himself is the most striking example of this. The townspeople of Nazareth said, "Whence has this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?" all unconscious of the thirty years that had been lived in their

midst under the eye of God, unrecorded even in the holy scriptures.

J. PAGE.

FEET-WASHING IN SCRIPTURE.

IT has been enunciated that the first time a subject is mentioned in scripture that there are definite features brought out therein. Thus in Genesis 18. 4, on the occasion of the heavenly visitors to Abraham's tent at Mamre, refreshment and welcome are indicated by Abraham's invitation. Certainly no thought of defilement enters into that use of the water. Similarly in Genesis 43. 24, on the arrival of Joseph's brethren at Joseph's house, they are assured of welcome and refreshment by the same offer of feet-washing.

In John 13, on the ever-memorable occasion of the Lord washing His disciples' feet, these thoughts are emphasised by the words of the Spirit through John : that Jesus was departing out of the world to the Father ; that the Father had given all things into His hands ; that He was going to God. In view of this new place He was about to occupy, He lays aside His garments, and washes His disciples' feet. He would assure them of participation with Himself in all that He was about to enter upon. It was a place man had never occupied before.

The passover had enabled God's people of old to enter upon fellowship with all that God had set before them. The disciples had partaken of the passover, and it was now supper time. It is now, dispensationally, supper time. There is also definite connection with the Lord's supper ; it is His own supper. The emblems of His body given, and His blood shed, speak to our hearts of His own welcome and peace provided for

His disciples. And as the hospitality of Abraham's tent, and Joseph's house was evidenced by the provision of the refreshing water for the feet, so the supper speaks to us of the Lord's provision that we may pass into His own home and enjoy that place with Him in spirit now.

In contrast to the welcome of Abraham and Joseph was the neglect of Simon the Pharisee, who provided no water for his unknown heavenly Guest. (Luke 7.)

The water the Lord used would speak of His love in His laying down His life to enable Him to have them with Himself, as He said, to have "part with me." He would pass on to His disciples the privilege of this same precious ministry. They were to wash one another's feet in the same grace as He had shewn. Their ministry was to be in view of the heavenly portion of His beloved assembly. His last words would supply them with the wealth of spiritual food available. He was going to the Father, whose house would henceforth be open, and enjoyed in spirit in the assembly. His glory would be seen by them, and the glory of God. He had brought divine love to them, they were to love one another as He had loved them. As having part with Him they would be here bearing fruit for God, as He had been. (Chap. 15.) Also they would be here in testimony as He had been. (Chap. 16.) Thus the spring of all assembly privilege, fruit-bearing and testimony, was to be found in relation to Him in the new place He was about to occupy with His Father and their Father, His God and their God.

L. O. LABETT.

THE MASTER OF THE SONG.

(1 CHRON. 15. 22-27.)

DAVID was the sweet psalmist of Israel. He had gained much substance through experience with God. He knew God as the One who inhabited the praises of Israel, and he desired that the singers should be intelligent and the praises suitably expressed, so he appointed Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, master of the song. It says, "And Chenaniah . . . he instructed about the song because he was skilful."

There is a great need for singers to-day, and God is securing them through grace. He will be praised. The singers require training, however, and we must all come under the teaching of the Master of the song. He knows what God delights in, and He knows what is suitable to Him. He has put a new song into our mouths, even praise unto our God. We must each one of us be taught our part, or we shall not blend in the song. We are passed through sorrow and trial to learn what is suitable to God, so that we can produce those heavenly notes by singing and making melody in our hearts. And let us remember that the Lord is Chief. He must lead, He who was forsaken of God and brought into the dust of death, He was heard from the horns of the unicorns ; and as come forth in resurrection He is the Master of the song, saying, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." How important to bear this in mind when we come together. Let us wait upon the Lord, for He will lead the singing. He would have our hearts and our voices blended. There is no discordant note in the singing which He leads, for He is skilful.

What a privilege and what a joy to join in that
singing !

C. A. ABRAHAM.

THE FRUITFUL TREE.

(PSA. I.)

IN beauty and vigour of manhood,
Unmarred and untainted by sin,
He kneels, in His sorrow and anguish,
Gethsemane's garden within.

As sapling of tenderest nature,
He grew 'neath the vision of God,
Adorning with beautiful verdure
The ground where His holy feet trod.

A vine that had budded and blossomed,
And brought forth its clusters of fruit,
A tree by the rivers of water,
That nourished in sweetness its root :

The weary had sat 'neath His shadow,
The hungry had fed from His bough ;
So perfect His growth and His bearing,
No need of the knife or the plough.

But now to His soul there is nearing
The bleak, bitter breathings of death ;
The rising of judgment o'erflowing,
The nails, and the thorn-woven wreath.

He bends in His perfect submission,
He bows at the threat of the rod,
" Thy will and not mine," is the token ;
What fruit in due season for God !

* * * * *

A tree of Jehovah's own planting,
Cut off in the midst of His days,
He flourishes, fruitful and vernal,
In courts of thanksgiving and praise.

H. J. MILES.

SERVICE.

(REV. 15. 5-8; 16. 1.)

THE desire of every one who loves the Lord is to serve Him, and surely the desire is a right one. It will be recalled that the Lord said to Pharaoh, "Let my son go, that he may serve me," which shews what the divine intent was. In the five verses at the head of this paper three thoughts are suggested: coming out from the presence of the Lord, being divinely equipped, and moving at the word of the Lord. These three thoughts are the background of effectual service.

THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

In verse 6 we are told that the seven angels came out of the temple. How often we have put our hands to service without having spent any time in the presence of the Lord. In the third chapter of Mark we read of the Lord Jesus, the perfect servant, appointing twelve that they might be with Him. What a privilege was theirs of being with the Lord and observing what He did and the way He did things; and He did all things well. How rich and precious would be the lessons they would learn as they moved about in the company of the One who always moved in the power of the anointing.

There is an interesting and instructive illustration in the attitude of one who was to have a remarkable place as the leader of the people of God into the promised land. In Exodus 33 we read of Moses entering

into the tabernacle and of the Lord speaking unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. At the close of the interview we read that Moses turned again into the camp, but his servant Joshua departed not out of the tabernacle—the example of Joshua is a lesson for us as to the necessity of seeking the presence of the Lord before putting our hands to any service for Himself, for service to be effectual *must* be the outcome of personal intimacy with the Lord.

THE DIVINE EQUIPMENT.

In verse 7 we read, “And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls.” This tells us that they received the instruments of their service from the hands of another. What a word this is for us. We recall how the Lord said to His disciples just before His ascension, “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem *until* ye be endued with power from on high,” shewing that the Lord well knew that it was useless for them to move until they had been divinely equipped. In the chapter in Mark to which we have already referred it says He sent them forth to preach and to have power. Then in the Epistle to the Ephesians we read that the ascended Lord has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. How wonderfully equipped they would be for the service to which the Lord had called them. In the goodness of the Lord there are to-day servants who have come out from His presence divinely qualified to be used for the building up of the Lord’s people and for the work of the ministry. If we have the

sense of being called by the Lord to His service, how inclined we are to set to work at once without waiting for

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

In Revelation 16. 1 we read, "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways." The response is immediate, for they went and carried out with divine power their commission. From this we learn the necessity of making no kind of move until we get a direct word from the Lord to do so. This is a very real test, for we are naturally impatient to be doing, but if we go out on our own initiative how ineffective and disappointing our service is likely to be. Still the Lord answers desire; this is seen in the case of Isaiah who, after the live coal had been laid upon his mouth, heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for me?" Isaiah's answer was, "Here am I, *send* me." Here we have the threefold thought of suitability, availability and desire, and the word of the Lord is, "Go."

The case of Philip the evangelist is helpful. He had been one of those chosen for a certain work, and qualified for a wider sphere of service, and is found in Samaria, where he was being greatly used, so that the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, and the result is that there was great joy in that city. Then the divine command came to Philip, "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is desert." Then we read he arose and went. Like another honoured servant he conferred not with flesh and blood, which would have said, Why leave such a

successful work, where the hand of the Lord in blessing is so manifest, for a sphere which is desert and where there will be no opportunities to serve the Lord? No; the scripture simply says, "He arose and went," and moving thus at the word of the Lord the way of the Lord quickly was made plain to him, and we know the sequel. On the other hand Moses, whom God had raised up and fitted to be the deliverer of His people from Pharaoh and from Egypt, moved prematurely and found no support from the Lord, and had to flee, and in the backside of the desert await direction from God.

We see in Gideon another instance of one who was to be used in honoured service moving at the divine command. The Lord had looked upon him and said, "Go . . . have I not sent thee . . . surely I will be with thee." Then the most wonderful of all, in the Lord Himself we see the perfection of service. When Mary and Martha had sent to Him the message, "Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick," as a servant He did not move until the moment for doing so had come, and then the power of death had to yield at His word.

May the desire on our part to serve the Lord be governed by the guiding hand of our Lord; and coming out from His presence with a sense of being divinely equipped, just wait the divine command as to our sphere of service, and also as to the time to move. We then can count upon our service being effectual by the blessing of the Lord being manifestly with us.

J. R. TITHECOTT.

FOLLOWING THE LORD.

(MATT. 4. 17-22 ; 8. 18-23 ; 16. 24-28 ; 17. 1-5.)

I WANT to say a few simple words in relation to following Christ. It is something of vital interest to every one who knows the Lord. I presume that most here, if not all, know the Lord as their Saviour, but intensely blessed as that is, and a wonderful start, the question I desire to raise with you is, Are you following Him ?

It is very wonderful and touching to think that He *wants* us to follow Him. We can understand a little the blessedness which accrues to the one who does so, but how it should affect our hearts to think that it is His great desire that we should follow Him. This brings us to the first scripture I read. Those mentioned in Matthew 4 had a certain outlook and a certain occupation. I wonder what outlook each of us has. The outlook these men had was a perfectly natural one, and centred round their livelihood. It was a material outlook. Jesus sees them as He passes by and calls them. He says, as it were, "If you are prepared to follow me, I will give you a perfectly different outlook and occupation." I think when we first hear the Lord's voice to us, it changes our whole outlook on life. It is not that a full understanding of what that call involves is appreciated at the outset, but the impressions we receive change our whole view-point. With many of us it may be that we have a sense of being saved for glory. That is a wonderful impression indeed, but to get the full gain of it we must follow Him. If we do, we shall learn some wonderful lessons, so that the brief span accorded to us

here will not be spent in vain. The Lord has much to do in us as well as by us.

Now I want to appeal to you as to what constitutes your outlook. Is it worldly advancement, the amassing of money, or advance in social standing? Or is it to be found alongside a rejected Christ? We are in a world that has cast out and crucified Jesus, and if I am true to Him, a gulf has come in between the world and me. Am I ashamed of Christ, of confessing His blessed name? I have every ground for adoration that He has ever deigned to stoop and touch me and draw me to Himself—nay, more, that He loves me! Do not forget, public opinion in everything that matters is almost always wrong. Christ is despised in the world, as also is every one who is true to Him; but the Christian is in the intelligence of the mind of heaven as to things, and thus is it to be wondered at that his outlook, previously barren and wrong, is changed right round as it is brought into the light of heaven!

As far as the world's outlook is concerned, Christ died on the cross. They see no further than that. He finished His course in shame and death. But question a Christian. He will tell you that the One on Calvary's cross has gone to the pinnacle of glory. It is this One that we are called on to follow. We shall get wonderful disclosures if we do. We shall gain experiences of Christ which cannot be known otherwise, and be brought now into the practical good of the world into which He has gone. As regards this present world no doubt our position will be a despised one, for we are not as men are. We are seeking to follow that most blessed Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is but lightly esteemed.

Which do we really prize most—being in line with men's thoughts, or being in fellowship with God.

The Lord says, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." God is seeking men, and He will give us to be in sympathy with Him. He, so to speak, enrolls us in His service. The result here was that they left their nets and followed Him. This is the path. It means that every other interest takes a subservient place. I am convinced that if this is the desire of our hearts the Lord will help us. He will order every circumstance in our lives so as to enable us to reach the objective implanted in our souls, for "all things work together for good to them that love God."

Now in Matthew 8 we get a further development. A certain scribe comes and says, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." I think there are two sides in following the Lord. There is the gain side, and the rejection side. Hence the Lord says, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." It means sacrificing our comfort. We all naturally like comfort. The Lord puts that side before us here, for He never hides the real issues. The question is, "Am I prepared to be a pilgrim?" I would ask, Can you in actual fact settle down and take your ease in a world of sorrow, suffering and death, not to add a world which has cast out Christ. Sorrow comes to us all, but if gone through with God, it has a wonderfully mellowing effect, and thus the feelings and traits of Christ are worked out in us.

Another says, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father," but the Lord says, "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." It was not unfeeling on the Lord's part to say this, but I believe the Lord

means that our links with Him must take the precedence of everything else. Our links with Him are to be supreme. Only the sweetness of our place with Christ can lead us to take this path.

Now in Matthew 16 we have an appeal. The Lord's words there are not in answer to any question. He had been speaking of His death and sufferings, and *then* says to His disciples, "If any will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Are we going to follow Him? Does He command our hearts? If so, it says, "let him deny himself." This is deliberate action, taken up in the knowledge of what it involves. I am compelled by affection to follow Him. It says elsewhere that if we are not prepared to follow Him, we are not worthy of Him. We are bound to say "Amen" to that. The Lord would appeal to us and say, "I have trodden the path right into death—and death too as the judgment of God." He tasted death so that we might never even see it. He has gone by the way of death to the glory, there to prepare a place for us, from which He will return to receive us to Himself. We cannot surely be other than interested in the place He has prepared for us. Everywhere here where my eye rests I see confusion, rebellion, uncertainty, but when I look up I am entitled to say, "We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved."

It is true that it is a path of rejection here, but the Lord quickly adds the other side so as to encourage us and give us the feeling that the gain so transcendently surpasses the loss. He says, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Your soul is of incalculable value; every-

thing here is slipping, slipping, slipping. Solomon was man enough to face that. He did what very few are prepared to do. He faced life here in all its bearings and recorded his findings in a book. But then he was not in a position to see beyond what is "under the sun." The Lord here draws our attention to what was about to be revealed ; something beyond the sun. It is imminent. The Son of man is about to come in His glory. Oh, that we might drop everything there, and let every thought be of Himself !

The wind up of the whole world system is imminent, and the day of Christ is about to dawn. Why not follow Him ? Do not let us be content with following afar off. The Lord in the last verse of chapter 16 says, as it were, If you are prepared to follow me you shall have a private view of the glory before it actually comes in. Does this appeal to us ? He will open up to us, if we are prepared to follow Him, the light of coming glory, and not only thus shall we be in the secret of the solution of every problem, but we shall receive divine communications. What possibilities this opens.

Now in closing I want to refer to Hosea 6. 1-3, as I am sure if we have known what it is to turn aside from "first love" we shall find much comfort in this scripture. The Lord would have us know that He has never changed. He invites us to return to Him, and in doing so to find Him the same blessed Lord that we knew at the beginning. This was just what the prodigal found in Luke 15. There was no trace of change in his father. This is the discovery the Lord holds in reserve for the one who returns to Him. He may have "to tear" and "to smite," but He is only against us in love, and He waits, so that immediately we

turn He may come in and "heal us" and "bind us up." "Then," it says, "shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." The blessed Lord is so worthy of all we can give Him, so wonderful in all His dealings with us. May we love Him and follow Him so closely that to the end we may be found in the paths of righteousness, and thus be near enough to receive the disclosure which I believe He will make, "Surely I come quickly," and respond to it with burning hearts. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." H. P. WELLS.

TEARS.

FAR removed from human sentiment are the tears recorded in scripture. They are the expression of deep spiritual emotions which are inevitable when the soul enters into "the things that be of God." Not that Christianity is sorrowful; on the contrary, it is essentially joyful in character, but there are occasions in every life when the deep feelings, long pent up, find expression in tears.

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It is with unshod feet and holy reverence that we contemplate the tears of Jesus in those sacred moments when His deep feelings found expression in weeping. Three times it is recorded that He—the Man of sorrows—wept during His life here. Once at the descent of the mount of Olives as He came near and beheld the city of Jerusalem; He "wept over it," saying, "If thou hadst known!" These tears of SORROW told of His love for God's earthly people, and disclosed His deep grief consequent upon their rejection of Himself—their Messiah; for He looked on to the terrible

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judgments which must fall upon them. How gladly would He have gathered them, but they would not. He had come to His own and His own had received Him not.

* * * * *

At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus, the Son of God, wept tears of SYMPATHY with His bereaved loved ones. There were never such tears as these! Thousands of bereaved hearts have been comforted by them, for they have told, as no human language could express, the depth of His love and of His deep feelings for those who are bowed with grief. Even the onlookers had to say, "Behold how he loved him!" How truly is it said, "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We adore the wisdom that caused Him to remain "two days still in the same place where he was," in order that those sisters might experience His sympathy and witness His resurrection power for the glory of God.

* * * * *

In the garden of Gethsemane, with the dark shadow of the cross upon His spirit, Jesus wept tears of SUFFERING, for it is said, "In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

If such were the expression of His anticipation of the cross, what were His atoning sufferings in the hour of His forsaking! It will never be ours to enter into those sufferings—they were His alone—but the love that led Him onward to the cross will command response from every redeemed one eternally; while His devotedness to the will of God when He said,

“Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done,” will ever rise as sweet incense to God and be the theme of our adoring worship. His tears were not shed in vain !

* * * * *

So too the followers of Jesus prove that they are passing through “the valley of Baca [weeping].” What tears have been shed by the servants of Christ as they have trodden in the footsteps of their Lord and Master—these are the tears of SERVICE. The Apostle Paul twice referred to them in his farewell to the elders of Ephesus ; as he spoke of “serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears,” and reminded them that by the space of three years he ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. Again, he says to the Corinthians, “I wrote to you with many tears.”

It was evident, too, that his beloved child in the faith, Timothy, had felt the sorrows connected with service and suffering, as shewn by the apostle’s words to him, “greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears.” It was not that Timothy was an effeminate man or a weakling, but he was one who “cared with genuine feeling how the saints got on,” and his tears were the expression of that feeling.

So intimately is service interwoven with tears that the Psalmist wrote encouragingly to the weepers—“they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

* * * * *

There are other tears which are noted in heaven. The sinner’s tears of SHAME are seen, as when the woman of Luke 7 stood at the feet of Jesus behind

Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears. How greatly the Lord valued this, as He said, "She hath washed my feet with tears." It was His joy to speak to her heart the word of comfort—"thy sins are forgiven."

Nor are the bitter tears of SELF-JUDGMENT passed by in the record, for it is said after Peter's grievous denial of Jesus that "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter . . . and he went out and wept bitterly."

* * * * *

It is inevitable that in this death-shadowed world tears must flow, but our hearts are comforted as we think of the triumph of God which will presently be displayed when the promise shall be fulfilled, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Hence we sing in joyful anticipation:

"And God has fixed the happy day,
When the last tear shall dim our eyes,
When He will wipe these tears away,
And fill our hearts with glad surprise;
To hear His voice and see His face,
And know the fulness of His grace."

F. S. MARSH.

THE BIBLE—HOSEA XI.—XII. 6.

THE depth of feeling expressed in the opening verses of chapter 11 is too apparent to require attention to be drawn to it. It is another instance of appeal by vivid contrast, of which there are so many in Hosea. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went

from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images." What a return on man's part to such love and deliverance on God's! The thoughts of love in the heart of God that Israel should be delivered from all their miserable existence in Egypt and be to Him a kingdom of priests and an holy nation, His driving out the wicked nations of Canaan and planting His people in the land of their inheritance, but found an answer of idolatrous departure on their part! From Acts 7. 42, 43 it is doubtful if ever the children of Israel voluntarily offered any sacrifices to God. Idolatry seems to have marked them all along.

But if man fails there is no failure in Christ. The reader will remember that verse 1 is quoted in Matthew 2. 15 and applied directly to the Lord. Israel's history was one of failure and sorrow to the heart of God! But every wish of the heart of God found an answer in Jesus. Jesus began the history of Israel afresh. Indeed He has begun all our histories afresh. Man's new beginning we may read in Jesus. Marvellous wonder! inscrutable mystery that a divine Person should become Man—"a little child" carried to Egypt! How every day of that precious and holy life filled heaven with interest and God's heart with pleasure! It is difficult not to be detained over such a theme as this. I leave it, however, for the reader's enjoyment. He may well dwell thereon. My object in this paper is but to give a brief sketch or outline. It is, however, of the greatest importance to see that Israel's history began anew in Jesus here and all was perfect.

