

# LANDMARKS

OF THE  
FAITH

VOL. IV 1938

Some  
*LANDMARKS*  
*of the Faith*

BEING  
OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON  
SCRIPTURAL SUBJECTS

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THE FAITH—once delivered to the Saints.  
—*Jude i, 3.*

Remove not the ancient landmark which thy  
fathers have set.—*Prov. xxii, 28.*

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## The Lord's Joy.

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**B**ELIEVERS at the beginning of their Christian career are largely occupied with the blessings which God has given *them* and of *their* joy. They are indeed marvellously blessed, and the normal result is to be filled “ *with all joy and peace in believing* ” (Rom. xv. 13). They rightly desire also to know this joy and peace in its fullness, so that they may experimentally know more of present deliverance from the fleeting joys around them. But as the believer grows in the divine nature he thinks more of the Lord and of His portion, than of his own part in the blessing. Let us therefore briefly consider the Lord's joy and that which brings it to fruition.

“ *The Word was made (became) flesh* ” (John i, 14). Then afterwards throughout the Gospel by John our beloved Lord is presented as one with the Father, and yet a real Man, who was weary with His journey, and who wept with those that wept. (John iv and xi). Thus we have the Son in eternal relationship with the Father, the “ *I Am,* ” God manifested in flesh, a real Man, who morally in nature corresponded with what God is essentially.

In Matt. xi the Lord accepts His rejection by the Jewish nation, and although feeling keenly their folly and wilful unbelief, yet at that time gives thanks to His Father. Apart from the cross it was the most trying moment in the Lord's pathway through this world, yet it made no

difference to His joy because He lived in the enjoyment of His Father's love and in doing His Father's will, and not in movements around Him. This perfect Man had placed His whole trust in God, found His delight in Jehovah's saints, and found also complete satisfaction in the lot apportioned to Him by Jehovah. He ever looked onward to being in the actual presence of God where there is "*fullness of joy*" and "*pleasures for evermore.*" (Psalm xvi). He now has that joy which as a perfect Man He always had before Him in His pathway on earth. Heb. xii, 2). All who love Him are bound to rejoice as they think of *His* joy in being in the presence of His God, and their joy increases as they contemplate this, His present joy, and thus the joy of the Lord is their strength.

While sitting on the Father's throne the Lord is waiting, patiently waiting, while His assembly is being formed. Adam was asleep while the woman was builded, but Christ is watching, intently watching, the gradual formation of His counterpart. Directly this is completed the Lord Himself will descend from heaven, and all the redeemed, from the beginning of God's work in grace to that moment, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

There are three things which characterize His descent into the air—*WITH JOY* He will send forth His assembling shout,—*WITH POWER* of archangel's voice He will call His redeemed out of the realm of death, and—*WITH ABSOLUTE CONTROL* the trump of

God will call them to enter into that which His eternal purpose has purposed for them. What a moment for *Him* when He meets in the air those for whom He died! How it will thrill our hearts to see *His* joy! The moment will have arrived when He will present to Himself, His assembly, shining in a beauty which is all His own, and which perfectly satisfies every desire of His heart (Eph. v, 25-27). With what joy He will conduct the many sons into His Father's presence in His Father's house for the joy and glory of the Father and the Son! Then for the first time the whole assembly will know the rich portion purposed for her, and will enter fully into the joy of being loved with the love wherewith the Father loves His Son. For that moment our Lord waits on high, and we wait down here, and the more we contemplate *His* joy in presenting the assembly to Himself and to His Father, the more we shall join with the Spirit in saying to our Beloved "Come." Surely we long to see the completion of His joy, and see also the whole universe chanting His praise.

In the foregoing remarks we have, then, spoken of the Lord's *present* joy at the right hand of God, and also of the joy He will have in presenting His assembly to Himself, and in introducing her into the presence of His God and Father. The length of the interval between the Lord taking His own inside with Himself and subsequently manifesting Himself *with* them, is not stated, for the heavenly saints will have



entered on their eternal portion with God. Neither is there any description given of it, for human language cannot express the blessedness of being at home with Him in all that new creation involves (II Cor. xii, 4). The *full* portion of the saints forming the assembly will then be fully enjoyed, because for this the redemption of the body is necessary. The *internal* part of God's purpose, the assembly's position with the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, will then be fully known. We speak of the inside part because Eph. i, 1-6 unfolds this, along with the Headship of Christ over all things, and our inheritance in Christ. This latter part—inheriting with Him—we shall still wait for, with Him, in His Father's presence. The Son could come forth from the Father and return to the Father (John xvi, 28). We, however, must be first caught up to be with His God and Father, and then “*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory*” (Col. iii, 4). We could not consistently “*Shew the exceeding riches of His grace*” until that grace had been fully known and enjoyed by us. This distinction between the assembly's place *inside* with God, and our position with Christ as Head over all, is of great importance. The peculiar sweetness of the relationship of the saints inside with Christ surpasses all human comprehension, and no other family of the redeemed will share it. It is unique, according to eternal purpose, apart from all thought of responsibility, and will be fulfilled

by God's power and grace for His own delight and glory. All the redeemed will be in the relationship of sons, but one family alone will have the Spirit of His Son (Rev. xxi, 7; Gal. iv, 6).

During the interval in which both the Assembly and the Old Testament saints are enjoying their internal portion *in heaven*, six families will be saved and formed *on earth* for the time of display in the day of glory. Their hopes were the coming of Christ to establish His kingdom in glory, and the two families who sacrificed their lives for their Lord will reign with Christ in heavenly glory in company with the assembly and Old Testament saints (Rev. vi, 9-11; xvi, 2-4; xx, 4). Then four families who will be faithful to their Lord through the time of trouble will form the nucleus of those who are to inhabit the earth during the reign of Christ for a thousand years (Rev. xiv, 1-5; vii, 1-8 and 9-17; xxi, 24).

We must now consider the joy of Christ in the day of His glory which commences with His coming with His heavenly saints to reign over the earth. The false bride will have been judged, and the heavenly saints will have been manifested before the judgment seat of Christ to "*receive the things done in the body*" (II Cor. v, 10). No thought of judgment could be connected with their going in, for in new creation all is of God; but when man has taken any part in what God accomplishes the work needs to be reviewed

(Col. iii, 10 ; I Cor. iii, 10-17). We therefore now read “ *His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints* ” (Rev. xix, 7, 8). With joy will the Lamb bring forth His bride, adorned with bridal beauty that will shine in eternal brilliancy. With joy will He display her in that which she has been for Him in the day of His rejection. He has had the joy of having her at home with Himself, and now with delight He can be manifested with her.