Verse 3 gives another touching reference, "I taught Ephraim also to go [walk], taking them by their arms ;

but they knew not that I healed them." Israel's infancy, so to speak, had been carefully watched over by God. He provided for their every need in the wilderness and gently led them through the deserts. But they "knew not." They erred in their hearts, as we are told in Hebrews 3. Then we read, "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." Think of God appealing to His people like this! But Israel's history finds its repetition in ours so often, alas! How could a believer ever turn away from the Lord, and if away, how could he keep away if His mighty love was realised? But, ah! the departure begins slowly and by degrees; little things come in; the heart gets just a little bit cool; then further departure; the Lord's love (intense and real as it is) has less place in the heart; then worldly tastes develop, prayer is given up or neglected; spiritual appetites decline; the scriptures lose their place; and but for our faithful Lord, who seeks to recover us, where should we be? Alas! where?

Hence there is the Lord's discipline. Not the phase of the world we would choose—Egypt. Our discipline is not Egypt; that is not to hold us; but a phase of it which shall hold us in severer slavery. "The Assyrian shall be his king." (Ver. 5.)

Again the heart of God bursts forth in appealing love. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" Being God, His sovereignty will save the situation. (Ver. 9.) God would recover His people. (Vers. 10, 11.) But the state of Israel at that time was awful, marked by lies and deceit—a profession with no reality. There was for a time an element of truth in Judah, but it was not for long. Judah too departs. Jacob as a whole is crooked. (Chap. 12. 1, 2.)

In a most abrupt manner the prophet breaks off and reminds God's people of the energies that had marked their ancestor Jacob. He had had *power with God*! He had wrestled, but in the end as dependent and clinging and beseeching had been blessed. God had spoken to them at Bethel. And the very name Jehovah was a name ever to be remembered. His memorial! And the prophet appeals, "Therefore turn thou to thy God." M. W. BIGGS.

THE THREEFOLD BLESSING.

(NUM. 6. 22-27; DEUT. 33. 3; LUKE 24. 49-53; 2 COR. 13. 14.)

IN the divine composition of blessing, as given to Moses to be pronounced by Aaron and his sons, we have a wonderful fulness. It is interesting to see that it follows on the reference to the Nazarite. How it suggests to us the Lord Jesus in His present position as the divinely appointed Priest to pronounce the blessing of God upon His people. He, the true Nazarite, has lived that wonderful life of His here upon earth for the will of God, the One who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He has paid all His vows and has fulfilled in His precious death all the offerings. How fitting it is that the true Nazarite should be the One through whose lips, as Priest, the complete formula of blessing should be made known. For it is complete; it is *threefold*. Does it not suggest to us the wondrous activities of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The *Father*—the Spring and Source of all blessing; the *Son*—in and through whom it is expressed; and the *Holy Spirit*—the One by whose power alone it can be received and enjoyed.

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“The LORD bless thee, and keep thee,” thus the *source* of the blessing.

“The LORD make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee,” this is the *expression* of the blessing.

“The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace,” the present *enjoyment* of the blessing.

We have a suggestion of this threefold character of blessing in the words of Moses, the man of God. In Deuteronomy 33. 3 we read, “Yea, he loved the people ; all his saints are in thy hand” (blessed and kept), “and they sat down at thy feet” (in subjection to Christ), “every one shall receive of thy words” (by the Holy Spirit). Then in the end of Luke we see the Lord Jesus, having completed the path of the Nazarite here and died and risen from the dead, now as Priest being carried up into heaven. We read, “He led them out as far as to Bethany” ; He has a company that He has *separated* from this world, in order that He might shed upon them this blessing from heaven. It is threefold as regards the giving of it. “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you.” The promise of the *Father*, sent by Himself, the *Son* ; the promise being the *Holy Spirit*. What it means to be under those uplifted hands, “none but His loved ones know.” It is those who *follow Him out to Bethany* who receive that blessing in its fulness ; those who turn their back upon the world that has refused Him come into all that heaven has to give.

Then in the last verse of 2 Corinthians 13 we have the threefold blessing again. Paul, as of the priestly family, is pronouncing the blessing upon those whom he has won back to the place of separation, having himself acted, as to his relations with them, in the

spirit of the Nazarite. Here, in his final word to them, he lifts up his hands and blesses them. It is well to note that here we have *first* the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," *then* the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. This was where they had lacked in that grace. When it is a question of our relations together, how important it is that we be under the influence of that grace, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." If that is lacking with us, how can we be enjoying the love of God, or know the communion of the Holy Spirit? From God's side we see it is "the Father's love, the source of all," that is at the top, and that is what we are led up to, but here from our side and in the pathway, what we need to know is the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ; *thus* shall we enjoy the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

But these blessings are only known and enjoyed as we are in living touch with the true Nazarite and the true Priest, He who has said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." And He would lead our hearts, as He did His own on that memorable day, out as far as to Bethany, that we might see Him carried up into heaven *still blessing His people.* C. DEAYTON.

THE TRACK OF THE VICTOR.

(2 SAM. 23. 20.)

BENAIAH'S great exploit in going down into a pit on a snowy day to destroy the lion is recorded

by the Spirit of God. That deed of valour has been taken account of by God.

There were two tracks into the pit, the one that of the lion, the other Benaiah's, but only one out, that of the victor. It sets forth, in type, the movements of the Lord Jesus in this world. He took account of the track of the lion. A little maid lying in death, a young man of the city of Nain being borne away in the power of the enemy, and Lazarus, were all evidences of the power of the enemy. The Lord Jesus, in infinite compassion, went forward in the track of the lion under wintry conditions. The enemy brought to bear upon Him chilling influences terrible in their intensity, indeed impossible conditions for any other man. We think of Gethsemane with its sorrowful depression even unto death, and then of Calvary with all its desolation voiced in the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The true Benaiah went into the pit in order to accomplish the will of God, and to annul him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Matthew 28 gives us the coming forth of the Victor in power. The angel descending; the watch thrown to the ground; the evidence that the Lord Jesus had passed through the enemy's quarters in that some of the saints that slept arose, and appeared in the holy city unto many after His resurrection. All this bringing consternation and dismay into the enemy's ranks, reminding us of the flight of the Syrians in 2 Kings 7, where the way of their flight was full of garments and vessels which they had cast away in their haste.

The disciples came upon the track of the Victor when they saw the open tomb, the broken seal and the stone rolled away, but Mary Magdalene saw the

Victor Himself. He was the risen Lord. On the resurrection side of death there were no footprints of the lion, no track but His; the true Benaiah was there in all His proved supremacy and He can say, "Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and my God, and your God." What a victorious message and what a glorious track from the pit to the presence of His Father and His God, and with what acclamation He would be received, and no enemy was there to stay that upward movement, and the disciples from Bethany saw Him go up, they followed the shining track.

This track is still open; when together He comes to us and leads us that way, that we may enjoy all the love of God which He has made possible by His death and victory.

The day is coming when He, as Victor, will come forth to assert the rights of God. In Revelation 20 an angel descends having the key of the bottomless pit, and he laid hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years and cast him into the pit, and shut it, and sealed it over him. In Matthew 28 the seal is broken, but here no one could break that seal. The tables are completely turned. Finally the devil will be cast into the lake of fire where death and the grave will find their place and the universe of bliss will be brought into view and God will be all in all. The wondrous track of the beloved Son of God will never be forgotten, for eternal homage and praise will be rendered to Him, the mighty Victor.

H. J. FOOTE.

DISCIPLESHIP AND THE POWER OF THE LORD.

(MATT. 8. 23-27.)

IT is striking to notice how the Lord in His work and ministry here so often had to do with individuals. When we think of the infinite greatness of Christ, who He is—God over all—and His greatness as a man here in this world, and yet we read more than once of the Lord having to do with individuals all alone. We know of that striking case in the fourth chapter of John's gospel where the Lord spoke to a woman alone, and we know the conversation with the woman had far-reaching results.

Thus we get encouragement for the present moment. Things as they are for God outwardly at the present time seem small and weak, but it is very encouraging to realise that what the Lord gives to a few will have far-reaching results. The Lord is able to do it; He is Head of the assembly—of the whole church—and He takes account of the whole church in a great city.

We get one great city (the city of Corinth) specially taken up in connection with God's testimony in a place. Paul was told by the Lord that He had much people in that place, and Paul, when writing to the Christians there, writes to "the assembly of God which is in Corinth." He does not write to the assemblies, but to *the assembly*. That principle remains true. There is one assembly in each city, and in connection with each the Lord has said, "Ye are the body of Christ." Each one is dependent on the other in that place, and if the Lord gives something to one or

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two, depend upon it it is for the good of all. We cannot explain how He is going to do it, but the Lord does it, so that it is very important for us when we have to do with the Lord to realise that He is speaking to us not only for our good, but for the good of the whole church.

When we come to the practical condition of things we find individuals are addressed—"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." That is intensely individual—"he that hath." But think of the possibilities in connection with the hearing; think of the results that are possible in connection with *your* hearing. The woman in John 4 was not one we might have thought the Lord would take up as a desirable messenger, but the Lord did take her up, and He used her to that city.

The thought of discipleship is very prominent in the Gospel of Matthew. The gospel ends with that. If we are to understand the gospels we must see the way they end. At the end of the Gospel of Matthew the eleven are sent out into the world to make disciples of all the nations. At the end of Mark they are sent out into the world to preach the glad tidings to all creation.

We get the thought of creation more than once in Mark; God claims His creation for Himself in Mark's gospel. In Matthew's gospel the thought of discipleship is prominent, and they were to make disciples not of the Jews only, but of all the nations. If we think of those nations as they were at that time, what a wonderful testimony it was to the power of God. Think of the idolatry and abominable wickedness that was there, and how degraded men were at that time, and yet they were to make disciples of all

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the nations. I do not believe one nation has been left out. In many of the places at the present time where there is very little for God it is because the truth has been given up. We do not know what has happened in the past, but there are traces of the light of Christianity having been there. I believe disciples were made of all the nations because Jesus sent them to do it. God would not leave one nation out. But then they were to be *disciples*, not just converted people. A disciple is a follower of Jesus, a learner of Jesus, one who is instructed by Jesus, and in that way is intelligent.

There is another thing in Matthew's gospel I would like to draw attention to, and that is the *power* of the Lord Jesus ; He is presented in connection with the power of God. Jesus is presented in a different way in each gospel ; we get the same events but in a different light. The incident we drew attention to comes very soon in Matthew's gospel. It is a special incident setting forth the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is mentioned elsewhere, but in different connections. The greatness of the Person is presented in Matthew ; He is presented as a *Man*—"What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him !" It is not only that He can meet the power of the winds and the sea and overcome them, but they *obey* Him. It is a wonderful help to realise Jesus in that light, that He is not only stronger than all the power of evil, but the power of evil obeys Him. At the end of the previous chapter the Lord speaks of one who hears His sayings and does them, and He compares him to a man who builds his house upon a rock ; the rain descends, the floods come, and then the winds blow, but the house stands because it is built

upon a rock. If we read on in the Gospel of Matthew we can see that everything is under the control of the Lord. The Lord may use Satan ; He may use the power of evil here, but it is the privilege of the Christian to take it from the Lord.

You will remember that Paul, when writing his second Epistle to the Corinthians tells them of the wonderful way the Lord had dealt with him. He says, "I know a man in Christ . . . such an one caught up to the third heaven " ; and then he tells them that he heard in paradise words not lawful for a man to utter. What wonderful exaltation and privilege ! Then when down here resuming his ordinary pathway he said there was given to him a thorn in the flesh lest he should be exalted above measure. How terrible the human heart is ! Think of the Apostle Paul, great servant of the Lord that he was, needing a thorn in the flesh. The Lord gave it to him. We are not told what it was. The Holy Spirit does not satisfy curiosity as to the exact form of the infirmity, but it was infirmity ; it was weakness, and Paul says it was a minister of Satan to buffet him. But Paul did not take it from Satan ; he took it from the Lord, and he had to do with Him about it. Paul besought the Lord three times that it might be taken from him ; he realised that the One who gave it could take it away. The Lord gave him a beautiful answer ; He said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." It shews how the Lord controls the power of evil and uses it for the good of His own.

We find the disciples in following Jesus into the boat experience a storm. The Lord had spoken at the end of the previous chapter of the rain coming, and the

streams, and then the wind. That should have helped them. How often we have known things in doctrine, but when faced with realities we are shaken. We need to distinguish between what we are by nature and what God has made of us. What God has done will go on for ever ; it cannot be shaken, but we have to realise that we are shaken. Even with Paul we can see how distressed he was about the thorn in the flesh. We do not want to be occupied with evil, but the Lord has told us about it ; He has spoken of the rain coming down, then the streams, and last of all the wind. One thing after another. The rain would form the streams, the streams would submerge anything built on the sand, and the wind would bring all the weakness to light. The Lord speaks of that in order to draw attention to something that cannot be shaken ; He says, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." How important it is that we should be building and that we should truly be disciples.

The *sayings* that the Lord refers to were spoken to His disciples. If we want to understand what a disciple is we must read what is called the sermon on the mount ; the instruction there is for a man who hears and does the things. We shall not prosper unless we do the things. If we look over our soul history, we find we made distinct progress in connection with practical steps, but we must not rest on the past. There is always another step to be taken ; so long as we are here there is something to do, and the Lord speaks of a man doing these things. We need to be prepared for the storm. They follow Jesus into the boat and then there is a storm. It says, "And, behold, there arose a great

tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves : but he was asleep." How beautiful that the Lord could rest in the storm ! That is a lesson for us. It is just the opposite to what we naturally should do. The storm is a time to rest, because it is a time when the things we might ordinarily do are hindered. The Lord would teach us to rest in a storm. He was asleep in the storm. We do not often find the blessed Lord presented as being asleep. We read of His being all night in prayer to God and of His being weary with His journey.

If we are left here we shall have to face a storm. The storm must come. We cannot expect things to be always the same in connection with the testimony. There is evil here ; the enemy is here, and the Lord would prepare us for a storm, but the storm is a time of rest. Think of the Lord down here as the dependent Man ; think of His sleep. How different from the sleep of His disciples ; in the hour of His agony they were sleeping for sorrow. We often find refuge from sorrow in sleep for a time, but it does not send the sorrow away. The Lord when He took sleep would take it from His Father, conscious of His love, care and support. He was asleep in the storm, but the disciples were not asleep. "His disciples came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us ; we perish. . . . Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." We can see the sea, but we cannot see the wind ; the wind is an insidious, subtle thing. The Lord rebuked the wind and the sea. That is the way the Lord works ; He goes to the root of the matter. We are apt to look at the things that are influenced by the wind instead of going to the root. When Peter sought to walk on the water—and he did

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walk—to go to Jesus, he began to sink when he looked round and saw the wind boisterous.

We have to remember that when the Apostle Paul speaks of conflict he says, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” We often look at the flesh and blood, and we are apt to forget what is behind it all ; it is brought in some way under the power of the enemy ; there is the wind. Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea and there was a great calm. As I said just now, we shall have to face the storm, but, thank God, we are going to see a great calm ! Whenever you see a storm in the testimony there is a calm coming—blessing is coming. The One who allows the storm is the One who controls things, and He is going to bring in a great calm. They are impressed with His greatness—“What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him !”

C. MENZIES.

“ THE GENERATION FOLLOWING.”

IT has ever been the pleasure of God that there should be a generation to follow, for this is necessary to secure the continuation of God’s testimony on earth. The earnest expectation of the fulfilment of God’s promise of a seed which should bruise the serpent’s head caused Eve erroneously to regard Cain as this seed ; but although Abel was killed and Cain wandered from God, Adam afterwards begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name *Seth* (appointed). In him the generation of faith was

continued in view of the eventual fulfilment of the promise by the coming of Christ.

Abram recognised the necessity of a generation when he said, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" But the word of the Lord came to him, "Look now toward heaven and tell the stars . . . so shall thy seed be." So in *Isaac* (laughter) a seed was given, amidst rejoicing. Thus the generation following was assured and the line of faith remained unbroken.

Jacob, on his deathbed, rejoiced that there was a generation following, as he blessed the two sons of Joseph, *Ephraim and Manasseh*, for he said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed." Then he added, "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads . . . and let them grow into a multitude." And he blessed them that day. Thus his faith counted upon the continuance of a people for God on earth.

Jochebed, the mother of Moses, was fully alive to the value of the generation to follow; for when Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river," she took for her babe an ark of bulrushes, that he might be preserved alive. How greatly God honoured her faith, for not only was *Moses* preserved, but he became the great deliverer of God's people out of Egypt, that they might be brought to the land of God's purpose, and continue therein. The education of the succeeding generation was commanded by God, so that when Moses taught them the words of God, he instructed them that they should "teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons," for God had said, "Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear

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my words . . . that they may teach their children.”

Hannah, that godly woman of a dark day, felt the need for a generation to follow as she prayed, “O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt . . . give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.”

Samuel, who was given as the answer to that prayer, was used to recover the people of God, and before he passed away he anointed David, by whom the ark was recovered and God’s testimony continued.

It was *David*, in his day, who charged the people to “Walk about Zion . . . that ye may tell it to the generation following.”

His contemporary, *Asaph*, also said, “Of the words of God, which our fathers have told us . . . we will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord.” He also said the Lord “commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God.” (Psa. 78.)

How beautifully the Psalmist expressed the true spiritual desire of every one who is concerned for the maintenance of God’s interests when he said, “That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished [sculptured] after the similitude of a palace.” Thus the development of spiritual manhood of the sons, and the beautifying of the house of God with the meek and quiet spirit of the daughters, are to be the results

of the generation to come, being brought to God, and blessed by Him.

The New Testament confirms the principle, for the generation following is the hope of the testimony. With what affection the Apostle Paul refers to *Timothy* as his "beloved child," encouraging him to consider for the continuation of the testimony of our Lord, by his exhortation—"the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Every one who is concerned in these last days for the continuation of the interests of God in power looks out with earnest longing upon the generation following. The potential value of young lives, the possibilities of spiritual development, and the consciousness of the great need for spiritual men and women, will cause much prayer and desire that the rising generation may be encouraged and established.

On the other hand, young believers will do well to look with affectionate regard to those who have long trodden the path of faith, and, having gained experience with God, are able to build them up on their most holy faith. Thus the work of God will continue, until the Lord comes !

F. S. MARSH.

THE BIBLE.—HOSEA XII. 7—XIV.

IN another abrupt transition Israel's deceitful course of departure is brought before us in chapter 12. 7. Could there be a greater contrast than between what Israel was and what Jehovah was ? Their path of deceit might seem to yield prosperity, as the present

time is one of great prosperity in a boastful Christendom. "I am become rich" (Hosea 12. 8) finds its counterpart to-day in "I am rich, and am grown rich" of Revelation 3. 17. But what a state of departure each passage proves! Thank God, He can act sovereignly. He did so in delivering Israel from Egypt; He will do so again. Prophetic ministry will again save the situation, as it did then and has done many times since. Man's departure and God's mercy are placed over against each other here. Yet departure must be judged. (Ver. 14.) So also, "He trespassed through Baal, and he died." (Chap. 13. 1.)

Israel's failure is again emphasised (ver. 2) and consequent judgment follows (ver. 3); but again the only hope is in what *God* is—"Yet I am Jehovah thy God," etc. Again they but enjoy His blessing to exalt themselves. "They became full and their heart was exalted." How history repeats itself! (See Deut. 32. 13-16; Eph. 1. 3-6; Rev. 2. 4, 5.) How deceitful the heart! We may even enjoy our blessings in a mental way and get away in heart and forget the Blessor. "Therefore have they forgotten me"! God *must* judge such a state. (Vers. 7, 8.) We destroy ourselves if we depart from God, for He is our only help. What is the use of a king without God? He is but taken away in God's wrath! The utter failure of man, of Israel, and the saving mercy of God are constantly brought together in Hosea. So here again (vers. 12-14), and yet there is always God's solemn judgment of departure. (Vers. 15, 16.) This is so even with us. Our failures and God's mercy; and yet there is always His discipline, so that we should not be condemned with the world. (Amos 3. 2; 1 Cor. 11. 32.)

The last chapter (14) is a most touching appeal. "O Israel, return unto the Lord." Grace and mercy will meet them as they have met us. Romans 11 and Hosea go well together. Israel will yet be subjects of mercy. Our works cannot save us; outside help is no good. Mercy alone suits us, and God is rich in mercy!

So the reply comes (ver. 4), "I will heal," etc. What a really lovely end secured by mercy for such an unhappy course of departure. Israel is not here "going about to establish their own righteousness." (Rom. 10. 3.) They have at last found out they have none. Their words are, "Forgive all iniquity." Hence God blesses and loves freely and rich blessing is their portion.'

The heart, too, is recovered. Ephraim says, "What have I to do any more with idols?" How God notices any move like this! "I have heard him," says God, "and observed him." Every move Godward is observed. How interested heaven is in every returning sinner. How the Lord watches every movement of recovery!

Verse 8 is a kind of dialogue, a conversation. Ephraim says, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Jehovah says, "I have heard him, and observed him." Then Ephraim, "I am like a green fir tree." Then Jehovah, "From me is thy fruit found." Only in dependence is fruit possible. All is from God.

The Book of Hosea shews the rightness of God's ways. If we are wise we shall understand them. Departure means we must fall. *God* cannot change. He does not alter to accommodate Himself to our departure. If we transgress we fall; the just walk in God's ways. Repentance is our first right step. We

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begin then to walk in God's ways. So the Lord recognises such in Matthew 3. 15. Then faith recognises the justness of God's judgment and comes to God by sacrifice, the death of another. Our works cannot save us. It always must be mercy, whether Israel or ourselves.

M. W. BIGGS.

“THE LAMP OF THE BODY IS THE EYE.”

(MATT. 6. 22, 23.)

THAT the *light* of the body is *not* the eye is evident, for the eye can only illuminate the body as long as it is itself illuminated! The passage should read, “the *lamp* of the body is the eye”—it simply holds the light. Yet without this lamp we cannot see. How needful is it then to be careful that the eye, as the organ which receives outwardly and supplies inwardly divine light should be kept clear, and clean. If it gets dim the light fades from it, and soon the lamp goes out, and the whole body—the whole man—becomes opaque. (Matt. 6. 23.)

Such a one in such a state, whatever may have been his past keenness of spiritual perception, becomes “shortsighted” (2 Peter 1. 9), and eventually blind; so that, maybe, he cannot distinguish the very truth that once was so clear to his soul, and which he enjoyed.

“The lamp of the body is the eye.” How is this perceptive faculty of our moral being to be kept healthy?

It must be supplied with fresh oil! If the Spirit within is grieved He will not illuminate us, and whatever light we have objectively, as doctrine and principle,

will be of no use to us. There must *then* be self-judgment. If I find that my brethren are enjoying light from God which I fail to discern, let me be concerned about my spiritual eyesight. “*First,*” said Christ, “cast the beam out of thine own eye, and *then* thou shalt *see clearly.*”

Then again the eye must be focussed on Christ. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” *Single* means *simple*—the opposite of duplex. The Greek word is only found in the New Testament in Matthew 6. 22 and Luke 11. 34. J. N. D. translates it respectively “single” and “simple.” “Full of light” in the original is one word, and that word is an adjective meaning *luminous*! Thus the spiritual man is the reverse of opaque. Luminous is the word that describes him. According to his capacity he is descriptive of Christ—“the true light.” Whilst the Spirit feeds the lamp from within, Christ illuminates it from without. So we have the inward supply and the outward source of the soul’s discrimination in divine things. “If therefore thy whole body is light, not having any part dark, it shall be *all light* as when the lamp lights thee with its brightness.” May it be so—Amen.

S. J. B. CARTER.

GAIUS.

(3 JOHN.)

IN the scriptures the Spirit brings many brethren beloved of God before us for our consideration. No two are alike, neither are there to-day any two who are alike. Nevertheless all have one object, Christ, and it is the contemplation of Him that brings

us closer and closer together and produces likeness to Himself. "Let this mind be in you," the mind of Christ, which is the mind of God for us.

In this short, but very important epistle, John the elder brings three before us for our consideration, two by way of encouragement and one by way of warning. How John's own thoughts of them help us. John's own heart comes to light, and he speaks to Gaius as brother to brother. He greets him as one he loves in truth; a love that can think sympathetically, and so desire health for him and prosperity according to the measure of his soul prosperity. John greatly rejoices in finding those walking in truth, the moral features of the Lord Jesus being reproduced in them. John had seen these lovely features in the Lord and recognises them in others, and speaks of some coming and bearing testimony to Gaius, holding fast the truth even as he walked in truth.

Holding fast the truth and walking in truth is more to be preferred to teaching truth. Doubtless John and others did both, hence the effectiveness of their ministry. Divine impressions are carried from the home of this beloved brother, and had been borne witness to before the church, and how he had set some forward on their journey worthily of God. They may have come to him as strangers, but would leave deeply impressed with the Spirit of Christ seen in Gaius. He was like Paul in his own hired house set for the refreshment and encouragement of others. What a privilege! How John would have us to turn to account such privileges. "We therefore ought to receive such that we might be fellow-helpers with the truth." "We therefore" means you and me. You may not have a home like Gaius, but you may have

means ; we may not even have these, but can help the work of the Lord by our prayers. How the apostles valued the prayers of the brethren, and much is set down to the effectual prayers of the saints. To-day the Lord would have us in practical sympathy with what He is doing and with those by whom He is working.

Diotrephes ; what a sad contrast to Gaius ! We would like to draw a veil over this section, but the Spirit, through John, does not ; he comes into public view, surely as a warning for us. We can leave him with the Lord and the spiritual judgment of the saints, as it says in verse 11, "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good." No one that is spiritual would emulate him, but with sorrow of heart would pray for him.

Demetrius ; what a comfort to consider a brother who hath a good report of all and of the truth itself. It has been suggested that he may have been one of the brethren Diotrephes had cast out of the assembly. This may have been, but of his sympathetic link with Gaius and with the truth there is no doubt, and John himself bears witness to it, and he says to Gaius, "Thou knowest that our witness is true." There is much for the encouragement of all in this short epistle.

J. LIGHTBURN.

THE SONG OF SONGS.

THIS book is the end of the Old Testament, according to the Lord's own arrangement of that precious volume. (Luke 24. 44.) The disciples as assembled at Jerusalem were to *understand* the scrip-

tures, Moses, the prophets and the Psalms. (Job to Canticles.) The Lord could *interpret* the scriptures to the two going *away* from Jerusalem, but the assembled disciples have their *understandings opened* that they should *understand* the scriptures themselves.

The song is Christ's, the true Solomon. Thus John the Baptist recognised Him, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." (John 3. 29.) John, devoted servant, one truly sent of God, retires in the joy of that recognition, his heart finding its relief in the joy of hearing His voice. Christ, in His song, delights in the spiritual and moral features of His bride, and it will be found there is no spiritual progress seen in the bride till she is named *the Shulamite*. Shulamite is feminine of Solomon. She is entitled to that name since she has been brought morally to be like Him. It has often been said that the epistles in their effective ministry by the Spirit build and form the woman, and the gospels reveal to us the Man. Thus the song celebrates the production of similarity of love to that of Christ by His assembly on earth.

As Solomon, Christ has entered into His glory; it is noonday; not in display, but in peace. (Luke 24. 26.) He is at leisure, as Solomon was, from war; no evil occurrent in that glory. The epistles speak of Him as such, and unfold His glories to His own, His beloved.

It is remarkable how much is known of Him in the first chapter: His love better than wine, His name an ointment poured forth. The personal experience through the word (Eph. 5. 25-27) of the tents of Kedar (see Psa. 120. 5), to the curtains of Solomon's house, shew where bridal affections impel the assembly. The flock rests at noon; this is where the

supper leads. (See Gen. 43. 16.) By the ministry of the new covenant (2 Cor. 3) under His shadow, as the apple tree, there is rapture ; and she is led to the banqueting house, where love divine doth rest. Apples (or citrons), the fruit of the apple tree, speak of the love of God known by the ministry of Christ.

Christ values the separation of heart to Himself, and noticing the wall, leads His own into the fulness of blessing consequent upon His having ended the winter, and having brought in the time of love. Progress is marked in chapter 2. 10. But the lesson of His absence brings the assembly, as the Galatians and Corinthians experienced, into the good of the new covenant, and Jerusalem above. (Chap. 3. 4.) The procession from the wilderness to Jerusalem, and the place of Solomon's rest, shew how the bride has benefited by ministry. Her features are now recounted that she may know Christ's appreciation of what He finds in His assembly. His inheritance is revealed to her, and in His company she is to Him what is exclusively delightful to His affections. (Chap. 4.)

The exercise of such a beloved assembly as that at Ephesus is portrayed in chapter 5 ; the affections awake, but sleep, lack of watchfulness, sets His love in activity to reveal His unchanging love. The lover in the East leaves perfume on the handles to shew he has called, and the beautiful simile is used to shew the means that Christ uses to awaken the assembly to His suffering love.

She can now describe Him. How often has the Lord acted in this way, and with what precious results ! Who but the assembly is His undefiled, His *only one* ? Not *one* of a thousand. (Eccles. 7. 28.) Who is she that is fair as the moon ? The Shulamite !

“LET THY GARMENTS BE ALWAYS WHITE.” 139

What is seen in the Shulamite ? As it were the dance of two camps (Mahanaim). Movement together is found both in Colossians and Ephesians.

It is the bride who can define love. The assembly knows what divine love is. It has been expressed in death and the grave, in the flames of Jah. She upon His arm can survey love and become transformed by it, and dispense its preciousness. 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 it to Himself *glorious*.

L. O. LABETT.

“LET THY GARMENTS BE ALWAYS WHITE.”

“**W**HAT’S the harm ? Surely a Christian can go *anywhere* without being harmed or hindered or defiled.”

Said her friend, “You remind me of when I was about to go down a coal mine with some friends ! I had on a dainty white frock. When remonstrated with I turned to an old miner who was to be our guide, and asked petulantly :

“‘Can’t I wear a white dress going down ?’

“‘Yes’m,’ he replied with a smile, ‘you can wear a white dress going down, but you won’t wear it coming up.’”

So mixing with and fraternising with worldly people and their ways and associations—our white garments must get defiled ! Our safe course is in 2 Corinthians 6. 14–18—read it !

If our head is to lack no ointment—if we wish for spiritual power and discernment—we must keep our garments (which mean our habits and ways) *always white.*” (See Eccles. 9. 8.)

S. J. B. CARTER.

“THE TELEGRAM DID IT!”

I RECEIVED a letter asking me if I could pay a visit to see a young woman who was dying and could not get peace. This was fourteen miles away, and I had to walk home. I went and found her greatly troubled. I read and prayed with her, said all I could to help her, but no peace came. She said, “Oh, do come again!” I promised to do so as soon as I could. Meanwhile she confessed a sin for which she could not be forgiven—so she thought. However, I dropped a note to say that, God willing, I was coming again at an early date. At the close of the note I put, “Fear not: believe only.”

When I arrived she was full of joy and exclaimed, “The telegram did it.” I said, “What telegram?” She said, “The one from heaven, ‘Fear not: believe only.’”

Light shone in and peace filled her soul, and a very short time after she broke a blood-vessel coughing and died in her father’s arms. Oh, the power of His word!

W. J. H.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

(EZEK. 48. 30-35.)

IN the fortieth chapter of this book we read of the prophet in the visions of God being brought into the land of Israel, and set upon a very high mountain, upon which there was the frame of a city and of a man with a measuring reed in his hand, who said to Ezekiel that he was to see with his eyes, to hear with his ears and to set his heart upon all that was to be shewn to him, and finally that he was to declare all that he saw to the house of Israel. From chapter 40 to the close of the book we are given the details of this vision of God, and in the verses at the head of this paper we read of the names of the gates of the city, and that the name of the city was Jehovah-Shammah—the Lord is there.

In Psalm 48 we are invited to walk about the city of the great King so that acquaintance with it may enable us to speak well of it. So here the names of the various gates being given is surely an invitation to consider the import of each several gate, and how they stand in relation to the name of the city. May we be enabled in our meditations to speak well of each gate.

The three gates northward are first mentioned, the first being

THE GATE OF REUBEN.

This gate would suggest the thought of sonship. The great feature of the city being that the Lord is there, sonship would seem to be essential for enjoying the

liberty of the city. The spirit of sonship and the position of sons are the common heritage of the people of God, but how few know it for their soul's present enjoyment and entrance upon privilege. The idea of the city would convey to us the thought of rule, authority and influence, and if on our part there is to be intelligent and effective service, the thought of sonship meets us at the outset. These two thoughts are linked in the scriptures. It will be remembered that the Lord said to Moses that he was to go to Pharaoh and say, "Let my son go, that he may serve me," and in Revelation 21, in connection with the holy city, God says of the overcomer, "I will be to him God, and he shall be to me son." So Leah when Reuben was born said, "See, a son." We shall make but very poor progress in spiritual apprehension unless we realise that we have been brought into the position of sons and thus enter upon the spiritual import of the gate of Reuben.

The knowledge that sonship is our present portion prepares us for the significance of the

GATE OF JUDAH.

Every note of praise that ascends as incense to God and ministers to His heart's joy finds its spring in the blessed fact that we are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Therefore as we move on from the gate of Reuben and come to the gate of Judah we cannot but help giving expression to the feelings of a son, and these find their outlet in praise. How disappointing has Israel been to God, for we read that praise is silent before Him in Zion. Yet there have been movements when some of the sons of Judah have been found sounding their notes of praise. One thinks of

David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, how often his feelings found vent in songs of praise and thanksgiving in psalm after psalm. David the king shewed that Judah was the place where God was known. In a later day another of the sons of Judah, Hezekiah, says, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day." This would tell us that one of the evidences of life is that praise is rendered to God. Then there is Mary in Luke 1, how she shews herself to be truly of the tribe of Judah in that wonderful outburst of praise which finds expression in verses 46 to 55.

The greatest of the sons of Judah we cannot but think of "Great David's greater Son." How we delight to dwell upon the Lord Jesus Christ as ministering gladness and joy to the heart of His Father and His God. In a moment of extreme pressure, when He was conscious of rejection and when He had to pronounce judgment on Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, His heart found an outlet in praise to God, saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." Then after the institution of the supper we read that they sung a hymn and went to the mount of Olives, the sorrow of Gethsemane and the sufferings of Golgotha bearing heavily upon His holy soul; how wonderful at *such* a moment to read of a hymn being sung. Again, think of Christ in resurrection appearing to His own and saying, "All hail," and of the scripture in Psalm 22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee," words which in Hebrews 2 are applied to Christ and the church. Christ as the Singer has never failed, and moreover He has secured a company, His assembly, who know Him as the Leader of their praises. The day is coming when in the great congre-

gation the voice of Christ will be heard ; in Psalm 145 it is Christ who raises the note of praise to Jehovah, and in the psalms that follow one circle after another takes up the note, culminating in the hallelujah chorus of Psalm 150, when

“ Redeemed creation joins in one,
To bless the sacred name
Of Him that sits upon the throne
And to exalt the Lamb.”

In this way are we in the spirit of our souls found amongst the sons of Judah ? In Deuteronomy 33 it says, “Hear, O Lord, the voice of Judah.” In the Song of Solomon the Lord says, “Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice : *cause me to hear it.*” There is an immediate response : “Make haste, my beloved.” Has this been so with us ? The Lord would have our praise to be vocal, “speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and chanting with your heart to the Lord ; giving thanks at all times for all things to him who is God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

J. R. TITHECOTT.

(To be continued.)

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

A GLANCE AT THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

IT is of great moment that every true Christian should be impressed with the practical character of Christianity, so that it becomes an essential factor in the everyday life and shines out, not in word only, but in deed. The Apostle James was inspired to write

an epistle which deals in a unique manner with the working out of Christianity in practical life. While little is known of the writer himself (save that he was an apostle who walked with the Lord Jesus in His pathway, and thus saw in Him the exemplification of the truth), the effect of his personal contact with Jesus is clearly seen in his epistle.

He assumes that those to whom He writes are grounded in the fundamental truths of Christianity, for he refers to God as "*the Father*," and to the Lord Jesus Christ as "*the Lord of glory*." He mentions "*the Spirit that dwelleth in us*," and also refers to "*the assembly*," and He speaks of "*the coming of the Lord*" as though all these truths are known.

James illustrates his exhortations by familiar objects, as the Lord did in His ministry. For instance, "a *wave* of the sea driven with the wind and tossed," aptly describes a man who asks for wisdom, but does not ask in faith ; a *mirror* is used to teach the value of considering what manner of man one is ; "the *flower* of the grass" remind him of the fading character of everything here ; the *bit* in the horse's mouth, and the *rudder* of a ship illustrate the necessity for control in our speech ; a *fountain* proves the need for purity ; a *vapour* teaches the solemn lesson of the uncertainty of life ; the *rain* conveys the thought of the coming down of heavenly blessing.

This epistle deals definitely and powerfully in turn with essentially practical subjects, such as temptation and endurance, pure and undefiled religion, avoiding partiality, the necessity for good works, the ordering of the tongue, the wisdom which is from above, our friendships, the spirit of humility, behaviour as brethren, subjection to God's will, the

danger of a selfish life, the coming of the Lord, the power of prayer, and the value of one soul recovered for God. The apostle, full of affection, addresses Christians as "brethren" fourteen times in this short epistle, twice as "beloved brethren." He solemnly exhorts them to the end that Christianity may be livingly expressed both in their speech and in their works, for he says, "So *speak* ye, and so *do*, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

A distinct principle may be noted in each chapter. The climax of the first chapter is found in the remarkable definition of "true religion," so different from the human idea, for he emphasises its

PURITY.

"*Pure* religion and *undefiled* before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself *unspotted* from the world." Pure motives and affections should control the followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are found where there is sorrow and affliction, and in love to Him they will desire to walk as delivered from this present evil world.

In the second chapter he urges the necessity of

GOOD WORKS.

According to the Epistle to the Romans we are "justified by *faith*" before God, but this does not lessen the truth that we need to be "justified by *works*" in the sight of men. Those who profess faith in Christ are urged to shew their faith by their works, for Christianity is not a theory or system of doctrines, but is living and practical. Men are to witness the believer's works as expressing the reality of his faith.

In chapter 3, after calling solemn attention to the

danger of an unbridled tongue and urging the need of speaking a pure language, the apostle furnishes a key to a christian life in the supply of

WISDOM

that is from above. How encouraging it is that a Christian can be guided and governed by the wisdom that is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Christianity can only be displayed as this wisdom is received and its features expressed.

In chapter iv. the writer is concerned lest there should be a spirit that is not pleasing to God, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." The spirit of

LOWLINESS

is essential if the testimony of Christ is to be effectual, for He was meek and *lowly* in heart. It is not sufficient to do that which is right; it must be done in the right spirit to please God. God the Holy Spirit is here spoken of as "the Spirit that dwelleth in us," and He alone furnishes the true secret of lowliness.

Finally, the apostle in chapter 5 leads on to the value of one soul and life that is recovered for God, but connects this with the

POWER

of prayer, for "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are and he prayed earnestly. One of the greatest evidences of Christianity to-day is the recovery of those who have erred from the truth and this is effected in the power of prayer.

The consideration of this important epistle is commended, to the end that the practical lives of God's people may be increasingly for the pleasure of God and the testimony of Christ. F. S. MARSH.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HEBREWS.

(HEB. 2. 4; 3. 7; 6. 4-6; 9. 8; 10. 15-22.)

I HAVE in mind to dwell on the Holy Spirit as presented to us in this epistle. I have no doubt that the manner of His presentation in each book of scripture is distinctive, and that it opens up a wide subject for us; our understanding of each book would be greatly enhanced were we to lay hold of the setting of the Spirit therein. And so I would venture to look at this epistle from that point of view; for whilst the Holy Spirit, as we learn from the Lord's own word, does not speak of Himself, that is, as from Himself, He does speak of Himself as an object. He should be that in our minds, for it is a marvellous fact that the Holy Spirit of God, One of the divine Persons to whose name we are baptised, is still here. Indeed, He is the continual attestation to the divine gift here. The apostle says to the Corinthians, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable free gift." (2 Cor. 9. 15, New Trans.) It was not something unknown, nor merely historical; it was a living presence, and *is* livingly present. The fact that the "gift" in that particular passage is not specified presents it in greater evidence and fulness; as appealing to the intelligence and experience and consciousness of the saints of God. It is a divine presence here, a marvellous fact, the

fulness of divine giving ; and the more we so regard it, the more we shall be affected, and brought into accord with God.