When Israel has been gathered back into its own land and the earth cleansed by judgment, the Lord will review with joy the work of grace brought to fruition. Then “ *He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied* ” (Isaiah liii, 11). The Lord will then reign until every enemy has been subdued, and at the end He will exclaim “ *It is done,* ” and deliver up the kingdom that God—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—may be All in all. The Lord’s joy will now be complete, in seeing the universe established on the foundation of redemption and firmly attached to Him as the living Head of all, so that all will be sustained to His eternal glory and pleasure.

May we now, by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit, enter more into the joy of the Lord, so that we may be saying from our hearts, “ *Even so, come, Lord Jesus* ” (Rev. xxii, 20).

London.

J. S. G.

# A Hymn of Praise.

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Father, it is Thy love,  
So full and free,  
That to eternal days  
Our joy will be.

Love which, in Jesus here,  
'Tis sweet to trace :  
The blessed vessel He  
Of " grace on grace. "

Grace in His words and deeds,  
Grace in His ways,  
Grace which, in serving men,  
Filled full His days.

Thy JOY to have it so,  
Most blessed God—  
To see that grace displayed  
Each step He trod.

It fills with fragrance rare  
The Holiest :  
Its savour shall be known  
By all the blest.

While on the upward way,  
Our strength, our joy,  
Shall be in grace : its praise  
Our lips employ.

How blest are they, O God,  
Who know Thy ways ;  
Their glorious Centre He  
On whom we gaze.

Thy LOVE Thy glory is,  
And in Christ's day  
We shall its *fulness* prove,  
Rest 'neath its sway.

A. H. L.

## The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

“**A**ND God said moreover unto Moses, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations,” Exodus iii, 15. “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise . . . . But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city,” Hebrews xi, 9, 16.

There are few things more remarkable in the history of God's sovereign dealings with men, than the way in which He identified Himself, His name, and His character, with these men—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He committed Himself to them because their faith took hold of Himself and His promises. He was sovereign in His calling them, and in the prom-

ises which He made to them, all of which looked on to the coming of Christ ; yet this did not lessen the value He put on their faith and obedience, and their willingness to be “ *strangers and pilgrims on the earth,*” and *to confess* it also. They were not ashamed of their strangership in the world of man’s glory : and the God of glory was not ashamed to be called their God.

Now this energy of faith and this devoted pilgrim character shone out very finely in the life and walk of Abraham. He was above all—the Man of Faith, and the True Pilgrim. That is how we might describe him. His history is so well known, and that righteousness he secured by faith has been set out by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament so fully that we need not dwell on it further. There was such a display in his course of that in which God could take pleasure, that we can thus far understand how God could identify Himself and His name with such a man.

And the same is true of Isaac—though not perhaps in quite so full a measure. His course was less prominent than that of Abraham. Yet there was in it a quiet, calm persistence in the path of faith. Not that we see *no* failure ; doubtless there was failure, for none is perfect but One, and One alone. All that God could delight in, all that could possibly minister to His glory and the vindication of what He is, found its full unhindered display in Christ alone, the perfect Servant, His Elect, in whom His soul delighted. And there we rest. We may be disappointed in

ourselves, or in others, but we can never be disappointed in Him. We do not seek perfection in the subjects of the gracious activities of God; whether an Abraham or a Moses, or Paul and John. We see the work of God in them, precious traits of grace and devotedness; but we find in Christ the very source of these things. We learn deep lessons in the lives of these men of faith; but our hearts rest, the deep appreciation our souls is expressed, where all the delight of God is known, even in His beloved Son. God operates *in* men; but He works *for* the glory of His Son. All His purpose centres there. Thus we are not disturbed by the failure we find in others or in ourselves, nor even in men of faith in the Word, because God has revealed His Christ to our souls.

Thus in Isaac we find the heir of promise and the dispenser of blessing; but he was the type of the true Seed, even of Christ. Yet he filled out his day in a manner according to God's will. We do not find the abounding energy of faith in Isaac as in Abraham; but we do find a pilgrim character, and the maintenance of what was due to God as He was known to him. In the case, then, of Abraham and Isaac, we find certainly what might lead us to understand that word—“*The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac*”; but in Jacob's history, there is displayed a character, and a course, which might cause us to marvel that God Himself should commit His Name to him as “*The God of Jacob.*” But

therein lies the way in which God magnifies Himself in His marvellous goodness, His faithfulness to His promises, and as the Vindicator of His own glory, even in the presence of the weakness, vacillations and failure of a Jacob.

And this is a great comfort to our hearts, because it leaves room for us who feel how like Jacob we really are ! Yet God, the blessed God we know, is not ashamed to be the God of such a poor thing as that. In a most marvellous way Jacob's history serves to bring out what God is Himself, on His own side, in a faithfulness, in a goodness, in a largeness of heart, and in a fulness of blessing, that just staggers our poor puny thoughts, and rises far above all the weakness and failure of this poor stranger, yet, in spite of all, a pilgrim. Mark his words to Pharaoh : "*few and evil have the days of the years of my life been,*" Gen. xlvii, 9. He felt the contrast we have alluded to ; yet though the years of his life had that character, they had been punctuated by the unwearied faithfulness of the eternal God. A wanderer Jacob was from his home, a fugitive from his brother's wrath, yet he could not lie down to sleep for one night without God being there, and disclosing His faithfulness to him. Now see the perfect goodness of the Divine promise : "*And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land : for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken of,*" Gen. xxviii, 15. Yet in the presence of unbounded loving-



kindness the natural heart asserts itself—“*If God will be with me, . . . then shall the Lord be my God: . . . and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee,*” v. 20-22.

And was not God true to His word and promise? Indeed, He was. He bore with all the waywardness, and suffered all the plans and bargains of His servant: yet in the end Divine faithfulness triumphed over all. • Jacob may have thought he was attaining his own ends, when in fact God was just bringing him to the point of the recognition of His purpose. But he is weakened in his strongest place; God has to touch him there, that he might learn his own nothingness. God thus brings us to an end of our own resources, in order that we might grasp His purpose for us. But the process is a very painful one, both for the flesh and for nature; but blessed in its results. Jacob has a new name; and an entirely new history with God. For the Christian to-day, this means his apprehension of being “*in Christ Jesus,*” God having set aside the man of responsibility, with his failure, and his vows, and all his plans; for He has set Christ at His right hand, and our new place is in Him there. And then we come *from* that to be *for* Christ down here.

What a blessed faithful God is the God of Jacob! What encouragement for the heart; what comfort in the midst of our failure and weakness! Unchanging faithfulness; promises

that cannot fail ; a glory that God must vindicate in the lives of even such poor things as we are ! No wonder the Psalmist says : “ *The Lord of hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah !* ” Ps. xlvi, 7, 11. And again later : “ *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,* ” Ps. cxlvi, 5. Thus does the blessed God fill the measure of a man’s days, proved in His faithfulness, in the presence of weakness and failure. He tests us in all our circumstances, but rises above them in His grace and goodness, and blesses us, not according to our needs or desires, but according to His own riches and glory.

Bath.

V. W. J. H. L.

## God with us and God for us.

“ *God is with thee in all that thou doest,* ”

Gen. xxi, 22.

**W**HAT a beautiful testimony for Abraham to receive from the lips of the heathen around him. His life was so marked before them that as they watched his conduct from day to day, and the success that followed his work, they were constrained to say “ *God is with thee in all that thou doest.* ” But according to Acts x, 34, “ *God is no respecter of persons,* ” therefore He is just as willing to be with me in all that I do as He was with Abraham ; so the question that should often be in my mind is this : Am I living before my neighbours, friends, acquaintances, and all with whom I may have to do

business, in such a consistent manner that they are compelled to think and speak thus of me? Be thou, O God, with me in all I think or do or say!

There can be no surprise then, after seeing that God was with him in all that he did, to read further that “*the Lord blessed Abraham in all things.*” If God is with me He will certainly bless me, and when God blesses me I am blessed indeed, for “*the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it,*” Prov. x, 22. God’s blessing is pure and perfect; therefore, “*if God be for us, who can be against us?*” The answer to this question, which I heard one evening from a poor but good man in the street, is one I think I shall never forget. If God be for us, who can be against us? “Nobody of any account!” This was his reply to the apostles’ inspired query, and he was right. However many there may be against me, if God is on my side they will not *count*! Oh, that I may ever be on God’s side, living always in His will and for His glory! Then He will be for me and will bless me even as He did Abraham—“*in all things.*” And, therefore, while “*the Lord is on my side, I will not fear. What can man do unto me?*”

“ Beneath Thy wings secure I sleep;  
What foe can harm while Thou dost keep?  
I wake and find Thee at my side,  
My omnipresent Guard and Guide.

“ Oh, why should earth or hell distress  
With God so strong, so nigh to bless?  
From Him alone salvation flows;  
On Him alone, my soul, repose.”

JOHN ROBERTS,  
1896.

## The Faithfulness of God.

Psalm cxix, 89-96.

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THE first three verses contemplate the abiding faithfulness of God. *Thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations. God is faithful.* There is no variableness nor shadow of a turning with Him, and He can always be relied on to execute His word.

The material earth and heavens, according to the moral judgments of God, abide, and constitute a supplementary witness, if such were needed, to one of the most glorious facts connected with the revelation of God. Whatever we may be, whatever man is, the fact remains that God cannot deny Himself. He abides faithful. “ *God is faithful by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,*” I Cor. i, 9. What comfort this is to the heart and what a rock for our souls to lean on!

From verse 92 to the end our reaction, our answer, our response to this faithfulness is contemplated. For answer there must be either of

filial devotion, or, what is utterly unthinkable, of callous indifference. Do I delight in His law, what He shows and teaches me, the communication through it of Himself to me? Have I sought Him, studied or enquired of His precepts, and not forgotten either Him or them? Have I considered the witness or testimony given of Himself, and have I seen the end of all perfection—Christ—and my moral and physical conformation to Him? Thank God, in measure I have, and that I can say: “*I am Thine, save me, for I have sought Thy precepts,*” v. 94. Instead of perishing, I have been quickened, caused to live in respect of Himself, having experienced this salvation from day to day, and I pray that this salvation shall be vouchsafed to me till the end because I belong to Him.

The end of all perfection is Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, the yea and the Amen.

There is nothing more to follow from God in regard to the revelation of Himself, and there can be no higher attainment for me than conformity to His image, and with that I am satisfied.

I can say with the apostle John, “*When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is,*” I John iii, 2.

Would that our response was commensurate with the abiding and everlasting faithfulness of God!

Bath.

J. B.-C.

# Our Unchanging Saviour and The Things that Remain.

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**B**ECAUSE the believer lives in a world where all is changing and becoming more and more unstable, it is good for him to consider more earnestly than ever those things that will abide, lest he become weary or fainthearted through too much occupation with the things that will pass away.

First and foremost we have the assurance that **OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR HIMSELF WILL REMAIN**, for He is the unchanging One. “ *Thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail* ” (Heb. i, 10-12).

The contrast here is plainly between the Creator Himself and the creation. The contours of the earth on which we live seem to have changed but little since man was first made, while as to the constellations in the heavens no change at all can be traced by man, yet in contrast with the eternity of the Creator, the scriptures use such words as “ change,” “ grow

old," or "perish" when speaking of the creation.

But what adds such interest to all this to the Christian is that he knows the Creator is the Redeemer, or, what is equally true—the Redeemer is the Creator. The same chapter of the Hebrews that speaks of His glory as Creator declares that He "*when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*" He is therefore to us our unchanging Saviour "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.*"

O Lord and Saviour, we recline  
On that eternal love of Thine,  
Thou art our rest, and Thou alone  
Remainest when all else is gone.  
Yes! "Thou remainest," sea and land,  
E'en heaven shall pass, but Thou shalt stand:  
Undimmed Thy radiancy appears,  
Changeless through all the changing years.

But further, we are assured that THE KINGDOM OF GOD WILL REMAIN. The scripture, or rather one of them, that asserts this is also in the epistle to the Hebrews. In chapter twelve after speaking of the shaking of heaven and earth and the removal of those things that are shaken that those things that cannot be shaken may remain, the writer adds: "*Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God*

*acceptably with reverence and godly fear*” (v. 28).

The contrast here is between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men. This is further emphasised by the prophet Haggai who adds “*And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come*” (Haggai ii, v. 7).

As we look around us to-day we plainly see that the political world is in a turmoil,—unstable, restless, and at war or preparing for war. But all will be shaken, the best as well as the most lawless will be shaken and removed, to make way for the kingdom that shall remain: This kingdom will fill the coming age, *the world to come of which we speak* (chap. ii, v. 5) and over it Jesus the Son of Man will reign, He who made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.