Now that is the setting of the passage in 2 Corinthians. It is a question of *giving*. "He hath dispersed abroad ; he hath given to the poor : his righteousness remaineth for ever." We are thus in the very midst of the unspeakable free-giving of God. The gift of the Spirit and all that it involves is of a piece with the gift of the Son ; the Spirit of God continuing here maintains the sense of divine presence.

The Epistle to the Hebrews has remarkable correspondence with our own times ; it deals with apostasy. It indicates the divine way of meeting apostasy, and delivering the people of God from its current. As it was then, so now, the current is definite and strong. Young ones particularly are little aware of the strength of it, and how enormously it has been accentuated during the past quarter of a century ; and hence the importance of understanding how God would fortify us against it, so that if we are caught by it, as some, alas, are, we may be delivered from it ! The divine way necessarily hinges on the presence of the Holy Ghost here. The writer speaks of God bearing them witness, "both by signs and wonders, and various acts of power, and distributions of the Holy Spirit, *according to his will.*" (Ver. 4.)

We are thus brought back at the very outset of the epistle to the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, and His subsequent activities and services ; it was a marvellous intervention, far exceeding that of the heavenly multitude which came down when Jesus was born. The Holy Ghost had come, taking up His residence here. It was not a passing thing. It was not

a visit. It is said that He *sat* upon each of them ; upon each of those assembled ; which word usually denotes permanency as to position with something in view, however short or long the period. He came in definitely and resolutely to take up His residence in the assembly, the one hundred and twenty at Jerusalem being the work of Christ Himself. No one afterwards received the Holy Ghost as they did. The great initial idea of His coming and presence and continuance here is indicated in Acts 2. He *sat* upon each of them, and in the form of cloven tongues as of fire. That is, He was here to *speak*, and to speak universally ; and with means of dealing effectively with all obstruction, for there appeared cloven tongues as of *fire*. There were thus the distributions of the Holy Spirit according to God's will. (Heb. 2. 4.)

I think Christians should begin with the great fact in their souls of what God has done, of what He did at Pentecost, and what He has done in a lesser degree since, even in our own time. There has been a great revival ; not such as we have been speaking of this afternoon as seen in the work of Saul. (1 Sam. 15.) That was an incomplete work ; it was not finished ; it was like Sardis, of whom the Lord says, "I have not found thy works complete before my God." (Rev. 3. 2.) They may *appear* to be complete. Saul's victory over the Amalekites *seemed* to be complete, and he would persuade even Samuel that it was so, but it was not so before God. There had been disregard of the divine command in selfishly sparing what should have been utterly destroyed. And so, as at Sardis, which immediately preceded our time, and which is still all around us, the works are not complete before God. Take all the great religious movements

since the Reformation. In no instance do you find completion until you come to the true revival; not indeed what Christendom regards as a revival, but what the Spirit would give us to understand as a revival, that is, in the recognition of Christ in heaven, and the Holy Ghost here; and, as a consequence, His presence for the maintenance of the church. *That* is completeness!

■ A believer begins with himself as regards the church; he is of it. As soon as I apprehend Christ in heaven and the Holy Ghost here, and what the church is, I begin to see that I am a Peter, so to speak, I belong to it; and then I begin to move. Then as to service, the Lord says, "Go, for *I* will send thee," and that is the important thing, especially for young people. I begin with it and move in it, and I hold myself in regard of it. So that you see what we come to in the wonderful sovereign mercy of God is genuine recovery, corresponding with what was at the beginning; and especially in the distributions of the Holy Spirit of God "*according to his will.*" And that shuts out at once all human innovation in regard to the church of God. It is all a question of His own will. God's will must enter into everything as regards the distributions of the Holy Spirit. It is said as regards gifts that *God* has set them in the assembly. It is also said that "there are distinctions of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are distinctions of services, and the same Lord; and there are distinctions of operations, but the same God who operates all things in all." (1 Cor. 12. 4-6.)

Thus you see how we are set in this connection; the Holy Spirit operating in gifts, in distributions, the Lord operating in services, God operating all things

in all, as over all. We are in God's world, and man and his world are shut out. However small the limits to which it may be reduced, these great facts apply. So, as regards the distributions of the Spirit ; they are not something merely abstract or theoretic, they are existent and actively, livingly present ; and that is the first great thing to recognise as to the Spirit, these widespread distributions. Whatever they are, they are for the saints, for every one of them, old and young ; and our salvation in the testimony depends in our recognising this, that all is on the principle of God's unspeakable free giving.

J. TAYLOR.

(To be continued, D.V.)

THE BIBLE.

(JOEL 1.)

THE quotation from the prophecy of Joel in the Apostle Peter's address, which is recorded in Acts 2. 16, awakens interest in this minor prophet and provokes inquiry. Very remarkable are the New Testament quotations of the Old Testament. They are by no means haphazard, but with definite design. The one to which I have referred, gives an illustration of that class of quotation when the event referred to is the same in kind as that spoken of in the prophecy, but is not its complete fulfilment. It will possibly be known that there are three manners of quotations, as another has long ago remarked. First, "that it might be fulfilled" when it is the direct object of the prophecy, such as Matthew 1. 22, 23. Secondly, "So that it was fulfilled," which is an accomplishment

contained in the scope of the prophecy, but not the full thought of the Holy Spirit in the prophecy, for example, Matthew 2. 23. Thirdly, "then was fulfilled," which is simply a fact which corresponds with the quotation, which in its spirit applies to it without being its positive object, for example, Matthew 2. 17. This difference in quotation is important.

The quotation in Acts 2 is of the second class, and shews how the blessings of Christianity are largely anticipative in their character; that is to say, we may now enjoy things by faith which really belong to a future day, the "world to come."

The Apostle Peter does not quote Joel 2. 18-27 (which verses refer to the material or temporal blessings of the millennial day), but cites chapter 2. 28-32, which passage speaks of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. From this quotation we have a key to the prophecy of Joel.

Whatever governmental judgment there may have been in the past, and whatever recovery there was after the return from Babylon, it is clear from Acts 2, as also from the prophecy itself, that the events of the past were but a partial fulfilment, and the real scope of the prophecy and the full blessing announced yet await their accomplishment.

Believers to-day anticipate the moral blessings of the "world to come" or millennium, as it is sometimes called. We now may enter the kingdom of God; we now know salvation by calling on the name of the Lord, as did the believers in the day of Acts 2; the pouring out of the Holy Spirit has already had a partial accomplishment, as the Apostle Peter explains. All these blessings are known to-day on the principle of faith, and the Holy Spirit gives us the present enjoy-

ment of spiritual blessings belonging to a yet future day. But the display of these blessings and their outward proof are not yet.

* * * * *

It is clear that the prophecy of Joel divides itself into three main parts. Chapter 1, which refers to a terrible scourge of locusts ; chapter 2, which uses this scourge as an illustration of an even greater scourge when God's "northern army" would overrun the land ; and chapter 3, which speaks of the day of the Lord and the blessings ushered in thereby or consequent thereupon.

With regard to the first section of the prophecy (chap. 1), it is especially to be noted that the great grief or concern of the prophet's heart is that the meat offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord. (Vers. 9, 13.) It is true that joy is withered from the children of men (how could it be otherwise if God have not His place ?), but the heart of the prophet is distressed because God has not His portion, and he calls upon the people to be distressed too. Would that we felt things in this way. How solemn any failure appears when we see that it robs God of what is due to Him. Our very discipline from Him prevents our rendering to Him what ought rightly to be given.

What a solemn manner of address, "Ye drunkards" ! Self-indulgence was there instead of consideration for God.

The prophet, however, not only makes the appeal, but leads the way in a cry to Jehovah. This double action of heart is often and necessary to be found in the true servant. He stands for God and appeals to men ; he stands for men and cries to God. "To

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thee, Jehovah, do I cry." It is Moses who on the mount intercedes for the people, who so firmly stands for God among the people and says, "Who is on the Lord's side?"

What lessons this first chapter teaches! The first question in our hearts always should be, How does this condition affect *God*? It must surely rob us of true joy if God's part is wanting. Then we not only appeal to man to turn to God and cry to Him, but we ourselves lead the way; we cry to God for man.

M. W. BIGGS.

MATERIAL FOR THE ASSEMBLY.

(MATT. 21. 1-11; ACTS 9. 1-21.)

WHAT I had before me in reading these passages was to suggest to you the way the Lord is securing material for the assembly. I wanted us to take account afresh of the fact that His assembly is still here, and He is using the gospel to secure material for it. The thought comes to light in connection with Saul of Tarsus when He says to him, "Why persecutest thou me?" He was not persecuting the Lord Jesus personally, he was persecuting those who bore His name. I desire to connect him with the little colt in Matthew's gospel, because there are many young ones here this evening, and I would like to encourage you to think that the Lord has His eye upon you just as you are, knowing where you live, knowing all about you, not only where you live, but how you live, as He said to Saul of Tarsus, "Why persecutest thou me?" The Lord is active in grace, making no demand upon you,

but using His grace to subdue you to Himself. The assembly of God on earth is made up of those who love the Lord's will; those who in every place call on the name of the Lord, their Lord and our Lord, one Lord over all the companies of God's people, and one Lord over each person in those companies.

The Lord Jesus says in Luke's gospel, Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? The person who does that is like one who builds on the sand, but a wise person digs deep, digs down till he reaches the rock and builds on the rock. It means that you are building your christian profession on what Christ is and not what you can be, and along with that you are owning the Lord; it will make you stable, as it says, "stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

You will become characteristically one of His disciples, one whom He can use towards others. We do not see sufficient of this work going on, no doubt because we are so little subject to the Lord. We know so little how to bring His power in, but the power of His name is here. Salvation is connected with it. So here His disciples move out in all the authority of His word. They are going to claim this little foal for Him. They are to bring it to Him, and they do so. They were told, if any one say anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord hath need of them." That is what one wants to press upon every young heart; the Lord has need of you, you have that which is more valuable to Him than the universe. He is looking for hearts in which He may gain His place, which shall resound in praise to God, so that God may find His dwelling-place there. He has fathomed all the sufferings of Calvary to bring it to pass, He cried,

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?” And then He says, “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel,” and so He is securing hearts for God’s praise. He claims them on the ground of having redeemed them. The word is going forth. “The Lord has need of them.” Just as you are, beloved friends, He would give you to understand, He does not ask you to do anything or be anything, He wants your heart to fill it with the praise of God. It is no question of reformation or making you better before He moves towards you.

It is a question of claiming His place in your heart because He died for you. So the Lord says to Ananias in connection with Saul, “He is a chosen vessel unto me.” How unlikely this man looked, so violent in his opposition to the Lord, and the Lord was in power, and He looked down on this man in his degradation and self-will and He subdued him by a glance.

That is the way the Lord Jesus looks down on every heart, making no demand, but putting in the claim of His redeeming love. And Saul of Tarsus looks up at Him and says, “Who art thou, Lord ?” One would seek to encourage individual dealings with the Lord of this kind.

So He says, “He is a chosen vessel unto me.” That is, Saul of Tarsus was to have a personal link with Jesus, the blessed Son of God. How impossible it looked. He was indeed as violent as an untamed foal of an ass. He came of the tribe that was characteristically a ravaging wolf. He was ravaging the lambs of the flock of Christ, and he is to take a right-about turn. God’s Son is to be enthroned in his heart, and he is to be used for the bringing in of the members of the body of Christ, whom previously he was persecuting. There is

nothing between the service of sin and Satan's power and whole-hearted subjection to Jesus as Lord. Now the Lord Jesus said nothing to Saul of Tarsus about being the Son of God, but in verse 20 we read, "Straightway in the synagogue he preached Jesus that he is the Son of God." I wanted just to suggest one or two thoughts connected with the Son of God to you. He is the centre of a world for God's pleasure. He is the alone One who could make known the Father's love. He has not only been down to Calvary to meet all your need, but He has made known the love of God there. None but the Son of God could have done that. You do not need a long life for the appreciation of Jesus in this character. Saul preached immediately that Jesus is the Son of God. Be instant in your confession of Him in that character. We need to stand for it in days like the present, when every wrong thing is being said about Him.

He has not only abolished death, He has brought life to light in Himself, the resurrection and the life. None other but the Son of God could have done this, and standing related to Him as Son of man is a vast company, those whom He can speak of as "Me." On the one hand the assembly is composed of those who are subject to Christ; on the other hand it is composed of those who are "of Christ." "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one," of one kind. Just as if you sow wheat your crop is of that kind or whatever it may be, and the assembly is composed of those who are the fruit of the love of Christ. It can be said, "For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." He puts His own features upon them, as we get in connection with Gideon's brethren: "As thou art, so were they :

each one resembled the children of a king." The assembly is composed of such.

You may remember that at the end of the wilderness journey it says that the children of Israel pitched toward the sun-rising. I believe it refers to Christ in that character. Under His lordship we prove present salvation in the scene of His absence, but as the Israel of God, as indwelt and formed by the Spirit, we move toward Jehovah's land, a scene filled with the glory of the Son of God "that he might be the firstborn among many brethren," and His brethren do not detract from Him in any way, but they all shew forth His features. As we have indeed in connection with the heavenly city, she has taken on so completely His blessed features, and that is what we are moving on toward. It is not that we cannot taste the blessedness of that scene now, for as we come together as His disciples to partake of His supper and pass by way of the appreciation of His love expressed in His precious death, our hearts already touch the eternal scene of which He is the Sun and Centre, and where He delights to associate His brethren with Himself in the presence of His Father's love.

I just read these passages to suggest to you and to the youngest heart that as Lord His grace would subdue you, He has need of you; and then as subdued by His grace, His love would secure you, secure you for eternal thoughts which would associate you with Himself eternally.

The Lord grant it may be so with each one, for His name's sake.

EU. ROBERTS.

SEED THOUGHTS.

Which world? Travelling through the superb scenery between Newcastle (N.S.W.) and Sydney I saw photographed on the placid surface of the lakes trees, rocks, mountains, etc. But everything that was highest in reality was lowest in reflection!

So it is as regards "this present evil world" and "the world to come." What is highest and most esteemed with God is lowest in the sight of men; and what is lowest in the view of men is highest in the sight of God.

"*In their generation*" (Luke 16. 8) says Christ. The circle runs round its three hundred and sixty degrees, and these people who are of this moral generation take a segment of it, say forty-five degrees, and all the rest is as non-existent!

Three findings:—(1) Found BY Him (Luke 15. 5); (2) Found IN Him (Phil. 3. 9); (3) Found OF Him. (2 Peter 3. 14.)

Faults. It is better to find one of your own faults than a hundred of your fellow believer's.

First and Last. God's first utterance to man: "Thou shalt *surely* die." His last: "*Surely* I come quickly." Man's first utterance to God: "I was afraid . . . I hid myself." Man's last: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

S. J. B. C.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HEBREWS.

(Continued).

(HEB. 2. 4 ; 3. 7 ; 6. 4-6 ; 9. 8 ; 10. 15-22.)

FOLLOWING the distributions of the Holy Spirit according to God's will, the next thing is the *partaking* of it. Chapter 6 contemplates partaking of the Holy Spirit and the possibility of one having done so falling away. (Ver. 6.) In speaking of the Holy Spirit's presence here, and of partaking in it, it is well to bear in mind that it involves the system of grace which God has inaugurated ; and that is what is implied in the figure of a well in the Old Testament. It is not only the *Person* of the Holy Spirit, and His availability, but the system of grace that has been established in His power here. In this book He is called "the Spirit of grace" (chap. 10. 29), a significant term! "The Spirit of grace" involves the system of it, making what is of God dominant for good. Grace effects good in spite of evil. Hence I take Hagar in Genesis as a type of one who partook of the system, who had part in it, but fell away. She had part in the household of faith, and was treated accordingly. It is with her that the idea of a well is first introduced in scripture ; and then with herself and her son. In the second instance, in Genesis 21, she is an outcast, and *he* is an outcast, "the bondwoman and her son," but grace pursues them. She was rightly an outcast from the house of faith, for her son was a mocker of Christ, but grace, as I said, pursues them. This epistle develops

that thought ; for it is the continuance of the overtures of God to His earthly people.

I refer to Hagar in a simple and practical way, as indicating how one may be a participator in the Spirit of grace in this sense, and fall away, and "fail," as it says, "of the grace of God." So in Genesis 21 she has her eyes opened. She threw the boy under a shrub to die, and a voice came to her *from heaven*—that is the principle of this epistle—the second overture to Hagar was *from heaven*. Then God opens her eyes, and she sees the well, and she filled the flask with water and gave to the lad, and he drank of it. She availed herself of it, but she did not continue in it. Abraham in this same chapter went on in it and contended for it. He rebuked the Philistines because of a well they had violently taken away. He valued it. The seven ewe lambs were to be a witness that he had dug the well. But Hagar did not go on in it. It says she took a wife for her son out of Egypt. I speak of this so that you may see how easily after coming to Christ one may turn aside and form links with the world. Ishmael became an "archer," and scripture says of Joseph that "the archers shot at him." (Gen. 49. 23.) As links in the world are formed the course then is rapidly *down*.

Simon Magus in Acts 8 would give money to receive the Holy Ghost, that he might be a great one, and Peter says to him, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter." It is a terrible thing to have neither part nor lot in this matter, but here in Hebrews it speaks of those who *had* had part and who fell away. Such were not born of God ; they had part in an outward way in the Spirit.

Over against this we have the Holy Ghost *speaking*.

First in chapter 3, "To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." In this chapter He is speaking about *our* hearts, and how susceptible they are to hardening, but in chapter 10 He is speaking clearly about the heart of God, that never hardens towards His people! Moreover He intimates, as He speaks about the heart of God, that God takes away the stony heart from us. How blessed to retire into the knowledge of God in His faithfulness! He takes away the stony heart and gives a heart of flesh. The thought of the covenant tends to make the heart soft and tender; and then He says, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." The covenant implies that God in His faithfulness takes possession of the heart and mind so as to secure us wholly for Himself. He leaves not a stone unturned to reach the hearts of His people. We are to keep them with all diligence. (Prov. 4. 23.) The Holy Ghost sheds abroad in *our hearts* the love of God, so that God should rule and dwell there.

Chapters 8 and 10 speak about the covenant; and what I would point out is that what the Spirit says to us here is from the Old Testament; He gives it a present voice. Many belittle the Old Testament; scarcely a greater error could be made than to disparage or neglect the Old Testament. "Every scripture is divinely inspired, and profitable for teaching." (2 Tim. 3. 16.) So that you see the Holy Ghost makes these two passages speak *now*. He *is* a witness, and "the Holy Ghost *says*" (not "said"). Psalm 95 is thus written directly to us, for He quotes that psalm in chapter 3. He brings it to bear upon *me*, lest I should harden my heart; and in chapters 8 and 10 He brings Jeremiah to bear upon me, to witness to

us of the covenant of God. Thus you see what the testimony of the Spirit is, what He is to us, even without going on to the full christian state, which this epistle hardly gives you, for that you would go to Colossians or Ephesians. The Holy Spirit is speaking directly to us in the language of the Old Testament as a witness. How important, therefore, to read the Old Testament !

And then as regards "the holiest" in chapter 9 we read that the Holy Ghost *shews*, for the word in verse 8 is "shewing" or "signifying," that is to say, it is a question of *typical* instruction. The prophets are one witness, and the types are another, shewing the importance of typical teaching. "The Holy Spirit *shewing* this, that the way of the holy of holies has not yet been made manifest while as yet the first tabernacle has its standing." How needful, therefore, to read the types, for in them the Holy Spirit would *shew* us things! We have not only what He *says*, but what He *shews*. In chapter 10 He *speaks*, and brings in the covenant through Jeremiah. He speaks from Jeremiah, using his very words. He is speaking *now*, and all is in view of our entering "the holiest." For if the heart of God is so brought to me in these precious terms, in the thought of forgiveness, we are perfected by the one offering for ever (ver. 14)—we have encouragement to draw near to God. He says, as it were, I wish you to be so perfectly free that you can draw near to Me. Is it not touching, dear brethren? He is in the tabernacle, so to speak, and He would call us to Him. In Leviticus God *called* out of the tabernacle. The way into the holiest is open to us; "Having therefore, brethren, boldness for entering into the holy of holies by the blood of

Jesus, the new and living way which he has dedicated for us, through the veil, that is, his flesh." (Vers. 19, 20.) It is Jesus become Man here, and that involved His death. There is no other way than the death of Jesus; there is no way in for the natural man. It involves, too, the gift of the Spirit, for it is a *living* way.

And then "Having a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, sprinkled as to our hearts from a wicked conscience, and washed as to our body with pure water." (Ver. 22.) That is the way out of this world of apostasy. "Inside the veil, outside the camp." How can we be outside the camp save as we go in sustained by the great Priest!

What a group of facts we have here! The blood of Jesus, the new and living way through the veil, which is His flesh, and the great Priest over the house of God. All these things are grouped together so that a way is made for us into the holiest. It is "heaven itself" that is opened up to us in Hebrews; it has been called "the book of the opened heavens." It has special application to us to-day. Heaven is the outlet from what is going on around us! May God bless His word.

J. TAYLOR.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

As Seen in Paul at Ephesus.

WHILE the beloved Apostle Paul was the great exponent of the truths of Christianity, it is evident from his address to the elders of the church

at Ephesus in Acts 20 that he was also the exemplification of it practically. During the three years he was at Ephesus they had witnessed the marvellous practical results of the knowledge of God upon a man who before his conversion had been "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious."

He is now able to set forth Christianity as

LIVING

it, for his practical life corresponded with the great truths that he taught. He could say, "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, *after what manner* I have been with you at all seasons." It was at Ephesus that "the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified," but this could only be found where the lives of the Christians harmonised with the teaching. A transformed life is the greatest testimony to the power and reality of Christianity, and is so forceful that it cannot be gainsaid.

* * * * *

Paul's living activity in the Lord's interests found expression, as every true christian life will, in

"SERVING

the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears." With what devotedness he could say, "neither count I my life dear to myself." The spirit of self-surrender lay behind all his service, as he was willing to "spend and to be spent" in the service of God.

How practical that service was is evidenced by his words, "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these *hands* have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so *labouring* ye ought to support the weak." This was after the pattern of Jesus—God's perfect Servant—

whose untiring service Godward and manward will ever command our worshipping adoration.

* * * * *

Such loving service would necessarily be accompanied by

TEACHING,

for every ray of divine light that shines in our hearts is for the shining forth. At Ephesus Paul was "daily in the school of one Tyrannus." This was not arbitrary dogmatising, but the imparting of spiritual wealth, of which he was the possessor, to those who were of such interest to the heart of Christ. Jesus spoke of Himself as "your Lord and Teacher," and His servants continue this service of love, "for the perfecting of the saints."

Without assuming to be a "teacher," would not every one who loves the assembly for Christ's sake seek to impart to others such light and truth as they have received? It is the very spirit of Christianity to share what is possessed, and not to withhold more than is meet, as Paul could say, "I kept back nothing that was profitable," and "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

* * * * *

If, however, Christianity is to be in evidence there must be a testimony in power, so Paul was engaged in

"TESTIFYING

both to Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." His great joy was "to *testify* the gospel of the grace of God."

To those who have themselves come under the mighty emancipating power of the gospel is granted

the privilege of spreading the glad tidings. Paul had been so effectual in his testimony that it was said at Ephesus, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." It is inspiring to observe how the heart of the apostle was bound up with the glad tidings, for the testimony of the gospel was interwoven with every activity of his life.

* * * * *

Then Paul makes the remarkable statement that "by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." The great importance of

ADMONISHING

one another is thus emphasised, for admonition is ever needed. Each one at Ephesus would cherish the memory of those faithful personal warnings, given with such evidences of deep affection and concern. It requires spirituality to admonish. It is easy to blame and to criticise, but without spiritual power and skill admonitions will not be effectual. This principle is exemplified in the training of children, for fathers are exhorted to bring up their children "in the nurture and *admonition* of the Lord." This is the secret of parental control.

* * * * *

The place too that prayer has in practical Christianity cannot be over-estimated, and this is abundantly manifested in Paul's life and ministry. With what affection, as a father surrounded by his children, he says to them, "Now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace," and when the moment of parting arrived, "he kneeled down, and prayed with them all." Hence in his epistle he could

“GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.” 169

speaking with power of

“PRAYING

always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

* * * * *

The closing word of this wonderful address is of greatest moment, for the apostle exhorts them to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” The very essence of practical Christianity is the spirit of

GIVING,

for we are followers of Him who gave Himself!

In this world of selfishness, where greed and avarice are so much in evidence, the children of God are left to manifest the goodness of the giving God. How many avenues, hitherto closed, may be opened up by a loving gift! How many wandering ones may be touched by some personal service to them, freely given for Christ's sake! This is the more blessed part and it furnishes opportunity for the display of the practical spirit of Christianity which is to mark all those who love God.

F. S. MARSH.

“GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.”

IN this world there is much respect of persons, pride of heart, and the assertion of self-superiority. These are some of the marks of the flesh; but our Lord Jesus has said, “the flesh profiteth nothing.” Believers in the Lord Jesus need to be warned that they be not overcome by the insidious and subtle attacks of the enemy.

In James 2. 1-4 the apostle issues the following warning, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons . . . are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" If our eyes are upon the Lord of glory we shall be preserved from the pride of the Pharisee (the religious man), the glory of the Sadducee (the learned materialist of this world), and from the leaven of the Herodian (the politics and rationalism of this world). The attitude of God in this day of grace is very different. He does not make any difference between man and man, between nation and nation. All men in the natural state are sinners before Him; all are dead in trespasses and sins; all are in the flesh. There is no such thing as "good flesh" or "better flesh." The man who considers himself to be civilised is as much in the flesh as the man he looks down upon as uncivilised. The man who claims to belong to a superior race and nationality stands as much condemned before the holy God as the man who is despised as belonging to an inferior race.

Those who are saved through grace have ceased to belong to this world or to the nations of this world; they belong to the Lord Jesus, and all believers form, as the Apostle Peter says, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Peter 2. 9.) It would be very fatal to soul prosperity for believers to shift the ground that God has given them, and be in admiration for that out of which God has delivered them.

The attitude of God at present is blessing for all.

“GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.” 171

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” It is not said in connection with this dispensation of grace that God loved any particular country, continent, nation or people, or that He loved any particular country more. “Whosoever” the word says, so that all are favoured, and it is open to every one to come and accept this favour. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2. 4-6, “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ; who gave himself a ransom for all.” Again, Peter says in Acts 10. 34, 35, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” Some men have greater opportunities of hearing and knowing the gospel of God’s grace, and in so far as this is so the greater is their responsibility, “for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required : and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” (Luke 12. 48.)

However, the gospel might be preached every day next door to a man’s house and still it is possible for the man to be without the gospel, but the gracious God is also converting the hearts of men in forests and deserts away from the vaunting civilisation of man. Wherever there is a soul convicted of sin and in sincere search for salvation, God makes His Son available unto him. In Colossians 1. 23 the Apostle Paul says of the gospel that it “was preached to every creature which is under heaven ; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” Again in Romans 10. 18 he speaks of them that preach the gospel of peace that “their sound went

into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”

In Acts 16. 6 Paul and Silas “were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia” (that is, the region at present called Asia Minor), but it is nowhere said that the word was to be preached only in Europe (the term “Europe” does not occur in the scriptures), nor is it said that all the servants of God were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. The services of these two servants of God were for the time being immediately required in Macedonia, the harvest there being ready. Because of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, God is offering salvation to man and wherever there is a response in the heart of any man, be he in Macedonia or Rhodesia, in the north or the south, on sea or land, the gracious God makes His Son available unto such a soul through His own means and in His own way.

Our Lord Jesus has purchased this world, or the “field” of Matthew 13. 44 because of the treasure hid in it. He has found this treasure, although it is at present hid from the world; the treasure is not hid in any particular country, continent or nation. It is hid in this world-field; but it is complete before and in Him who loved the assembly and gave Himself for it. The nations of this world and the flesh have no part or share in this treasure. Neither any principle of man nor any part of man’s world can ever find entrance into that which composes the bride of Christ.

The world at the present moment is surcharged with national pride and claims of political supremacy; in short, the manifestation of man’s selfishness is rapidly progressing along these and many other channels. It will be headed up in the Antichrist “who opposeth

DISCIPLESHIP AND THE POWER OF GOD. 173

and exalteth himself above all that is called God; or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. 2. 4.) The Lord would keep His saints so that they might be on the watch that these elements do not hold their hearts in any measure, but that their affections might be maintained unimpaired in the separation into which the death of Christ has brought them. "But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6. 14.)

W. S. DESAI.

DISCIPLESHIP AND THE POWER OF GOD.

(MATT. 28. 16-20; REV. 3. 7-13.)

WE shall not understand the gospels rightly unless we see that the Lord while He was here was bearing testimony to this day. At the end of Matthew's gospel we get the beginning of this day. When the eleven saw Jesus after He had risen from among the dead, it says, "they worshipped him: but some doubted." The Holy Spirit takes account of that. We know what it is to doubt and to be in perplexity. As we get light as to His greatness, how important it is to worship Him! God would not limit worship to the meetings. Do you not think Paul was a worshipper when in prison? There was no meeting in the prison at Rome, but he could write from prison, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Was he not a worshipper when he uttered those words?

He was occupied with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Was not John a worshipper when he was at the Isle of Patmos ?

As we get light as to Jesus we need to be careful not to lose it. We need to hold things. There are three important stages we need to take heed to. First you are brought to desire things and there is *prayer* ; then there is *thanksgiving*, and *worship*, "And when they saw him they worshipped him." And then He speaks to them, and we get a wonderful setting forth of the present moment—"And Jesus coming up spoke to them, saying, All power has been given me in heaven and upon earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have enjoined you. And behold, I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age."

I have often thought of this presentation of Christ, and how He is like the commander-in-chief of an army. If there is a great commander-in-chief, he gives character to the whole army. There may be soldiers at a distance, but they are conscious that the commander-in-chief is there. We can say of the Lord Jesus, He is with us. How sure and effectual things are. They were to go to all the nations and make disciples, baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. There is progress in this. There is the revelation first of all of the Father : "There is one God, even the Father." Where is He seen ? He is seen in Jesus. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He "is the image of the invisible God." "No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he

hath declared him." We begin with the name of the Father ; His name is proclaimed and His people turn their backs on this world and submit to baptism. They are baptised to the name of the Father.

Then there is the Son—"and of the Son." As God is revealed to you, you feel the need of the Son ; you feel the need of a Man. The Son is the delight of the Father's heart, the One who has done his will, and then He is a Man—"What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him !" But that is not all—"and of the Holy Spirit." Things are confirmed and brought to pass in the Holy Spirit. "For there is one God, even the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things," but then there is also the bond—the power—there is the Holy Spirit. We are told in the scriptures that two are better than one. But God does not stop there ; He says "a threefold cord is not quickly broken." We find the first truth to be attacked by Satan is the truth as to the presence of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing we are so prone to be infidel about as the presence of the Holy Spirit, and so the Lord brings that in as the climax in connection with baptism—"and of the Holy Spirit."

What a difference it makes to us when we realise that the Holy Spirit is here ! We are not left here at our own charge to be wanderers and aimless. If I think of the Holy Spirit here, I can think of perfection—God is here. And so the Lord says, "All power is given unto me in heaven *and* in earth." How often when the word "and" comes in there is a test. I can remember a time when I could think of Jesus at the right hand of God—all power there, but then He says, "all power is given unto me in heaven *and* in

earth." There is power *here*. He has all power here. In "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" we get successful teaching; nothing is left out.

I will now turn to the passage in the Revelation. It is wonderful to read the messages to the seven churches. We see the downgrade that came in, beginning with Ephesus leaving its first love; and then there is recovery in Philadelphia. What marks Philadelphia is that Christ is everything to it. It seems as if there was a necessity for the church's failure in order to bring out in a special way the love of Christ and His power to recover. What a miracle it is that in this present day the Lord Jesus has those who love Him and who are treasuring His commandments; those who are being taught to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded! We may think some of the things He has commanded are small and might be overlooked, but if Jesus has commanded them they come under the "all things"; not one detail is to be left out. We can see how the Lord is bringing us to that now in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Philadelphia has learned Christ in a special way: "He that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth." It takes us back to the prophet Isaiah. How beautiful to see "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." When we turn to Him the power is just the same. And so He says to Philadelphia, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an opened door"—not an open door; an open door might have been left open by chance. The door set before the assembly is not a door open by chance; Jesus has opened that

door; He is the One who opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens. Everything belongs to Him. How important it is to see what Jesus has done, and take the way He has made for us. If you take that way you will find out that no one can shut it. At the end of Matthew's gospel we read of the women who loved the Lord and were caring for His body. The keepers were frightened and became as dead men when the angel appeared, but the angel could say to the women, "Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus who was crucified." If you are seeking Jesus, if Christ is the object of your heart, there is no power that can stop you; there is an opened door. Jesus has opened that door, and He has the key of David—the great victor who holds the sword once held by the giant. You will remember how David took that sword and said, "There is none like it." That sword had once terrified the people of God, but in the hands of David it was for their blessing. And so in the hands of Jesus that power is ever for blessing. It may be a thorn in the flesh, a minister of Satan to buffet, or it may be a storm.

We get every encouragement in this word to Philadelphia, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." How important it is to keep the word of His patience. Jesus is waiting in patience. Paul says to the Thessalonians, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of the Christ." John was "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Outwardly he was a poor convict under the power of a cruel Roman emperor, but he was in the kingdom and patience of Jesus

Christ, and he was kept. The Lord would teach His assembly to keep that patience, and He says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."

It is a solemn word, "them that dwell upon the earth." If you look through the Book of the Revelation you will find judgment comes upon those that dwell upon the earth. On the other hand there are those who have their dwelling-place in heaven. I am sure the Lord is teaching us that our place is in heaven. If we seek to settle down here and become earth-dwellers, we may have to taste something of that testing. But there is a promise to those who keep the word of His patience; He will keep them from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. We know that refers in all its fulness to the time of Jacob's trouble, the great tribulation, but the Lord is leaving His assembly here to learn things, and things are anticipated in the assembly. John could say, "even now there are many antichrists." And so we have to taste something of what is coming. The great thing is to be true to the Lord, to look after His interests, and He will look after you. We need not worry as to what we are going to do; what we have to be concerned about is to learn of Him, and to keep the word of His patience.

C. MENZIES.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

(EZEK. 48. 30-35.)

THE third gate northward is the

GATE OF LEVI.

The generally accepted meaning of Levi is "joined," and Levi in scripture is brought before us in connection with the thought of drawing near to God. It is very evident that this thought is intimately connected with that which we have been considering in relation to Judah. Levi appears to have been separated by the Lord to Himself for a three-fold purpose: to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord; to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him; and to bless in His name. A great and holy privilege.

This high honour was theirs on account of their faithfulness to God in very trying circumstances. When the land was divided it is emphasised that God Himself was their inheritance. Their privileges were many. They were the bearers of the ark (Christ); they ministered to God, for He speaks of them in Jeremiah as "my ministers," they were also privileged to speak to the people on God's behalf. From 1 Chronicles 26 we learn that they had charge of the holy things, the treasures of the house of God; in these days when reverence for the things of God is not easily found, how refreshing it is to know that God will always have those who jealously guard them. Then the Book of Nehemiah tells us that the Levites were those who taught the people, and by their teaching brought spiritual emotions to light, bringing about amongst them the spirit of quietness, so that they were ultimately marked by very great gladness.

Then again, it is the Levites, who, suitably clothed in white linen, are found, as one, making one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; the effect being that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God. What a blessed result! One feels that the Lord will never lack those who in that way are characterised by the gate of Levi—those who are carrying the ark, standing before the Lord, and being used in blessing to the people of God. Indeed, we may say that God has secured that this should be so in the true Zadok. Zadok was himself a beautiful type of Christ as the One whom God has secured for the help of His people. Our lot may be cast in a dark and difficult day, but God is ever for His people, and is manifestly fulfilling His word in Jeremiah 33 that He will multiply the Levites that minister unto Himself. May we covet to be found in this company.

J. R. TITHECOTT.

“ABOUND YET MORE AND MORE.”

(PHIL. 1. 9.)

AN artist when asked, “What is your best picture?” replied, “My next!”

Let us never look back for our best work for Christ. Let us never live in the past. Let us never have need to ask, “How is it the former days were better than these?” “Still upwards”—“Press toward the mark,” “Increasing by the true knowledge of God.”

S. J. B. CARTER.

“WHEN YOUR CHILDREN SHALL ASK.”

A FEW WORDS TO CHILDREN OF CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

THIS expression, or one similar, occurs three times in the scriptures ; in Exodus 12. 26, Exodus 13. 14, and Joshua 4. 6. It has a twofold bearing. In the first place, christian parents are entitled to expect their children to ask them about the things of God ; and on the other hand, God expects the children to inquire. I desire to present it principally from the children's point of view.

There are certain things that your parents, as saints of God, have part in, that you are continual witnesses of, that must, and will, awaken inquiry in your heart. God knows this inquiry is there, and takes great account of it, and does not expect you to stifle it. Yea, He definitely shews from the above scriptures that He looks for you to express your desires. “For whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.” (Rom. 15. 4.) And I Corinthians 10. 11 shews that these things happened unto the children of Israel for our example.

Now you will say, Well, what am I expected to inquire about ? The first thing is

THE WAY OF SALVATION.

The feast of passover was to be celebrated yearly, and as the children partook of it with their parents, they were expected to understand what it meant and why they did it. So verse 26 of Exodus 12 says, “When your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by

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this service ? ” The answer to this inquiry explains how God saved His people by the sprinkled blood when He smote the Egyptians. This would greatly concern the children, for many of them were the very firstborn ones who would have been slain, but for the precious blood of the lamb. This *is* just your position, dear young friend. Your parents have obeyed God and recognised the necessity for the death of Christ. He is the blessed Lamb of God. No other way of salvation could be found. As you listen to the precious name of Jesus mentioned in your home, as you read the scriptures perhaps at the family reading, or as you kneel in prayer with them, has not the question often arisen in your heart, What does it all mean ? May I put it to you more personally, What does it mean to *you* ? Oh, do not refuse to face the inquiry ! God Himself expects you to ask about it. Your parents are praying for you to say something to indicate you are really concerned about your salvation. Will you not give them that joy *now* without further delay ?

The second inquiry has reference to

THE CLAIMS OF GOD.

This is mentioned in Exodus 13. 14. Here it follows on the fact that every firstborn was to be redeemed with a lamb. The salvation from judgment is not the point here, but a definite claim has to be recognised from God. The same blood that shelters from judgment claims for God. The verse we are considering says, “And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this ? ” Have you, dear young friend, asked your parents why they are so concerned that you should grow up for God ? Per-

“WHEN YOUR CHILDREN SHALL ASK.” 183

haps, like many, you see around you the pleasures of the world and they attract you, and you intend to have your way as soon as you can. But do not forget you *must* do it at the expense of rebelling against a definite claim put in for you by God. Maybe you often rebel because you are not allowed to do the same things as other children whose parents are not converted.

Can you wonder your parents are deeply concerned, and often advise you to take a different course than the one you have before you? The world seems to allure you, but its pleasures are empty and vain, and destroy every desire after God.

No doubt you have seen a moth flying round a candle flame, attracted by the *light* but unconscious of the destructive *heat*, until at last it flies right into the flame and falls dead. How like the glitter of this world. Thousands flutter around its gaudy shows, but a terrible destructive power is behind it all, destroying both body and soul. Oh, yield to the claims of God now, to-day, for they are the claims of love! Face the inquiry raised and bow to it.

The third inquiry illustrates

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

In Joshua 4. 6 the reference is to the twelve stones taken out of the river Jordan, and carried over to be set up as a memorial of the wondrous way opened up through the waters of death; not now as at the Red Sea to deliver from the world, but a way into all the blessings of God on the other side, typified by the land of Canaan. The twelve stones represent the whole twelve tribes as belonging to this wondrous scene of privilege. We now, according to 1 Corinthians

10. 17, have *one* loaf as a memorial, on the one hand, of the *one body* composed of all true believers on the Lord Jesus, and, on the other, as a remembrance of the precious body of Christ given for us. No doubt, you have often sat with your parents at the breaking of bread. Have you ever inquired of them what it all means? If you have faced the first two inquiries, you are ready for this one. For *you* have a part in this, and the Lord Jesus desires that *you* too should break bread in remembrance of Himself. Perhaps the desire *is in your heart*. But do not keep it there. Ask about it, and make it known. It is due to the Lord you should.

May the Lord give each one of our readers to face *all three* of these inquiries, that He expects you to raise, for His blessed name's sake.