So real is this kingdom to the believer that he is said to have already received it. In the parable the nobleman went into a far country *to receive for himself a kingdom* and to return (Luke xix, 12). But not only has Christ, but His people also have already received this kingdom, a kingdom that cannot be moved, and they with Him wait only for its display in glory.

This brings us to another fact and that is that **THE CHILDREN OF GOD WILL REMAIN.** In the epistle of John we read: “*All*



*that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever*” (I John ii, v. 16-17). The world here is not the material earth, nor the nations of the earth as such, but the world in its moral elements, as God sees it. These elements are lust and pride, sad evidence and results of the fall of man. This world of lust and pride will pass away, it cannot, it must not, remain. But the children of God will remain. “*He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*”

It is characteristic of God’s children that they do His will. It is true that we are *exhorted* to do His will, and that He works it in us—“*Now the God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight*” (Heb. xiii, 20-21), and true also that we desire to do His will more perfectly, but in contrast to the world characterized by lust and pride the children of God really do His will. The Lord, when on earth, so regarded His disciples. *And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and said “Behold my mother and my brethren, for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother”* (Matt. xii, v. 49-50). •Such as these will abide when the present world has passed away and they shall

have their portion in that world where the will of God shall be done on earth even as it is done in heaven.

Lastly, THE TRUTH OF GOD WILL REMAIN. We are told this in John's second epistle. "*For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever*" (v. 2). Many errors came into the church during the days of the apostles and they firmly resisted them. Many errors have come into the church since their departure. Error is all around us to-day and many have been ensnared thereby. We live in the days of which the Apostle Paul wrote: "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*" (II Tim. iv, v. 3-4). Yet the truth is triumphant, the truth will prevail! Paul himself said as much when he said "*We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth*" (II Cor. xiii, v. 8). The truth is, of course, the revelation of God in His Son. He Himself is the truth, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, the holy scriptures are the scriptures of truth, and the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. No saint of God will ever take a wrong thought of God into heaven! The truth, then, cannot pass away, it "*shall be with us for ever.*"

EDITOR.

# Thou Art The Same.

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Quickly the moments flee,  
Passing away ;  
One thousand years to Thee  
Are as one day.  
Changeless Thy majesty,  
Wondrous Thy name ;  
Through all eternity  
Thou art the Same !

Maker of worlds of old,  
The starry sky ;  
Thou shalt their glories fold,  
And lay them by !  
Yet Thy years never fail,  
Endless Thy fame ;  
Thy mighty power we hail,  
Thou art the Same !

Jesus, our Lord, our all,  
To Thee we cling ;  
Keep us (while empires fall)  
Under Thy wing.  
Saviour, to Thee we pray,  
Knowing Thy name ;  
Yesterday and to-day—  
Ever the Same !

E. L. B.

# The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved.

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JOHN, though not mentioning himself by name, apparently speaks of himself six times in his Gospel. It is instructive and worthy of our careful consideration to examine each passage, and also to notice the progressive teaching contained in each.

John the Baptist had proclaimed that Jesus was “ *The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world* ” (John i, 29). This testimony meets the need of the conscience of any awakened by the mercy of God. The Lamb which God had provided was before them, the only One capable of undertaking the removal of sin from the universe of God. Thousands of lambs had died, but none of these sacrifices had satisfied the claims of a holy God, neither had they met the need of those who offered them. But now the Lamb foreordained by God had come, the One of whom all others were types, Who alone can put away sin in its entirety. The work He has now done has met all the holy claims of God, it purges the guilty conscience, it has sacrificially put away sin, and soon by divine power He will banish sin from the universe of God. May each of our readers know peace with God, through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ who has made peace by the blood of His cross.

But man has a heart and a mind as well as a conscience. The work of Christ purifies the conscience, and then the knowledge of the Person who has accomplished the work is the controlling object for the mind and the satisfying portion for the heart. Our God has provided a rich portion for us besides meeting our soul's need. So—“*Again the next day,*” the day upon which he had proclaimed that God's Lamb had come to accomplish this great work, he is “*looking upon Jesus as He walked.*” He is not now testifying to a crowd, but his mind and heart are engaged with the Person. He unconsciously expresses—“*Behold the Lamb of God.*” His soul was delighting in, his mind was engaged with the Person, and so he spake of Him. The two disciples, the whole of his congregation, hear his utterance, their hearts are drawn to and their minds become engaged with the same Person in whom John the Baptist had been delighting. The musings of John the Baptist had been used to attract them to Jesus, and now they follow Him. Jesus enquires—“*What seek ye?*” He does not ask—“*Whom seek ye?*” but—“*What seek ye?*” “*Whom*” could only have called forth one answer, but “*What*” searches the depth of the moral being. What am I really seeking? Is it something below the sun, or even my deep need to be met? If it is my need I may ponder carefully the words—“*Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*” —ponder over the glorious tidings that He has

made Peace. The work that saves is done, and I may know that my sins are put away by the work He has done upon the cross. God is satisfied and glorified by what Jesus HAS DONE, and now I may find rest in that triumphant Saviour in the glory of God.

These two disciples replied—“ *Master where dwellest Thou?* ” They desired a home acquaintance with Jesus. They were not satisfied with a casual acquaintance, but desired to know Him at home—in the secret surroundings of His Person. This desire could only call forth one answer—“ *Come and see.* ” He desires that we should know Him intimately in the blessedness of His Father’s presence, where love is supreme, where all that God is shines in unsullied light. He came to where we were to meet our deep need that we may know Him where He dwells in His Father’s bosom and finally to dwell with Him for ever. These disciples came, saw, and dwelt with Him “ *that day.* ” That day left its stamp upon them, they were marked by its impress the rest of their days, and it will be so with us if we respond like Andrew and John and “ *Come and see.* ”

A good start is a very great mercy, but more is needed in order to finish well, and also to live where Christ is in reproach and rejected. In John xiii, 23, we see the effect upon John who had been “ *that day* ” with Jesus at home. He is enjoying His love, he is conscious that *he* is

loved, and in communion he can ask and be answered. John was perfectly free with his Lord, but at the same time giving the Lord His place as Lord and Teacher. How beautifully simple divine things are if in communion with Him in His circle, but how difficult when reasoning with the unrenewed mind. Difficulties there are in our pathway, but bring Him in and they are vanquished. The wall is *leaped* over and the *troop* is triumphed over (Ps. xviii, 29). The believer is helped by every difficulty he overcomes.

If we have responded to the invitation “*Come and see,*” and are sustained in communion, then we can SUFFER WITH HIM. It is our privilege at times to suffer *for* Him, but only through walking in communion are we enabled to suffer *with* Him. All the disciples “*forsook Him and fled,*” but John soon returned, and was the only one with Jesus when passing through the incomparable sorrow connected with the cross. What must it have been to a “*Boanerges*” to witness the brutal treatment and insulting conduct heaped upon the One who loved him and the One he loved! He was a *known* disciple and *known* at the palace of the high priest, and at his word Peter was admitted, but it is only in communion that any are able to suffer with Christ (John xviii, 15).

John has heard His Lord condemned, seen Him nailed to the cross, but in John xix, 25-27, he is still near to the One who loved him. The

Lord can commit His mother—figuratively the elect of Israel—to John. It is communion with Christ that fits us to do what He wishes (see Acts ix, 10-15).

In John xx, 1-10, John reaches the sepulchre—the place of death—first, and thus associates himself with One who has died under reproach. He can leave it—believing—to follow His loved and rejected Teacher until he is privileged to see Him face to face.

In the last reference to John in his Gospel he knew and testified for his Lord, saying—“*It is the Lord.*” Then when we hear the Lord saying to Peter—“*Follow thou Me,*” we find John already following, and from his epistles we judge that he was maintained following until he departed to be with Christ, which is far better.

In concluding, let us remember that to know the Son of God in the circle of His Father’s love, in the sacred intimacy and present enjoyment of His Father’s house, enables us to have communion in its richest character. Then if maintained in communion we can suffer with Him, care for those He loves, move on in His pathway with intelligence through believing, and be marked by following Him until He comes. May the Lord give us grace that we may be marked by these features, for His glory and joy, for His name’s sake.

London.

J. S. G.



## A Little-Known Disciple.

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OF those disciples who were with our Lord when He was here upon earth, very little is recorded concerning Andrew. We are told little of what he did, and as to whether he preached or no scripture is silent. Yet we can be quite certain that his gracious Master loved and appreciated His humble disciple as much as He did his brother Peter. Yet of Peter we read a great deal. He preached widely and was also used of God to give us part of the written Word. But of the comparative little that the Spirit of God has been pleased to make known concerning Andrew, we have sufficient to see that in the counsels and affections of God's Beloved Son he occupied a very intimate place.

We first find him spoken of in John i, v. 35 and 40. He has become a disciple of John the Baptist. John, as he contemplates the Person of the Son of God, says in Andrew's hearing—“*Behold the Lamb of God*”; whereupon Andrew promptly leaves him for One Whose greatness and Person are set before us in the opening verses of this same gospel. His having been attracted to that Blessed One evokes a desire to seek his brother Simon, and finding him, he brings him to Jesus—a simple yet most blessed service within the reach of the most of God's people. Both of them found Christ, both had the privilege of being in His blessed company

“ *that day* ” (John i, 39), and as we know from Matt. iv, 18-20, they were the first two to be called by our Lord Himself to be His disciples.

In the 6th chapter of John we find Andrew again. Here, although his faith—like our own—was very weak, yet the loaves and fishes of which he speaks are taken up in the omnipotent hand of the Son of God and used to feed the multitudes. Our Lord had addressed Philip, and Andrew is free to interpose without fear of rebuke, although both Philip and he betrayed the fact that they had forgotten how even Moses in unbelief had said—“ *Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them?* ” (Num. xi, 22). Andrew is to witness the power and grace of Him Who, centuries before, had fed his fathers in another wilderness; not one meal only but continuously for almost forty years.

Passing on to chapter xii, verse 22, we meet Andrew in company with Philip telling Jesus that certain Greeks desire to see Him. In this wonderful chapter Lazarus has been raised. Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, are typical of the Remnant—just a few owning Him while yet in the midst of an apostate nation—a remnant which will be in being just previous to the ushering in of the Age to come (referred to as the Millenium). Verses 12-15 speak of the times of rejoicing in the Age to come when the Jewish nation will have received their King, and the Gentiles, referred to here as “ Greeks,”

come up to the City to worship (v. 20-22). As Andrew and Philip tell the Lord that the Greeks desire to see Him, they hear from His blessed lips His speaking of His wondrous death which must take place before any blessing could flow forth to guilty man, whether Jew or Gentile.

Turning to Mark, chapter xiii, verse 3, we see further how Andrew with three other disciples enjoyed holy intimacy with our adorable Lord and how he and they could approach the Saviour, God's beloved Son, in all freedom and liberty, and ask what they would and hear from the lips of their Master the things which would be brought to pass ere He comes " *in the clouds with great power and glory* " (v. 26).

As we peruse what God has been pleased to record concerning His beloved servant Andrew, we can well be encouraged. In a simple and living way he was drawn to the Person of the Son of God, heard His life-giving voice and was used to bring his brother to the feet of the Lord Jesus. To the question asked by our Lord, " *What seek ye?* ", their reply was " *Where dwellest Thou?* " Where could He always be found by them? No doubt His home as a Man on earth was a very humble one, but His real dwelling ever was in the bosom of the Father, and He gives His own the privilege of knowing something of the blessedness of it.

We read little of Andrew, but of Peter whom he brought to Jesus we read a great deal. We

read little of Ananias in the ninth chapter of the Acts, but a great deal of Paul to whom he was sent. The same thought may be applied to Cornelius, of whom we read in the tenth chapter.

The few references to Andrew show how our beloved Lord values attachment of heart to Himself, and doubtless the Day will show how He valued the love of this disciple. We may not be called to great things; we may never preach or cause anything to be preserved in writing, but we can seek grace to be fitted and used for His glory, according to His wisdom and desire.

The Greeks said “ *We would see Jesus.* ” He was here, and having veiled His glory, could be seen as a Man by the human eye. His beloved saints now see Him with the eye of faith; they see Him “ *crowned with glory and honour* ” but human eyes cannot see Him. The scriptures speak of Him but the Bible is little read nowadays. But it is for His own who are “ *the epistle of Christ* ” (II Cor. iii, 3) to remember that the world can read *them*, and to seek grace to be really legible.

May each of us be found answering more fully to this, expressing the joy and blessing of being firmly attached to our adorable Lord, and if He so desires, be ready to point others to Him as Andrew first saw Him—“ *the Lamb of God.* ”

London.

J. E. F.-J.

## John the Baptist.

WE cannot read the opening chapters of John's Gospel without feeling that the greatness of this man, to which our Lord refers, is the greatness of a man to whom Christ is all, and to whom therefore, self is nothing.