W. J. WHITE.

THE TEARS OF JOSEPH, SUGGESTING THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

(GEN. 42. 21-24 ; 43. 29-31 ; 14. 1-4, 14, 15 ; 46. 29.)

I BELIEVE these scriptures would suggest to us the love of Christ (typically set forth in Joseph), and the way that love is active to bring His own near to Himself. In each scripture we find Joseph weeps—a beautiful picture of the heart of Christ. Have we ever thought of His tears on behalf of His own?

In figure, too, it is Christ in resurrection, for Joseph here has been into the pit and into the prison, and has been exalted ; but his desire is to have his brethren near him, the desire of Christ at the present moment.

There is evident progress in what comes out in these scriptures. In the first what marks the brethren of

Joseph is that they judge themselves: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," they say, and Joseph takes account of that. He speaks to them by an interpreter, however, and as they say later, "the man spake roughly to us"; but his heart was moved—"He turned himself about from them and wept." Is it not so with us sometimes? we feel there is no answer to our exercise; but think of the heart of Christ as set forth here, "He turned himself about from them and wept." We often think of our weeping, but the thought of the tears of Christ on our behalf in His faithful love will, I believe, help us greatly.

In the next scripture Benjamin is with them. It has been suggested that Benjamin presents Christ subjectively formed amongst us, and Christ takes account of that, as Joseph does here, and it says, "*he entered into his chamber and wept there.*" It is very touching to see the tears of Joseph, as his heart yearned towards his brethren and noted their movements that were according to God; and he says, "Set on bread." The moment had not come for him to make himself known, but he feeds them. Surely we have known something of this; a sense of being fed, but yet not conscious of seeing the Lord. The two disciples going to Emmaus would perhaps answer to it; they were fed as Jesus "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself," and this led to them being in the company of His own and Jesus making Himself known.

So in the next scripture (chap. 45. 1) it says Joseph "could not refrain himself." In chapter 43. 31 Joseph had "refrained himself." This scripture and that in chapter 42 would perhaps answer to what is presented in Revelation 1, where the Lord is seen "girt about

the paps with a golden girdle," His affections were restrained ; but in chapter 45 Joseph's affections flow out, and he weeps aloud. "And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren." The Lord loves to give us to know His deep affections and to present Himself living to us. "It is I myself," He said (Luke 24. 39), as Joseph here says, "I am Joseph" ; and again, "Come near to me, I pray you," as Jesus again said, "Handle me, and see," having previously said, "Peace be unto you." *And they came near* ; the Lord would have us to answer in like manner to Him.

In the fourth scripture we have a distinct move. Here we find that "*Benjamin wept.*" Joseph wept, but Benjamin weeps now. What a moment when we reach this point, that *we* weep. All reserves have gone. It is not only the tears of Christ in figure, but *our* tears too ; His faithful love has broken down all reserves. "He *fell* upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept ; and Benjamin wept upon his neck" ; further it says, "he kissed all his brethren." There is nothing now to hinder the outflow of the love of Joseph, and he kisses *all* his brethren.

So our Lord Jesus Christ would give us to know His love to us, each in a special and peculiar way, whilst at the same time we are conscious of being in the circle of the brethren who are all loved by Him. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine." (Song of Sol. 1. 2.) And there is more ; there is the talking with him ; in perfect liberty "his brethren talked with him" ; a picture of what the Lord does with us in His love. He breaks down all reserve, and gives a sense of His love to us personally, though in the circle of the

THE TEARS OF JOSEPH.

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brethren where all are loved, bringing us into liberty to talk with Him.

In the last scripture we have Israel, Joseph's father. I believe typically it might set forth Israel in a coming day, giving Christ His true place amongst them, as the brethren of Joseph may set forth the church; but it is the same heart of love, we have the tears still, setting forth the deep yearning love of Joseph, and how much more of Christ.

But I think, too, we can give this scripture a present application, for in this last scripture we have the father; so the Lord in His love would lead us not only to be set free to know His love and in liberty to talk with Him, but as brought into liberty would lead us to the Father. As another has said, they were to "tell my father of all my glory," and the Lord would give us such a sense of His love and glory that we can tell His Father of it. Surely this is His desire for His own, and surely too the heart of the Father delights that we should speak to Him, feebly it may be, of the glory of Jesus.

We frequently sing together the well-known hymn :

" His be the Victor's name,
Who fought the fight alone,"

which would answer to Joseph in the pit and in prison—he was alone there as Jesus was alone upon the cross—but the close of that hymn,

" Who lived, who died, who lives again—
For thee, His church, for thee ! "

gives us, I think, Joseph surrounded by his brethren, Christ in resurrection with His brethren near Him, conscious of His love, and all that that love would lead us into.

F. SMART.

FOUR WONDERFUL MORNINGS.

IT cannot be denied that in this night of the absence of Christ the world is in darkness. Spiritually it is a darkness that can be felt ; morally the corruption of this present evil world is increasingly evidenced ; politically the world problems are incapable of solution ; commercially anxiety and gloom are filling the minds of men ; while nationally the possibility of a great world conflict cannot be disregarded.

Yet amidst the darkness there is light in the hearts of the children of God. There are thousands on earth who love Him, and with whom the bright hope of the *morning* gives a positive and certain outlook that cheers the spirit and supports them, for even in their sorrows they know that while "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." It is said to them, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of light."

Their glorious prospect is, however, based on a momentous event which is the key to the whole of Christianity—the resurrection of Christ ; and this gives present light and joy. It was on that

MORNING OF RESURRECTION

that there dawned a new and eternal day. There were those who loved Jesus and mourned His death, and "very early in the *morning*, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun," to find that the Lord was risen and the stone was rolled away. Many a stone has been rolled away as the result of His glorious resurrection. Doubts and difficulties have vanished ; hopes are renewed ; and a new joy begun when the great reality of the risen

Christ has dawned upon the soul. This is not merely an event in history ; it is a spiritual reality in every soul in whom there is a living faith in that risen One. Everything for the glory of God and the blessing of man depends upon the resurrection, for "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins. . . . But now *is* Christ risen from the dead." Now our faith is in God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Intimately connected with the resurrection is the morning which is recorded in John 21. It was the

MORNING OF RECOVERY,

for seven brothers were recovered to communion, joy and service that morning. It would indicate the character of the present service and the skill of the risen Lord to revive and recover His people through the long period that He is hidden from the eyes of men. "He stood on the shore," as if to signify that now every blessing is established in resurrection on a firm foundation. There He made provision for them that they may be warmed and fed, so that, fully restored to spiritual freshness and power, they might begin a new day of joy, fidelity and service. They had become discouraged and had planned their own actions in their own way, but they had toiled all night and caught nothing.

Unless we are under the direction of Christ, our risen Lord, our toil and efforts will be fruitless. Those disciples were not yet ready for service, for Jesus had something to adjust before they could go forth, commissioned by the Lord. He loved them too well to allow them to drift, so He brought them to that morning—the beginning of a new day—that He might entrust to them His interests ; that they might shep-

herd and feed those who were so valued by Him—His lambs and sheep.

It is well to consider the skill of our Lord Jesus in handling His discouraged and disheartened disciples, and the way He secured their complete recovery indicates for us the only way by which reviving and restoration are to be effected. He would challenge our hearts to-day, as then, with the question, "Children, have ye any meat?" for this is always an indication of whether we have been following on or are going back.

But there is another morning which is immediately before us, seeing that the hope of the church throughout the night of the Lord's absence has ever been His coming. The first great event for which we look is His coming for His own, as stated so clearly in 1 Thessalonians 4, "For the Lord himself shall descend . . . then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together . . . to meet him in the air." This moment is often referred to as the

MORNING OF RAPTURE,

for at that moment the bride of Christ will respond to His call, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." It is in relation to this that He says, "I am the bright and *morning star*," adding, "Surely I come quickly." When speaking to His disciples He said, "watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or *in the morning*." As the three watches of the night have already passed we look for Him in the morning—the fourth watch.

The rapture is, however, but the beginning of

momentous events connected with His coming. Soon after this the Sun of righteousness will arise with healing in His wings. It is then that the prophecy of David will be fulfilled that "He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a

"MORNING WITHOUT CLOUDS."

The prospect of this bright morning is cheering many a waking watcher to-day. There are numbers of the Lord's people feeling the darkness of the present moment, and saying, "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning." Eager anticipation for the coming of the Lord is found in many hearts. The trend of current events gives no encouragement for those who have only a prospect in this life, but there are many who "love his appearing," to whom the morning without clouds is a bright and joyous hope. Then the rejected and suffering Son of man will come in power and great glory, and He whose right it is will reign supreme. Meantime His word is, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, WATCH."

F. S. MARSH.

THE BIBLE.

(JOEL 2.)

THE opening verse of Joel 2 reminds us of Numbers 10. 9, where instructions are given as to sounding an alarm in the event of Israel having to go against an enemy. The reference to this in the prophet Joel shews how God would arouse His people from their lethargy and summon them to face the seriousness of

the impending judgment. They had never had to face such an enemy before ; the day of Jehovah was coming !

In my previous article it was remarked that the prophet uses the devastating plague of locusts, to which he refers in chapter 1, to serve in chapter 2 as a warning of a far greater judgment, of which this plague of insects was but a figure. Chapter 2 speaks of an army of unexampled, desolating character. But though the effects were to be terrible to a degree, in the end the leader of this ferocious host would be driven back towards the East and destroyed because he had "exalted himself to do great things."

The attack made by Sennacherib king of Assyria, upon Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah and his complete defeat through the angel of Jehovah, was a partial fulfilment of this prophecy, and affords a type of a far greater future attack yet to be made upon God's earthly people and God's intervention for them when once more in their own land. This northern enemy has been referred to in several scriptures which have already been before us (for example, Isa. 8. 7 ; 10. 5-29 ; 14. 24 ; Dan. 8. 23, etc.). It is this future attack that is mainly before the Holy Spirit in this passage, as may be seen from verse 18 and onwards.

There is a further allusion to Numbers 10 in verse 15, where the trumpet is to sound and the assembly is to be summoned. This is quite a different thing from sounding an alarm. The alarm was to be used when they had to meet an enemy ; the calling of the assembly when the people had to come before God. Hence this second allusion to Numbers 10 is a call to Israel to come before God and turn to Him. First there is the call to meet the enemy ; secondly, a call

to appear before God—a solemn assembly. It was indeed a solemn matter, and might well cause alarm, if the enemy be God's army. How could they meet such an army? Their only hope lay in the response to the second trumpet sound. Let them turn to God. "Even now," says Jehovah, "turn to me." It was doubtless this spirit of turning to God in Hezekiah's reign that God answered, and the haughty king of Assyria was rebuked by Jehovah. But the repentance and turning to God were only momentary; the general state remained the same. Here the call to repentance is suggested as meeting with more abiding response, and abiding blessing ensues. Hence we read, "Then Jehovah will be jealous for his land." (Ver. 18.) The enemy is driven back and unparalleled blessing follows. The mighty king intended to "do great things"; but in fact it would be God who would "do great things." (Vers. 20, 21.) Through the voice of Jehovah the Assyrian would be beaten down (Isa. 30. 31), and God would bless His people. The very years of departure would yet be restored to them, and God would be in the midst of His people.

First, then, we have in verses 1-11 the "alarm" and the description of God's army—the Assyrian, the rod of His anger. (Isa. 10. 5.) Secondly, verses 12-17, the call to turn to God, the trumpet sounded for the solemn assembly. Then, lastly, verses 18-32, the answer on God's part in the defeat of the Assyrian and positive blessing introduced. But we must notice the different classes of blessing referred to and the way they are spoken of.

Jehovah does great things. There are to be unequalled conditions of material or earthly blessings. Israel would praise the Lord, who would deal won-

drously with them. Jehovah would be in the midst of them, and they would know that He is their God. In addition to this temporal blessing there would be the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. But *before* this there would be signs announcing the coming day of Jehovah, and whosoever would call upon Him should be saved.

It is remarkable that verses 28–32 compose chapter 3 in the Hebrew. (See J. N. D.'s note in the New Trans.)

So that we have perfect blessing on earth and the general outpouring of the Holy Spirit, but before the day of judgment signs of its approach, and an opportunity for whosoever to call on the Lord and find salvation.

In my previous paper I noticed that it is this part of the prophecy that the Apostle Peter quotes in Acts 2; for although the full bearing of the passage is future, and it will be Zion and Jerusalem where deliverance shall be found, yet the same offer held good for a "residue" in the days of Acts 2, for the word "whosoever" means any one.

Judgment was coming in the days of Acts 2. The murderers of God's Son would soon behold their city surrounded and eventually destroyed, and the wrath of God to the uttermost come upon the guilty nation. But there was deliverance in that day, not surely in Jerusalem, but in the assembly for whosoever should call on the name of the Lord. Salvation for whosoever and the gift of the Spirit were known, thus anticipating the blessing of the world to come.

The passage, however, awaits fulfilment in its full scope: signs of the approaching great and terrible day of the Lord; whosoever calling on Him finding deliverance in Zion and Jerusalem; material earthly

blessing of astonishing nature and above all the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all flesh.

M. W. BIGGS.

INWARD PARTS.

(LEV. 1. 9 ; PSA. 51. 6-10 ; LUKE 11. 37-42.)

IT is extremely interesting and instructive to see how God graciously uses material things to shew us spiritual things ; then, also, material things *are* figures of what is spiritual. For instance, the Psalmist says, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ? . . . He that hath clean hands," etc. He was not there referring to his hands, part of his body. This is only one instance out of a vast number.

In Leviticus 1. 6-9 the offerer cut the bullock he had brought for a burnt offering, and the sons of Aaron were to lay it on the wood on the fire. "But his inwards and his legs shall he [the offerer] wash in water : and the priest shall burn all on the altar . . . a sweet savour unto the Lord." This was done also with the peace offering in chapter 3, and ram of consecration in chapter 8.

In the case of the sin offering in chapter 4, the whole body, including the inwards, was burnt without the camp. But in the case of the burnt offering in chapter 1 it went up to God as a sweet savour. It spoke to God of Christ, and what was to be *in* Him. There were the outward movements of grace and compassion that men could take account of, but there were those "inward parts" that God alone could see. What was seen outwardly by men was only a reflex of what was within. Then in Leviticus 3. 4 and 8 we have the "fat that covereth the inwards," speaking of the ex-

cellency of it, that was for the heart of God only. Yet the offerer and the priests were privileged to see it. So are we, if we know what it is to bring an offering to God in this way.

The inward parts and the legs were to be washed with water, in the case of the offerings, not that there was any necessity of inward cleansing on the part of the Lord Himself, for He was pure within, holy, but the *inward parts and the legs of the offering* were to be washed, to be acceptable. He, as a man, meditated on the word day and night. With *us* there is the need of inward cleansing, as we see with David in Psalm 51. After fully acknowledging his sin concerning Bath-sheba, he could say, "Behold, thou desireth truth in the inward parts. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean : wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Vers. 6, 7.) Then he adds, "Create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me." (Ver. 11.) He knew very well that his outward act was the outcome of sin inwardly unjudged. Speaking of the wicked, David could say, "Their inward part is very wickedness" (Psa. 5. 9), but David *abhorred* this in himself as well as others. He could say again of the wicked, "They *delight* in lies : they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly [or, in their inward parts]." (Psa. 62. 4.) When the Lord takes up His earthly people again, He says, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write them in their hearts." (Jer. 31. 33.)

In Luke 11. 37 we read of the Pharisee who besought Jesus to go in to dine with him, and he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner. The Lord knew what was going on with this man inwardly, and says to him, "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside

CONTINUATION.

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of the cup and the platter ; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also ? ” (Vers. 39, 40.) They were, as He said in Matthew 7. 15, “false prophets . . . in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.”

It says in Mark 6. 19 that “Herodias had a quarrel [or, as the margin reads, an *inward grudge*] against John.” She evidently nursed this grudge inwardly for some long time (a serious warning to us), until a “convenient day came,” and she shewed what was inward, and told her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist, although the king had promised to give her *anything*, unto the half of his kingdom. The devil will provide a “convenient day” if we nurse evil in our hearts.

But what should mark a believer ? The Lord tells us in John 7. 38, “He that believeth on me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” What a thought ! If we meditate more on the Lord Jesus as presented to us in the gospels and in the offerings in Leviticus, we shall desire to be more like Him *now*, as we shall be like Him *soon*.
W. GRAHAM.

 CONTINUATION.

“**A**ND Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha.” (2 Sam. 9. 12.) Why are we told this—of what interest is it to us in our day ? I believe God would indicate to us that the lives of Mephibosheth should continue (see 1 Chron. 8. 35), he was a lover of David. So, beloved, the lives of those whose

affections, whilst in a hostile scene with an usurper upon the throne, have been gathered about the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ; that line has continued. How happy to be in it, and intelligently in it, too, for it says, "a young son."

Contrariwise, the scripture says, "Michal the daughter of Saul had no child." The lives of the despisers of Christ must eventually cease, but hearts that love Him shall surround Him eternally.

F. A. HUGHES.

"FAITHFUL IN THAT WHICH IS LEAST."

IT is said that a great artist was asked, with other great artists, for a specimen of his skill, so that a design for a fresco might be selected.

He simply took a pencil and drew *a perfect circle!*

"Give them that," he said. The messengers were surprised, and felt a bit chagrined.

But when the circle was shewn to the examiners they said, "If an artist can draw a little circle so perfect as that he must be capable of doing greater things even more finely."

So the word of commendation and reward by-and-by will be, "Thou hast been faithful over a *few things*, I will make thee ruler over *many things*: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

S. J. B. C.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

(EZEK. 48. 30-35.)

THE next three gates are those on the east side of the city, and they are the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin and the gate of Dan.

There is no doubt that Joseph and Benjamin are both types of Christ, the former setting forth blessing secured on the ground of suffering, and the latter Christ as coming in power, and thus bringing to pass fulness of blessing.

In Reuben, Judah and Levi we were thinking of what God has secured for the satisfaction of His own heart's joy. He has secured for Himself the many sons He is bringing to glory ; a company whose praises are His delight ; and a people who stand before Him and minister to Him for His heart's satisfaction.

When we come to the gates of Joseph, Benjamin and Dan it is more the side of our enjoyment. We come first to

THE GATE OF JOSEPH.

In Genesis we are told that Joseph was named by his mother ; the meaning of the name suggests the thought of adding to, or increase. In Deuteronomy 33 we read how the Lord adds blessing to blessing until it is indeed good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. In Acts 7 the same thought of increase meets us, for there Stephen, speaking of Joseph, says that God was with him. What a wonderful commendation, for who can estimate the wealth of blessing wrapped up in that simple statement. May we each covet the knowledge that God is with us. Next it says that God was his deliverer out of *all*

his afflictions—how manifold those afflictions! He was sold for a servant, his feet were hurt with fetters and the iron had entered into his soul, and then God came in, and how great the compensation! In the light of this we can a little understand the words of the apostle when he says, “for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

The next blessing is that God gave Joseph favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. What an increase of blessing is here. We are reminded of the words recorded of the Lord Jesus in Luke 2, that He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. How we should long to know more and more of such blessedness as this. Finally, it is said that God made him governor over Egypt and all his house; what an honour! We but little know what moral dignity God is able to clothe us with so that we may be here in superiority to the world and to all that the world can offer. How greatly God delights not only in blessing, but in giving us the present enjoyment of those blessings.

What must the feelings of those who belonged to the tribe of Joseph have been as they listened to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 33. How the fulness of the blessing must have impressed them with a sense of the goodness of God. And these blessings were to be known and enjoyed by no mean company, for there are the ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh.

What a God is ours, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ! Here indeed is spiritual increase.

J. R. TITHECOTT.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLE JOHN.

EVEN as each writer in the New Testament presents his own distinctive aspect of the truth of Christianity, so each one urges those practical characteristics which will display it.

This is evident in the writings of the beloved apostle, the keynote of whose epistles is

LOVE,

as he addresses the whole family of God thus : “Children, let us not *love* with word, nor with tongue, but in deed and in truth.”

Unexpressed love has no practical value to its object, and loving in word can only bring reproach. Actions ever speak louder than words, and as love delights to serve it must find means of expression in deeds.

Were Christianity a mere creed, then loving in word would suffice, but as it is of God it must be livingly expressed after the character of divine love. This apostle had said, “We have contemplated his glory.” He had walked with Jesus and had seen expressed in His life every beautiful trait that had been so delightful to God.

Now he writes to the children of God to the end that those same features may be seen in them ; so he urges the practical character of Christianity most emphatically. What importance he gives to

RIGHTEOUSNESS

as he refers again and again to doing (or practising)

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righteousness, which means simply a life lived on the principle of what is right Godward and manward ; so "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." Many a ruined life would have been saved had this fundamental basis of christian walk been observed.

Then, too, the anticipation of the moment when He shall appear and when we shall see Him as He is would be productive of

HOLINESS,

for "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." This is practical holiness, for the manner of the Father's love, the knowledge that we are the children of God, and the joyful anticipation of seeing Him are powerful incentives to "purify ourselves," for John is concerned that there should be consistency of walk and association.

One great evidence of a work of God in a person is

OBEDIENCE.

The impulse of love is to "keep his commandment," while "doing the will of God" is the normal conduct of His children, for there is no other standard for those who love Christ than "to walk even as he walked." This would be productive of unworldliness, for "he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God overcometh the world."

Another practical result is urged upon those who say they love the brethren ; that there should be a readiness to

SACRIFICE.

Not only are we exhorted to love one another, but the love of Him who laid down His life for us justifies the

solemn statement, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." It may be that many are not called to do this actually, but the whole spirit and principle of laying down that which is greatly valued would colour the lives of those who are actuated by divine love. Sacrifice is the only standard by which love can be measured. The greatest love has made the greatest sacrifice.

Then, lest we should dismiss these exhortations as presenting glorious but impossible ideals, the second and third epistles are given, so that actual living examples of the product of John's ministry are in evidence.

In the second epistle the elect lady, who with her family "walk in truth" and thus become the joy of the apostle, is a typical sister. She loved the truth, exerted an holy influence over her children and would safeguard her house against the invasion of evil. She shews the purifying effect of "the knowledge of the Father; and of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father," upon the personal life, the family and the home.

In the third Epistle of John a well-beloved brother is addressed, who also exemplifies the truth, for he is characterised by love, hospitality, and spiritual prosperity. Gaius also puts his Christianity into effect in his personal and home life, so that its living power and transforming effect are proved. In this epistle the expressions, "love in the truth," "testified of the truth," "walkest in the truth," "fellowhelpers to the truth," all shew how the truth practically affects the activities of the children of God.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

F. S. MARSH.

THE BIBLE.

(JOEL 3.)

IT is remarkable how one part of scripture helps us in the understanding of another, filling out details necessary to its full scope. Joel 3 is a good illustration of this.

In addition to disciplining and eventually blessing His people, God will have to say to all nations in the day when He takes up in a public way the government of the earth. Jerusalem at one time had been the centre of this government. Solomon sat on the *throne of Jehovah* we read. (1 Chron. 29. 23.) But through the failure of Israel and Judah, God's throne had been transferred from earth to heaven, as we see in the Book of Ezekiel. God then entrusted power to the hands of the Gentiles, as we learn in Daniel 2. Hence we recognise that the powers that be are ordained of God. (Rom. 13.) But in the exercise of this entrusted power not only has man glorified himself and not God, from whom he received the power, but he has at times wielded this power to persecute God's people and will yet do so the more. God sometimes uses nations as His hand of discipline upon His people, though the thoughts of those whom He uses be only hatred to Himself and His own, and their object be to further their own aggrandisement. This has been particularly seen in the nations that have had dealings with Israel and notably in the case of the Assyrian, or the King of the North, who had been a rod in the hand of Jehovah to chastise His people.

There will be two main adversaries to God's people in a future day: one with whom they will make an

alliance, the Beast (that is the last representative of the Gentile power figured in the great image of Dan. 2) and another, who will be an outside and definitely opposed enemy, though subtle, of whom the Assyrian of old affords an illustration. This latter enemy is called the "Desolator," and is permitted by God to attack His people because of their unholy alliance with the Beast and their accompanying idolatry. (See Dan. 9. 27.)

The prophecy of Joel deals with this latter enemy, the Northern power. But other nations will join hands with him as we may see in Psalm 83. This is the last confederacy of nations against Israel. In the chapter before us we have the gathering together of these nations in the land of Israel. The position will seem hopeless for Israel and except those days should be shortened no flesh should be saved; but God will cut them short for His elect's sake. The Lord will deal with Antichrist and the Beast in person, and then through His people with this last combined attack of nations against Jerusalem. God will judge them. They will assemble themselves; but the appeal to God is, "Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down." (Ver. 11.) This is similar to Isaiah 8. 7-10. The King of Assyria is there presented as in confederacy with other nations. He passes through Judah, and his success seems certain. The heathen will have come into God's inheritance, as Psalm 79 describes. But the cry goes up to Immanuel and God will prove Himself to be with His people. He will be the hope of His people. What greater hope could they have than *God* being with them? *They* shall call His name Immanuel. He will prove Himself to be this to them. He will be with them and they will appreciate the

value of His name "Immanuel." Who could deal with multitudes and multitudes? Who but God?

The expressions here employed remind us of Revelation 14, where there is first the fall of Babylon (ver. 8), which will be accomplished providentially. That is to say, God will use others to execute His judgment on Babylon, the corrupt church. (See Rev. 17. 16, 18.) Then there is the warning as to the Beast. Corrupted Christendom gives place to open apostasy in the Beast. Man sets up a rival head—"the lawless one." Thereupon Christ comes. (2 Thess. 2. 8.) Two results are then seen: the harvest and the vintage. It is refreshing to think of there being something for God even in such a day as that will be. There will be the harvest. The vintage is judgment, "the great winepress of the wrath of God." Nations will learn God through the judgment He executes. Notice, dear reader, that this is a dealing with nations as such, not with individuals among nations as in Matthew 25. 31-46. This huge combine is vividly brought before us in Ezekiel 38 and 39. And God becomes known through His judgments on them. His glory shall be heralded world-wide. (Isa. 66. 18-20.) In this judgment and display of power God will apparently work through His people, though miraculously intervening on their behalf. He will be the *strength* as well as the hope of His people. This is really the import of Immanuel; God with us; not precisely God for us, though this is necessarily involved.

"Then Jerusalem shall be holy." What an end of all her discipline! It is similar with us, "That we may be partakers of his holiness." (Heb. 12.)

There is a remarkable fulness in this brief prophecy and the moral teaching for us is equally full.

God may send a warning discipline, which if unheeded will but be a shadow of a coming storm. The thing is to see *God* in it. If we do, though it may rightly cause the most solemn concern (for whose hand is so mighty as God's!) it gives faith opportunity to turn to Him. Hence the gathering "trumpet" as well as the note of "alarm." We can always turn to God. Let me fall into the hand of God, says David. He Himself exhorts us to turn and weep before Him and in answer thereto He blesses abundantly—even restoring lost years. Only God could do it! Thus recovered He is the hope of His people and with them. What name more comforting than Immanuel? His Spirit poured out; He Himself known and with His people. What power is equal to God's? What league of nations can equal "God with us"? This Israel will prove. This we may now know!

M. W. BIGGS.

WE hail Thee, Lord, Immanuel!
 Thy saints dost Thou protect;
 Though enemies with leagues combine,
 Thine own wilt Thou direct.

The enemy with subtlety,
 Thy saints would overthrow;
 Art Thou not Lord, Immanuel?
 Defeat Thou canst not know!

When all seems hopeless and the foe
 With pride asserts his will;
 Thy name remains Immanuel!
 For God is with us still!

M. W. B.

SUMMER TIME.

The summer is near. (Mark 13. 28.)

The summer is here. (Song of Sol. 2. 10-13 ; Psa. 19. 1-6.)

The summer is ended. (Jer. 8. 20.)

IT is good to remember that though we are doubtless living in the last days of this dispensation, the disposition of God is just the same to-day as it was at the beginning. He is a Saviour God, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (See 1 Tim. 2. 1-7 and 2 Peter 3. 9, 10.)

THE SUMMER IS NEAR.

The instruction given by the Lord Jesus in Mark 13 refers primarily to those who form the godly remnant after the saints of this period have been taken to be with the Lord—just before He as the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in His wings (see Mal. 4), ushering in His glorious reign, so fully predicted in prophetic testimony, and for which this groaning creation waits. (Rom. 8. 18-22.) These suffering saints will see certain events happening, and say the *summer is near*, and the Lord tells them to “*Watch and pray*,” and adds, “It is as a man gone out of the country,” who may return suddenly at any hour of the night, and there was a possibility of finding his bondmen sleeping when he came. This is a general principle that applies to us to-day, for the fact is, the Lord Jesus has gone away, has gone back to heaven, having been refused by His earthly people, rejected by the world, and cast out as worthless by the “builders.” (See 1 Peter 2. 1-8.) There was no room for Him in this world at His birth, and it gave Him a crown of thorns, and a shameful cross at His death ; and the cry, “Away with him, away with him,”

from the religious leaders of that day prevailed, *but God* has highly exalted Him (see Phil. 2), and instead of judgment immediately and so richly deserved following His rejection, the most *wonderful period* has intervened. The Holy Spirit, a divine Person, has come down to announce the glad tidings to *all men*. Thus by the very presence of the Holy Spirit here since Pentecost (see Acts 2) reporting the glory of Christ, and God's infinite pleasure in all that He has done, we can truly say

THE SUMMER IS HERE.

Spiritually interpreted Psalm 19 referred to means that the glory of God is shining in the face of *Jesus* (see 2 Cor. 4. 6), the shining is universal, nothing is hid from the heat thereof. Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, describing his conversion to King Agrippa (Acts 26), says, I thought I ought to do much against the name of Jesus the Nazarene, which I also did . . . being exceedingly furious. But at mid-day . . . I saw, O king, a light *above* the brightness of the sun shining from heaven, and heard a voice. . . . I said, Who art thou, Lord? . . . and he said, *I am Jesus*. The warmth of such love as that penetrated the heart of Saul, filling every corner of it from that day on. How it flowed out to Christ and to the saints in his path of devoted service, right to the close of his life, his epistles give evidence.

When the Lord Jesus was here His ministry was confined to the few, and His movements confined to a small territory, but what He came to do had the whole world in view. He often referred to this, as "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it shall have been accomplished";

and again, "Except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abides alone; but if it die, it bears much fruit"; and yet again, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." So now, as the blessed result of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, this most wonderful summer time of opportunity is still present. The whole race has a new Head. In Christ God addresses every man, and has only one thought for men, that is *blessing*. Our psalm says, "His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and his circuit unto the ends of it." Well might we cry in the language of Psalm 107, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" By the deliberate rejection by Israel of their Messiah, the world has come provisionally into reconciliation. (See Rom. 11. 15.) The glad tidings of God concerning His Son is announced to *all nations* for the obedience of faith. (Rom. 1. 1-7.)

But before this blessed "summer" time could come, before the love of God could be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, our blessed Saviour had to feel the "winter," the bitter, cold indifference of this world, rejected and a stranger in the world His hands had made. We can little understand how He felt all this. In John 10. 22, 23 He is seen walking in the porch of Solomon, and it was "winter." Centuries before "the glory of Jehovah" that once had filled the temple had departed, but now in the Person of the Son of God the glory had returned, but this glory was moral, the blessed outshining of God in grace and love. This found no response in man's heart naturally. Where God sovereignly worked, however, these could

say, "We have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only begotten with a father." (John 1. 14.) Apart from this it was *winter* to Him—the icy blast of scorn and contempt and unbelief met Him on every hand. Psalm 69 describes His holy feelings in this regard. But there was that which was far more terrible for Him to face. In the Book of Job, chapter 37. 9, 10, there is an allusion to this perhaps.

"From the chamber of the south cometh the whirlwind ;
 And cold from the winds of the north
 By the breath of God ice is given ;
 And the breadth of the waters is straitened."

On the cross our blessed Saviour was forsaken, from Him came the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" (See Psa. 22.) Alone in those three hours when the created source of light and warmth was veiled, the whirlwind came from the south, the breadth of the waters was straitened. Of Him it could be said, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." (Psa. 42. 7.) All concentrated at that moment on *Jesus*. In His atoning sufferings He must be alone, none could share this, but, blessed be His name, He sustained it all. Vindicating God's holiness, saying, "But thou art holy," and at the same time manifesting the mighty love of God. In this was "manifested the love of God, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that *he loved us*, and sent his Son a propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4. 9, 10.)

Thank God, death and the grave could not hold

Him, and now He is risen and ascended to God's right hand, and spiritually *the summer is here* in consequence. Dear reader, has your heart been opened to the rays of the glorious light shining in "the face of Jesus" ?

" Oh, the glory of the grace,
Shining in the Saviour's face,
Telling sinners from above,
God is Light and God is Love."

The language in the "Song of Songs" is very precious to all lovers of Christ; while primarily it belongs to His earthly bride, those who form His heavenly bride interpret the language in a fuller and more spiritual way. His voice by the Spirit to us is "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For behold, *the winter* is past, the rain is over, it is gone: the flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing is come," etc. Our heavenly bridegroom would woo us away in spirit to Himself. I am sure He does that, especially when gathered together in assembly—to have part *with Him*, His words to His own (John 13 to 17) come home to us in sweet living power as we yield to His constraining love. "I am coming to you." *Love could not keep away*, and He repeats, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away," and can *anything* separate us from the love of Christ, or the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? Our apostle says, I am persuaded—*nothing*. (Rom. 8. 35–39.)

THE SUMMER IS ENDED.

But this wonderful, blessed period will end, as our Lord indicated, and the apostles oft repeated in their epistles. It will close suddenly, and if our heavenly Bridegroom calls us *now* to come away in spirit and in

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affection to Him where He now is, He also will *actually* take His bride and present it to Himself in glory, “I will come again, and receive you to myself,” (John 14), but in doing that the door of grace will be *shut* (Matt. 25), and the words of the prophet Jeremiah,

“The harvest is past, *the summer is ended*, and we are *not* saved,” will be solemnly true of those who have refused the glad tidings. Dear reader, may we again appeal to you to heed the warning and be like the “ants” spoken of in Proverbs 30, one of the four little things on the earth, but “*exceeding wise*”; they provide their meat in “*the summer*”—they know the winter is coming and wisely act accordingly. May you also be found as one of wisdom’s children.

To fellow believers we would conclude with the words of the Apostle Jude, “But ye, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” (Jude 20, 21.)

A. HURWORTH.

Brisbane.

“ TO BREAK BREAD.”

ON the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread. They had this definitely before them through the week, and they looked forward to the privilege of meeting together to break bread in response to the Lord’s desire.

Through grace the privilege is still afforded us. The feast has been preserved for us in all its freshness and simplicity through all the centuries since those early days. Have you taken up your privilege yet?

You may belong to the Lord, but have you answered to His own request? You may meet with the people of God, but do you come to break bread? Or do you just look on? Perhaps you have not made the choice like Moses of old, of whom it is written, "*When he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.*"

Perhaps you cannot face the affliction and the reproach of Christ, for He is still despised and rejected of men, but there is also the recompense of the reward. There is the wonderful circle of love where the Lord is owned and honoured, and where He is pleased to manifest Himself to those who love Him and are true to Him.

While it is a great privilege to break bread, is it not also a great responsibility? It is closely connected with the Lord's betrayal. From the glory the word is delivered unto us, "that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread." From the glory He would have us remember the night in which He was betrayed. How deeply He felt His betrayal! "The hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table." And again, "Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." And again, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Do we always realise what it means to break bread? We may do it lightly or in a formal way, whereas it is a shewing of the Lord's death until He comes.

The days of unleavened bread are mentioned before the disciples came together to break bread. There

must be the purging out of the old leaven. We must each one see to this. When the Lord said to the twelve, "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me," they began every one of them to say unto Him, "Lord, is it I?" So the injunction is, "Let a man examine *himself*, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." We must bear this in mind through the week with regard to all that we do or say, so that when we come together on the Lord's day we are ready and able to break bread and draw near with a true heart. It is the first day of the week. We remember Him. He would ever bring Himself before us as the One who loves and who gave Himself for us though He was betrayed, denied and forsaken.

May the Lord preserve us from the spirit of Judas the betrayer, and give us to be faithful unto Him, so that we can keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

C. A. ABRAHAM.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

(JOHN 11. 1-5; 13. 1; EPH. 5. 25; JOHN 21. 15-17.)

IT is before me to draw attention to the love of the Lord Jesus Christ in reference to individuals, to a company, to the church, and response from us.

I would desire to impress upon each one the importance of not reading scripture too hurriedly, for it is in the little words we often find such very precious thoughts. The first scripture says, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." These three without doubt loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is those who love Him who are the objects of His heart's

affections. It is a great thing to know that we are loved with a personal love by one no less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Martha is put first, although it is a question if we should have put it just in that order, but there it is. We each one are marked off personally, individually, as one He loves, indeed He calls each one by name, as it says in chapter 10, "He calleth his own sheep by name." The pathway to glory becomes an occasion for His own personal love to be made known to us. The Apostle Paul is an example, for he speaks of himself as one who lived by the faith of the Son of God, "*who loved me, and gave himself for me.*" He evidently found great comfort in the Lord's own personal love for him, he was marked off in that way, and so are we. Collective conditions are acceptable to God, but there is first that which has been wrought in us individually, so God would ever encourage us to have separate dealings with Himself. It was so with the three brought before us, for the Lord loved Martha, *and* her sister, *and* Lazarus. Trying circumstances, by His allowance, had come into that family, but circumstances never changed the heart of the Lord towards them, for His is an unchanging love and is above all the circumstances through which we may pass.

In John 13 we have the collective side. Having loved His own which are in the world, He loves them right through, for that is the force of the word. The first lesson we learn is what He is to me personally, and then we find ourselves linked with others whom He calls *His own*. How expressive is this of His love and of its enduring character. Our course may not always be a straight one and we may stumble, but we stumble with our faces in the right direction—in the

direction where the love of Christ may be known. Think of the patience of God with His people. He bore with them, He put up with them. Does it say this? No, the New Translation puts it, "for about forty years he nursed them in the desert." (Acts. 13. 18.) During no part of their journey, whether their hearts were cold, or whether they were without interest in God, He nursed them, He loved them right through. How the Lord feels for the whole company of His sheep, His own, the product of a love which led Him down into the depths of death.

Ephesians 5 brings before us a company which He calls His church. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. The church according to scripture always means a company of people whom He loves and for which He gave Himself. How wonderful is the grace of Christ which has given me a place in this wonderful company, which in the day to come He is going to present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. We think of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. What is the church to be like? Like Himself. Without spot, wrinkle, and then language fails and the apostle adds, or any such thing. This is the third stage. What a love! How deep it is. John 21 raises the question, Is there to be response on our part to such love as this? There are those who think we should not talk about our love for the Lord. Mustn't we? The Lord would surely encourage it. He appeals to Peter, "Lovest thou me?" and He would put to me and to you this question. It is a question which touches us at the very core. What are our feelings about the Lord? The Lord probed Peter three times, and at last he says, "Thou knowest all

things, thou knowest that I love thee." Have we ever told the Lord this? The tender touch of the hand of Jesus would draw forth response to Him, and He is worthy of it. How does He do it? Peter might at that moment have remembered his fall and the Lord's assurance that He had prayed for him; Peter's heart is touched and he says, "Lord . . . thou knowest that I love thee." Think of a company who in their private history had to do with the One they came together to remember. Oh, that we might cherish the personal love of Christ for us, and His unfailing love for His own, so that we might know His love for His assembly, and then there will be response. In the Song of Solomon we hear His voice saying, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee," and as the bride hears His voice of love there is response and she says, "He is chiefest among ten thousand . . . yea, he is altogether lovely." The Lord is looking for response from hearts touched by His love, do not let us deny Him pleasure. G. SCOTT.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

(EZEK. 48. 30-35.)

WE next come to

THE GATE OF BENJAMIN.

If, as we have been saying, the three gates on the east suggest the goodness of God to His people, this thought is carried on from Joseph to Benjamin. How beautiful is the thought of Moses the man of God speaking of Benjamin as the beloved of the Lord.

The goodness of God may indeed bring to light the

thousands of those who love Him, but how much greater is the thought of being loved by Jehovah. The Apostle Paul speaks of himself as being of the tribe of Benjamin, and one feels that he had arrived at the moral import of the gate of Benjamin. In writing to the Galatians he says he lived by the faith of the Son of God, "who loved me, and gave himself for me," and in writing to those at Rome and at Thessalonica he addresses them as beloved of God. Then there is the Apostle John, who speaks of himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved. How blessed it is to know ourselves as belonging to the company of those who are beloved of God. Such enjoy nearness to Himself and a wonderful sense of security, for the beloved of the Lord dwell in safety by Him. How great a sense of security Paul would know on account of the action of the Lord in drawing near to him and standing by him and saying, "Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Nearness to Himself and abiding in that nearness is the only place of absolute confidence.