He was no stoic steeled to human sympathies, though he walked alone, apart from all. He was no practiser of a long penance, done to propitiate a God he knew not, like many, his would-be imitators since. He was simply a man occupied with Jesus ; too happy in it to turn aside to other things ; one who was simply filled with the glory of Another, whose whole heart said, with his lips,—“ *Behold the Lamb of God!* ”

EXTRACTED.

## The Lamb of God.

REMARK the extent of the work involved in *taking away the sin of the world*. As the Lamb of God He has to do with the world. Nor will the full force of this expression be witnessed till the glorious result of His bloodshedding sweep away the last trace of sin in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. It finds, of course, a present application, and links itself with that activity of grace in which God is now sending out the Gospel to any and every sinner. Still, the eternal day alone will show out the full virtue of that which belongs to Jesus as the Lamb of God.

W. K. (1866).

# The Overcomer.

(Rev. iii, 12).

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*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*

**E**VERY effort, however feeble it be, made by Christians to walk according to divine light, will receive the approval of the Lord. We need to be delivered from every sectarian idea, and to recognize that the assembly of God is now here on earth.

In the verse just quoted we find ourselves upon the foundation of the assembly; all the promises here made by the Lord apply to the whole church of God. It will perhaps be asked "Where is the assembly?" If we take account of the external condition of Christendom, it must indeed be confessed that everything has failed; yet the assembly subsists still, for the Lord knows His own in the midst of the confusion.

Let us take care, then, not to place ourselves upon ground narrower than that of the Word of God. It is good, doubtless, to be apart from that which man has introduced into Christianity, but we need to be free from all party spirit, and from every endeavour to form a fellowship which

does not rest upon the foundation of the whole assembly of God. Here we shall meet with exercise, for only by the grace of the Lord can we overcome the influences which are opposed to His will.

These promises to the overcomer are given in order to rouse the soul who desires to be faithful to the end; the complete fulfilment of them is future, but their present and spiritual value ought to be known in our hearts.

First: “ *I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.* ” The figure is taken from I Kings vii, 21; but the temple of God to-day is the assembly (I Cor. iii, 17). A pillar denotes stability, and if we take into consideration the state of things in our day (for all is crumbling around us) we shall understand the importance of this promise.

Pillars such as Jachin and Boaz are rare. Even in things material, a pillar well placed, which has been able to withstand earthquakes and Gothic invasions, becomes an interesting object. We have seen old Doric columns which are still standing in spite of every shock; but it seems to us yet more wonderful to be able to declare that there are a few “ overcomers ” still standing after so many shocks and barbaric inroads in the Christian sphere.

The inscription upon the pillar is interesting. Let us look, then, at the first part: “ *I will write upon him the name of my God.* ” Here, our Lord speaks as the One who has Himself

fully glorified God in this world. It is the perfect Man of Psalm xvi, whose confidence in God shone out from the manger to the cross. He went about Palestine without a place to lay His head; He bore the opposition of Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians in Jerusalem. He passed through the valley of the shadow of death; He suffered, alone, upon the cross where He cried: “ *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* ”

It is thus Jesus speaks to us of His God; and nothing is more edifying than to consider the path of the perfect Man in the Psalms, in the Prophets, and in the Gospels.

A servant of the Lord, who closely followed his Master, was able to speak of “ *his God* ” at the close of a long life of sufferings—“ *My God shall supply all your need* ” (Philippians iv, 19). The “ *name of my God* ” is known in the midst of trials and exercises down here.

And then: “ *The name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God.* ” Let us notice two different aspects of the city of God. In Revelation xxi, 10, it is called “ *holy.* ” Here it is a question of the reign of Christ, and the great city, the metropolis of the universe is here looked at in its character of holiness, that is of separation from all evil. It is said that the great cities, built by men, beginning with that of Cain, have always exercised an evil influence over the inhabitants of the earth.



Thus it was with Babylon, Nineveh, Rome and Carthage, not to mention others of more recent date; but the assembly, during the reign of our Lord, will not only illuminate the universe, but also exercise a holy influence over the nations. She will have the glory of God.

But when, in Rev. xxi, 2, we find the *new Jerusalem*, as here in Rev. iii, 12, that carries us beyond the kingdom. It is the new creation; that which had no previous existence: this expression is in accord with the unchangeableness of the counsels of God. This name, then, is written upon the pillar; it surpasses temporal things, for the eternal counsels of God know no change.

Great is the grace accorded us, to be able to contemplate the city of God, the new Jerusalem, and to have our part in it. To Him who formed it for His own dwelling place, “ *be glory in the assembly, in Christ Jesus, to all generations of the age of ages!* ” (Eph. iii, 21; New Trans.).

But there is a further promise here: “ *My new name* ” also will be inscribed upon the pillar. The expression is emphatic; it denotes a peculiar satisfaction in the One who has taken His place in the glory, after all the suffering He encountered in His pathway upon earth, where He was the man of sorrows. Yes, Christ is now “ *the beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead* ”; and we believe that His “ *new name* ” carries with it His present glory at the

right hand of God. To the overcomer is given the intimacy known by nearness to the One who makes all things new. As the Firstborn among many brethren, He has entered into possession of the glory which He must inherit according to divine counsels. It is, then, a mark of the highest divine favour to know Jesus under His new name, and to be characterised by it.

The pillar, the name of God, the name of the city, new Jerusalem, and the new name—all these things speak to us of the *stability* of His work and impart a certain steadiness to the *overcomer* in days when all is moved and shaken.

That which is eternal is also presented to us in these promises. The pillar which remains standing, is meet for Him who is Himself the unchangeable "I AM"; and it is thus the inscription speaks to us.

Contemplating these glories of the new Jerusalem, we feel constrained to sing:

God of glory! God of grace!  
We Thy wondrous love confessing,  
And Thy Spirit now possessing,  
Thus draw near to worship Thee,  
In His Name, who set us free;  
Jesus Christ—most holy place—  
Where, O God! we see Thy face.

May God grant us, in these days of trouble and ruin, to stand fast in the Lord, being strengthened in Him, and in the power of His might.

(translated from the French of the late E. L. B.)

## Will ye also go away ?

(John vi, 67).

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O Lord it is Thyself—The Eternal Son—  
Loved by the Father ere the world begun,  
Creator Thou of the vast universe,  
Yet Thou did'st stoop, redeemed it from the  
curse ;

Who but Thyself could'st carry out His will ?  
And soon Thy glory all the universe shall fill.