Then there is the unfailing protection of the One who loves us, for He covers us *all the day long*. Paul in 2 Timothy says that at his first answer no man stood with him, but notwithstanding that the Lord stood with him and strengthened him and he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, and he goes on to say, "and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work." What a consciousness he must have had of the covering hand of the Lord. As regards ourselves how exposed we are to dangers, trials and temptations, but who can value aright the blessedness of the protecting hand of our God being over us all the

day long ; this may be the happy and continued experience of all upon whom God has set His love.

Then there is the added blessedness of dwelling with God and God with us. It is interesting that Jerusalem was within the territory of Benjamin, suggesting that the tribe dwelt where the dwelling-place of Jehovah was to be found. How rich and full these blessings are—the known and enjoyed portion of being loved of the Lord, of dwelling in safety by Him, of being the objects of His unceasing protection and the holy joy of the realised sense of the presence of the Lord. May these things be coveted by us, and not only coveted but possessed.

J. R. TITHECOTT.

GOD ALL IN ALL.

OMNIPOTENT, all-powerful, Creator God Thou art,
 The Saviour God, who saves and satisfies my heart,
 Directs the planets, holds the deep sea in His hand,
 The universe, high heaven, all things He doth command,
 He all hath planned.

Omnipresent, ever present is the blessed God,
 Would you get away from Him ? there is not a road.
 Jonah tried, and David, too, said " Whither shall I flee ? "
 Dark or light, earth or heaven, or the utter sea,
 Are alike to Thee.

Omniscient, seeing all, God of all mankind,
 None can hide away from Him where He cannot find.
 Hagar, Job and Jeremiah testify of this,
 But " God is Love," why seek to hide from such a God as this ?
 He offers endless bliss.

M. C.

“THERE IS NONE LIKE THEE.”

IN the consideration of the greatness, beauty and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, every heart that has known and loved Him is agreed in the conclusion that HE IS INCOMPARABLE.

The great servants and prophets of the Old Testament can only serve to typify some of the features that shine out in perfection in Jesus, but in His Person, He is unique and must ever be regarded by His people with worshipping adoration and affection as beyond compare !

This was the lesson that Peter and his companions had to learn on the mount of transfiguration. Peter would compare Jesus with Moses and Elias, but the Father's voice was heard saying, “*This* is my beloved Son : hear *him*.” Great as Moses and Elias were, as servants, they cannot be placed on the same elevation with Jesus. One of the sad characteristics of the religious world to-day is the profanity that is in evidence as to the Person of Christ by placing Him on a level with mere men and overlooking the unique glory that is His.

God's beloved Son must ever fill the scene in which His glory shines. It was therefore said, “when the voice was past, Jesus was found *alone*.”

Millions of men have lived on earth, but none have given pleasure to the heart of God as the life of Jesus did. His perfect pathway filled heaven with delight.

Millions of men have died on earth, but there was never a death like the death of Jesus. They have died on account of sin, having forfeited their right to live; but He laid down His life. No one but He could have

brought men to God by dying for them. The redeemed will celebrate through all eternity the preciousness of the death of Jesus.

Scripture is full of His incomparableness. When Joseph, who is one of the most remarkable of the types of Christ, came into his glory, Pharaoh said to him, "There is none so discreet and wise as thou art." He thus prefigures Christ in

HIS UNSURPASSED WISDOM.

Alone Joseph solved the great world-problems and administered the food supply for the perishing world. Legislators and great men can never solve the great problems that confront the world to-day, but Jesus will do so and bring in a world of glory. So Joseph could say, "Ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen." What a dignity and joy there is in telling out the gospel of the glory of Christ, for He alone could uphold the glory of God and meet the dire need of man.

The bride, in the Song of Songs, in the expression of her appreciation of the *beauty* of her Beloved, began by speaking of Him as "the chiefest among ten thousand," but she concludes her description of Him by exclaiming, "Yea, he is altogether lovely." She is filled with

HIS INCOMPARABLE BEAUTY

as she adds, "this is my beloved : this is my friend !"

David was filled with the same spirit when he said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after : that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord,

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and to inquire in his temple.” It was David who said as he sat before the Lord, “There is none like thee.”

The incomparable glory of Christ is disclosed too by His *words*. He was “skilled in speech.” They wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth. Even the officers, who were sent to take Him, returned without Him, saying, “Never man spake like this man.” For

HIS MARVELLOUS WORDS

can never be compared with those of the greatest men on earth ; they stand alone in their dignity and greatness. “There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification,” but there is none like the voice of Jesus. As Shepherd, His voice had attracted and controlled myriads of God’s sheep ; the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear live. His words awaken consciences, cause hearts to burn and transform lives. The power of His “still small voice” when He said “I am Jesus” to Saul of Tarsus, converted and transformed him from the fiercest foe into the greatest servant of the Lord.

Then if we consider His name, “God has given him a name which is above every name,” and of

HIS PEERLESS NAME

it is said, “there is NONE OTHER NAME under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Jesus alone can save ! Presently the whole universe of glory will praise Him, saying, “Blessed be his glorious name for ever.”

It must therefore be that His *glory* is distinctive,

for there shines from the face of Jesus "a light above the brightness of the sun." No created luminary could be compared with

HIS EXCELLENT GLORY.

Presently the holy city will have "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God will lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Every one who knows the *love* of Christ will gladly acknowledge that it transcends all other loves. Human love cannot be compared with

HIS LOVE, WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE.

He alone loved the church and gave Himself for it. Unlike every other, His love in its purity, intensity and constancy will abide eternally as the unique bond that will hold the responsive affections of the vast host of the redeemed.

May our Lord Jesus Christ so eclipse every other object that each may say with the apostle, "I count all things but loss for the *excellency* of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

F. S. MARSH.

THE BIBLE.

(AMOS. 1, 2.)

FROM chapter 3. 1 we may learn that the prophecy of Amos was in general addressed to the whole of Israel, "the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt." Yet it is equally clear that in the first two chapters the prophet pronounces judgment upon the nations immediately adjacent to Israel, that is to say, upon those nations which occupied the

territory given to Abraham. (See Gen. 15. 18.) The prophecy thus divides itself into two parts: chapters 1, 2 being God's judgment of the several occupants of this territory, including Judah and Israel; chapter 2 to end being a prophecy as to Israel as a whole in a definite or especial manner.

In contrast to Ezekiel and Jeremiah, who were priests and thus had some recognised status, Amos tells us that he was no prophet nor a prophet's son (chap. 7. 14); that is, he had no official capacity. His message was given solely by divine commission. Nothing more could be necessary, surely! Nevertheless, stating this emphasised the fact that God was speaking apart from what was formally recognised. In this manner God more definitely set aside all normal links with His people and shewed the sovereign character of the prophet's message. What was official at that time was morally far away from God and was opposed to what God was saying. (See chaps. 1. 1; 7. 10-15.) Amos was among the herdmen of Tekoa. It is possible our prophet was the father of Isaiah. (Isa. 1. 1.)

The unaffectedly calm but solemn tones of the prophet's message must impress our minds as we read his words, which are brief, clear and definite, and are a striking contrast to Hosea's abrupt transitions.

The prophecy is quoted twice in the New Testament: chapter 5. 25 in Acts 7; chapter 9. 11 in Acts 15.

The fact that the prophecy was given two years before the earthquake (chap. 1. 1) suggests that as a premonitory sign of yet greater judgment in the future, God was shortly to make His voice thus heard. As yet Jehovah's throne was in Jerusalem; He would roar from Zion. He would utter His voice from Jerusalem.

With regard to the first two chapters, it will be noticed that sins are named in detail by God and His judgment is because of definite and named offences. In principle this is always so. "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy." (James 2. 13.) "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. 20. 12.) See also Judges 1. 6, 7. "For three transgressions and for four." There may have been, and doubtless were, many other transgressions, but God alludes to what characterised those He was judging. The "three" would have been sufficient to call down His judgment; "and for four" shewed beyond measure how it was deserved.

Damascus (Syria) is first considered. They had been marked by a manner of extreme severity. Naming a sin is an important matter. It is God's method of conviction. We are often too general both with ourselves and others; and therefore judgment is neither convicting nor effectual. God says, "Because they have," etc. The sin is specified. Gaza is next referred to; the Philistines' sin is named. Tyrus is rebuked for not remembering the brotherly covenant. We cannot with impunity disregard the obligations of love. Hiram king of Tyre had been a lover of David. Things had sadly changed since that day. Edom, Ammon and Moab are each judged and their guilt specified. In the cases of these several nations, the sins are such that should have been regarded by natural conscience. In the case of Judah, however, there was another standard of judgment. They had despised the law of the Lord. Their privilege had been great to have had that law; their greatest sin had been to despise it. An important principle underlies this judgment of

Judah. Light and privileges carry with them obligations and a corresponding standard of judgment. Hence we read, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Rom. 2. 6, 16.) Note "according to my gospel." The gospel having come in, becomes the standard of judgment. Similarly in 1 Timothy 1. 10, 11. In the case of Israel, a more general survey of God's dealings is given. What God had done for them made their sins more solemn. It will be noticed that particular remark is made as to the treatment of the poor. God's gracious consideration for them (vers. 9, 10) should have at least made them considerate of the poor. Instead of which a selfish mind and heartless disregard of such had marked them, and, too, a profanity in regard of what God had specially raised up among them. A prophet speaks of what God is towards man ; a Nazarite, what man is as separated to God. Both had been profaned. These two reasons for judgment, what God Himself is, as seen in His law (ver. 4) and what He had done for Israel (vers. 9-11) are referred to elsewhere as affording a ground for the judgment of His people. (See Isa. 5. 4, 6.) How solemnly responsible is the professing church in the light of this. Who has had such favour shewn ? To whom has God been more fully revealed ? What judgment will equal that of a corrupt and Christless Christendom ? With violence shall Babylon be thrown down. (Rev. 18. 21.)

M. W. B.

HOW WE GROW.

“First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.”

IT is obvious that Christians are, in some respects, like the plants. For healthy, continuous growth and fruit-bearing plants need four things—good soil, good atmosphere, a steady supply of moisture and plenty of sunshine; and we seem to need much the same. The good soil for us is the love of God—“being rooted and grounded in love”; “keep yourselves in the love of God.” The atmosphere is the company, sympathy and affection of the saints—“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”; “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”; “Behold, how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” The moisture may be likened to the application of the word of God in the power of the Spirit—“For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”; “Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.” And the sunshine is the love of Christ—we may live “in the sunshine of his love”; “the love of Christ constraineth us”; “arise from among the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.” We all need these things all the time, so as to be “growing up into him in all things”; and entering into the purpose

of God—the land. Jesus said, “without me ye can do nothing.” He has made everything that is necessary and good available to us. If we do not avail ourselves of these blessed resources in Him we become weak, stunted and unfruitful.

When quite young I learnt a lesson in natural history which stayed with me. We lived in an old rambling house on the bank of the Maitai River, with a large garden containing many trees and shrubs; a place for birds and flowers and children. My father loved his garden and his peasticks were stowed away for the winter in the attic. Being a heavy, stoutish man he could not climb up through the manhole. I climbed through, placed them together, and then, wandering about in the gloomy old attic, which had no window, I found a rose blooming there. A shoot from a bush in the garden below had grown through an interstice in the wall, and then up and up, between the lining and weather-boarding, trying in vain to get into the sunshine; and there it had budded and bloomed. The stem, leaves and flowers were all white, without a trace of colour, a poor, weak, delicate thing. Then I knew that all the beautiful colours and vigour of the plants are the work of the precious sunbeams. In another part of the old garden a rosebush had been planted in a patch of poor, hard clay; it had shoots and leaves and flowers in plenty; all brilliantly coloured, but they were small and stunted. The atmosphere was right; plenty of moisture and sunshine were available; but it got little or no nourishment through its roots in the bad soil, and it could not grow well. The impressions of early youth are often the deepest and most lasting.

We enter the kingdom (the control of the Lord)

through much tribulation; and then those who continue to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" go on and enter consciously that other blessed, glorious sphere, the church of the living God; spoken of by the Lord Jesus as "My assembly"; a wonderful sphere of divine joy and praise; where the purpose of the heart of the blessed God for His loved ones is known and enjoyed. And then one may go forth and speak a word in season to him that is weary.

"O keep us, love divine, near Thee,
That we our nothingness may know,
And ever to Thy glory be
Walking in faith while here below."

H. FARQUHAR.

FORGIVENESS AND REMISSION OF SINS.

PERHAPS we may honestly ask ourselves if there is a difference, and if there is, what the value of the difference may be? The remission of sins is spoken of in the gospel preaching, but have we, who believe, entered into the real value of the words? A few minutes consideration may not be amiss, for the difference is great and fundamental. Forgiveness marked the old covenant, but remission marks the new. When the English translations were being made some four hundred years ago the two words were synonymous, that is, there was no distinction in their meaning and the translators used them to represent one word only in the original of the New Testament (testament and covenant also represent one word). Since then, however, a difference has developed in their significance, therefore the question arises, What is the force of

the word chosen by the Spirit of God? This opens up a most interesting inquiry, for it is quite clear that in the New Testament forgiveness is not connected with sins, while remission is. In the New Testament the Spirit uses invariably the one word, of which the Latin-English remission is the equivalent, and in its first occurrence is rightly translated "remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 28), and so the expression should stand in each of the twelve times it is used, never forgiveness of sins. For example, if I do you an injury and you forgive me, which is quite right, and we can go on together, yet your forgiveness cannot wipe away or "blot out" the thing itself or its consequences, but *blotting out* is just the idea in the scriptural thought of remission. In the gospel section of Isaiah it is proclaimed, "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions" (chap. 43. 25 and 44. 22), and later taught by the Spirit (Heb. 10. 17), "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

In Luke 7 the Lord Himself distinguished the two thoughts by using in the parable the word "forgive" (used also in Eph. 4. 32 and Col. 3. 13), but when He speaks of and to the woman He changes the word and says, "thy sins are remitted." The Pharisees and scribes present quickly realised the change, and from their point of view rightly said, He blasphemeth, but we who believe rejoice in its significance.

I have no doubt the thought and the term both find their origin in the day of atonement. (Lev. 16.) That type was the climax of the ceremonial law, one day once a year, when the high priest in linen garments, not in his robes, went "within the veil" to the mercy seat, the very presence of Jehovah, but "not without blood, which he offered for himself, and the errors of

the people." (Heb. 9. 7.) In virtue of that sin offering Jehovah was enabled righteously to bear with the people for another year, or in that sense to forgive them. Why? Because however little they may have understood, it typified and looked forward to that one sacrifice and bloodshedding of Christ, who "once in the end of the world . . . appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." (Heb. 9. 26.)

The Spirit's argument in that chapter is, that if God permitted in type "the blood of bulls and of goats" to be effective, "how much more the blood of Christ." Then that very ordinance was "a remembrance," or calling to mind of sins every year, but now the blood of Jesus has been shed, and thus the new covenant established, He can say, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," there can be "no more offering for sin." This is foreshadowed in the type and now is unfolded to us in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which indeed is the basis of the gospel. The ceremony of that day was carried out by Aaron "alone" in two distinct though closely linked parts—there was the going within the veil with the blood of the sin offering, and there was the coming out to send away the scape-goat with "all their iniquities"—the one part equivalent to the other. Many have no difficulty in seeing the blood of the sacrifice to be a type of the blood of Christ, but is it equally seen that there must be a commensurate result? Then, the blood of the goat was evidence that the judgment of death had been executed, while the live goat sent away shewed His thought to be that what had necessitated the death was sent away out of sight and memory for ever. This gives us the word remission, which is borrowed from the "letting go," or rather sending away of the goat. (Lev. 16. 26.)

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For sin and its consequences (chap. 16. 21) there is no forgiveness, God's righteous judgment must be executed, therefore in the gospel there is the declaration of God's righteousness as witnessed in the blood of Jesus, while for faith there is in His resurrection a world brought into view beyond the range of sin and death. In *His* death, it means an ending and removal of the order of the first man Adam, with the world stained by sin which came in through him, but in His resurrection the establishment of an order after the pattern of the second Man, with a world where sin can have "no place."

That is the great salvation spoken by the Lord (Heb. 2. 3), and the theme of the gospel preached by the apostles—"Jesus and the resurrection," as recorded in Acts 4 and 17, also the commission given to Paul in Acts 26, "remission of sins and inheritance" for those who are "of the faith of Jesus" (Rom. 3. 26), deliverance from all that I am and have done, and inheritance in a world beyond the reach of death.

If as a result of the preaching "the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 13. 52), why should we have less? In a public way things are weak as water spilt on the ground, still we dare not think the power of the name of Jesus, or the power of the Spirit is diminished! Failure may be on our side, but on the resurrection side there is none nor can there be. The writer of a spiritual song has well expressed the truth in :

" Oh, bright and blessed scenes !
 Where sin can never come,
 Whose sight our longing spirit weans
 From earth where yet we roam."

ARTHUR J. MARKS.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

(EZEK. 48. 30-35.)

THE GATE OF DAN

is the next one to meet us, and what a gate to come to in the experience of our souls! This gate would remind us on the one hand of the thought of spiritual discernment, and on the other of spiritual energy. In the realisation that God discerned the exercises of her heart and had heard her Rachel named the son born to Bilhah. So Dan was his name and Jacob in Genesis 49 recognised the import of the name when he said, "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel."

Later in the history of the tribe we see how the thought of spiritual discernment comes to light. In Exodus 38 we learn that Aholiab of the tribe of Dan was associated with Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah in making the vessels and the furniture of the tabernacle. There are three things said of him: that he was an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen. These three things each carry with them the thought of spiritual discernment. An engraver suggests the wisdom required to open up and to bring to light the possibilities of beauty and worth which would otherwise remain hidden, and how in order to fill our place in the testimony of God we need to submit ourselves to the skill of an engraver.

Then there is the cunning workman. The word here does not mean slyness or any such thing, but rather it brings before us one who brings his God-given capacity and thought to bear upon all his work in connection with the assembly of God. Then he is also an embroiderer; one who weaves into the texture

the various glories of Christ suggested in the blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen. What a privilege to be called to and fitted for such work as this. May we greatly desire to be marked by spiritual discernment and thus be available to the Lord in relation to His testimony down here as an engraver, a cunning workman and an embroiderer.

Then there is the matter of spiritual energy. It says of Dan he is a lion's whelp, he shall leap from Bashan. A leaper is one who is marked by energy. In Joshua 19, after the extent of the lot marked out for Dan is given, we are told that the coast of the children of Dan was too little for them and that they went up against Leshem and took it and re-named it Dan, thus leaving upon it the impress of their own energy. It is instructive that Japho or Joppa is the place last named in relation to Dan's lot.

We meet with this city again in Acts 9, where a woman who had been noted for her good work and almsdeeds had died. The disciples there were marked by spiritual discernment, and sent for Peter, and he, marked by spiritual energy arose and went with them, and the result is that at the word of Peter, "Tabitha, arise," she opened her eyes and sat up; the whole scene is very suggestive of spiritual energy. There is much spiritual lethargy all around, but may our exercise be to answer to the thoughts suggested to us by the gate of Dan. We should be able to judge as to the holy claims of the house of God and to discern with priestly sensibilities between the holy and the profane. As it says in Ezekiel 44, "And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments."

J. R. TITHECOTT.

ISAIAH 30. 3-18.

“Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. . . . This is a rebellious people. . . . which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. . . . For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee; and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. . . . And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.”

When sore with fear tormented,
And dreading hot pursuit,
Trust not in Egypt's princes,
In horses fleet of foot.
For thus the Lord hath spoken:
“Think not from wrath to flee;
In quietness and confidence
Thy strength shall be.”

When all without is threat'ning,
And all within despair,
Let not deceiving prophets
Thy trembling heart ensnare.
Away with all temptations,
And hear thy Lord's decree:
“In quietness and confidence
Thy strength shall be.”

The gracious Lord is waiting,
He sits at mercy's gate;
He is a God of judgment
To those who for Him wait.
He'll still the voice of weeping,
And He will answer thee,
“In quietness and confidence
Thy strength shall be.”

J. C.

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