O Lord it is Thyself, from Thee we cannot part,  
Thou hold'st the deep recesses of our heart,  
No credit to ourselves that we remain  
True to Thy word and to Thy Holy Name.  
It is Thyself—Thy love proved at the cross  
That leads us now to count all else but loss.

O Lord it is Thyself—in Thee alone we rest ;  
Thou art the Truth which answers every test.  
Words of Eternal life are found alone in Thee,  
Thou art our one resource in each perplexity ;  
Blest Son of God ; Thou'rt more than all we  
need

And those Thou settest free are free indeed.

O Lord it is Thyself we're waiting now to see—  
Thou waitest too, to have Thine own with Thee  
At Home, in all the Father's boundless love,  
One with Thyself, as sons with Thee above.  
Lord, in this time of waiting, may we be  
A constant joy and comfort unto Thee.

Basingstoke.

H. M. H.

## A man greatly favoured.

**I**T is one of the greatest privileges in all ages for a saint of God to see the real state of God's people in the light of the revelation of God, and in the light of what He established at the beginning of the particular period in which that saint is living on the earth. He is then able to rightly discern the true value of the movements amongst those who call upon the Name of the Lord. If we do not in measure see things as God sees them we may be calling good evil and evil good.

In the address to the seven churches we see that the closing days of this present period of grace are characterized by those calling on the Name of the Lord, even boasting in their state and in divine privileges, when in the eyes of the Lord they are blind and naked (Rev. iii, 17). Let us then beware of a self-satisfied condition, and of lukewarmness, both of which are obnoxious to the Lord.

Habakkuk was a man thus favoured of God. He was shewn the iniquity prevailing amongst the chosen nation of Jehovah; that God would use "*a bitter and hasty nation*" marked with "*violence*" and of worse iniquity than the nation He was correcting. This was because they were His people. "*You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities*" (Amos iii, 2). In such a condition the faithful can only

rely on God, knowing that in due time, when His chastening has been effectual, He will judge the cruel oppressors of His people and fulfil all His promises to the nation whom He has chosen.

Until God had completed the correcting of His chosen nation the prophet would on his part “*watch to see what He will say to me.*” In a day of departure it is the individual saint who turns to the Lord and obtains His mind for the moment. He knows the root cause is departure from the will of God by substituting for the order of God that which man conceives is good, at any particular crisis. He judges himself as guilty, confessing the sin of the whole professing body as his own sin, and seeks grace to walk according to the revealed will of God in His Word, which Word is the mind of the Lord for all His own.

The Lord does not delay in answering the individual who is desirous to do the will of His Lord. Habakkuk has to write the vision plainly, so that the one who reads may run. Five woes are pronounced against the instrument inflicting the chastening, because of the wicked motives that moved him, and also because it is decreed that the earth is yet to be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the bed of the sea.

The light of what God is doing turns Habakkuk to God in prayer. He awaits the intervention of God in deliverance of His people, as

previously when they were slaves in Egypt. Until then, though there were no outward signs of the favour of Jehovah he would rejoice in Jehovah and joy in the God of his salvation. He would thus enjoy the divine portion open to every one of God's people, and be ready for the use of the chief Singer, Who maintains the eternal song of praise which will soon sound throughout the universe for the delight and glory of God.

London.

J. S. G.

## The Trial and Triumph of Faith.

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WHEN Abram was tested by the offer of the king of Sodom he gave the king to understand that he had settled the question beforehand with the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth. He would not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet—nor anything that was of Sodom, lest the king should say—“*I have made Abram rich*” (Gen. xiv, 22, 23).

His faith was owned and rewarded. “*After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward*” (Gen. xv, 1). He had been called out from

the idolatrous world, and he maintained the character of his calling by separation from the course of things around him. And so with the three captives in Babylon who stood the test, God was *their* shield, *their* exceeding great reward.

The ways and principles of Babylon are everywhere around us, and every step we take is contested by the enemy; trials and difficulties abound for those who seek to be true to the Lord. The Spirit of God would remind us constantly of our origin, so that we might seek to be in accord therewith. “ *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the wicked one. Children keep yourselves from idols* ” (I John v, 19, 21. N.T.). The blessed Lord when on earth could tell His disciples that they were not of the world, even as He was not of the world, and that the world would hate them on that account. And our part with Him and path through this hostile world is, on the one hand, comforting, while on the other hand we must be prepared to face the hostile elements. John, in speaking of the power of the antichrist in the world, could say—“ *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world* ” (I John iv, 4); and again we read—“ *All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world* ” (I John ii, 16). It has been said that Babylon is the

place where the people of God get into captivity by tampering with worldliness.

God has in His grace given us the true character of this, man's world, where there is everything that ministers to the flesh and gives man after that order a place; also He has told us in a most blessed way about *His* world, where all is of the Spirit, and ministers to the affections of His people for the exaltation of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the one order the will of man, or lawlessness, marked by independence, prevails; in the other order the will of God and righteousness and dependence on God prevails. The question might be asked—"In which of these two worlds am I living in my spirit?" We have been called out of this present evil world in view of another, "*a heavenly country,*" and we are exhorted to "*walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love*" (Eph. iv, 1-2).

In Gen. xi we see the beginning of Babylon. The end of this world will be Babylon—marked by complete independence of God. Let us see to it, dear brethren, that we do not contribute to this system, which is built up of every moral corruption the mind of man can think of—it is a combination of systems all going to form the one city and tower to give man a name and shut God out. The religious, social, and political forces join hands to reject Christ the Son of



God and to oppose whatever is heavenly in character. Therefore the closer our walk with God, the greater will be the pressure brought to bear by the world. In the workshop, and office, and other lines of employment the believer finds he is tested. The demands made upon him to join lodges, unions, and many other so-called societies—where man and not God is supreme—must be met, and much wisdom from and dependence upon God is needed with faith and courage to say no, which at once brings reproach and persecution; and which may, for some, end in experiencing great straits as to circumstances and other forms of trial.

But the God who is glorified by the believer's faithfulness will stand by him through the conflict and fill his soul with peace and a deeper sense of His love so that the truth of Rom. viii, 37 is experienced that "*in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*" The world could not give such a blessing, nor elevate after that manner. God, and His grace enables us to "*withstand in an evil day.*" The words of I Peter i, 6-9 hold good in such a case, "*. . . If needed, put to grief by various trials, that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes, though it be proved by fire, be found to praise and glory and honour in the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (New Trans.)

God is going to get a great revenue out of all the trials which His people pass through in

victory. The man of God is sure of his ground and can afford to look the world squarely in the face, and say to all its threats—“ ‘ *If it be so* ’ —*the God I know and trust is able to deliver me.*” “ ‘ *But if not,*’ or if He sees fit to let me go through the pressure, I am fully persuaded not to serve your gods or bow to your golden image.” Such faithfulness brings glory to God and defeats the enemy, and becomes a testimony to the holiness and love and power of God.

May the writer and reader of this paper be found treading this blessed onward, upward, way, with a purpose of heart that cannot be mistaken nor misunderstood, until we leave this scene for the brighter and better country where faith will not be needed, but where all the fruits of its triumphs shall be seen in full result, for His eternal praise who called us by His grace to be joint heirs with His Son of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Where deceiver ne'er can enter,  
Sin-soiled feet have never trod;  
Free—our peaceful feet may venture  
In the paradise of God.

Pasadena, Calif., U.S.A.

T. R.

# Notes on Scripture.

Psalm cxli, 2.

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“*LET my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*” Nothing proves the Divine character of Scripture as God’s Word more than the wealth of preciousness to be found in one verse, or in a few sentences.

In this verse the Psalmist realises, in a way that went beyond his dispensation, the blessedness of approach to God and communion with Him. Yet he realises also, how that approach and communion are founded on that which typifies what Christ is for the glory and pleasure of God, as the incense beaten small on the golden altar, and as the evening sacrifice, the burnt-offering, on the brazen altar.

For us to-day, all is Christ, and the apprehension of what Christ is to God, and His Person and perfections known and appreciated in the soul, as He who has given Himself up to glorify God, to be only the most perfect fragrance, and the offering of a sweet savour, for God’s delight and rest. In and according to that perfectness, and it alone, witnessed to and manifested in His precious death, and giving of Himself, all approach and communion is established for our souls.

So the Psalmist says—“*Let my prayer be set forth,*” as the Hebrew word signifies,—

“ *confirmed* ” or “ *established,* ” “ *before Thy face, or Thy presence.* ” Just as the ordinance of the incense was established as an unchanging thing, typifying the constancy of the saints’ portion in presentation to God in all the fragrance of Christ, so would his prayer be confirmed before Jehovah.

This gives a wonderful character to the saints’ intercession. Because the perfection of it is seen in the “ *perpetual incense* ” (Exodus xxx, 1-10), and also in the burnt-offering,—the law of “ *the fire* ” . . . that “ *shall not be put out* ” (Lev. vi, 12, 13), and in the “ *continual burnt-offering* ” (Numbers xxviii, 1-6). The incense was burned morning and evening; and there was also on the brazen altar the morning and evening Lamb. This is all deeply instructive, and most precious. It is all that Christ is; in His perfections Godward, yet maintained in the appreciation and affections of His own. In that sense their prayers and intercessions are as truly confirmed before the Father’s face, as is that offering-up of Jesus, the Beloved, on which their efficacy alone rests. This gives great power to the soul in all its intercessions; whether in private, in the home, or in the circle of the saints. Christ, once offered, is the foundation of all.

There is an undoubted reference here to the “ *evening lamb.* ” We often think of the *morning*, whether of a day or of a dispensation (for it applies to both); and thus the dispensation

of grace, and each day for the saint, begins with the sense of acceptance through the sweet savour of Christ's offering: but also in the *evening* of the dispensation all this is preserved to us in its fulness, because of the "*evening lamb.*" There is, there can be, *no* diminishing of the sweet savour of Christ to God in the burnt-offering. So also with the incense in the evening. The beginning and end of the dispensation, and all that lies between, is enclosed by the fragrance and sweet savour of Christ to God. We have it all to-day unchanged; and all our prayers and intercessions and communion are according to that perfectness.

The principle of this is also seen in the coming day of judgment and glory in Rev. v, 8. Whereas, in the offerings in Ezekiel, there seems to be no "*evening lamb.*" This may be because the coming day has not the same character of movement to a close, like this day and the one that is past. But what a fulness of precious truth hid in one verse! How Christ, too, is the secret of everything!

Bath.

V. W. J. H. L.

# The Spiritual History of Ephesus.

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THE History of Ephesus, as revealed to us in the Scriptures, if traced from beginning to end, is very instructive and helpful, though a rather sad story.

The first mention of Ephesus is in the 18th chapter of Acts, where we are told that Paul left Greece, taking with him Aquilla and Priscilla. Arriving at Ephesus, Paul went into the Synagogue of the Jews and reasoned with them. Although there is no record of what he said, we may be sure that his subject was his Lord and Master. We are not told how long he remained there, but we may assume that it was about a year, for on a later occasion, Paul said that he stayed in Ephesus two years, making in all—according to his own words—“*three years.*” (Acts xx, 31).

After this visit, Paul left the city to go to Jerusalem, and to Ephesus came a Jew named Apollos. Of him it is said that he “*was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquilla and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and*

*expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*” (Acts xviii, 25-26).

Apollos, evidently, had not the full Gospel, and he may not then have received the Holy Ghost; but on his departure from Ephesus there was given to him what is called a letter of commendation to the believers at Achaia. The account goes on to say “*He helped them much which had believed through grace,*” and we are led to conclude that he had now received the Holy Ghost. Seven times in the first epistle to the Corinthians Paul identifies himself with Apollos, as a servant of God.

In the 19th chapter of Acts, we read that “*Paul, having passed through the upper coasts, came (again) to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?”* They answered that they had not heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. Paul then asked them: “*Unto what then were ye baptised?*” and they said: “*Unto John’s baptism.*”

Without doubt, these twelve men were the result of the faithful work of Apollos. But we can learn from their experience the important truth that nobody can help or lead others beyond the point which he has reached in his own soul’s history. Paul then put before these men the full Gospel; and when they had heard this, “*They were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.*” Undoubtedly these twelve men formed the foundation of the Church of God at Ephesus.

A great work for God then took place here. Many souls were saved—but with much opposition and imitation, for Satan was very busy. A company of believers were separated, from amongst men and professors, into the path of separation of which Paul teaches in II Timothy, chapter two, verses 19 to 21. After a stay of two years and three months, Paul departed to journey into Macedonia and Achaia, purporting to go presently to Jerusalem. On the way, however, he seems to have lingered in Asia and Greece. Then, turning towards Jerusalem, he visited various places where he had previously worked. But, finally, once more drawing near to Ephesus, he sent a messenger from Miletus to the Ephesians, asking them to meet him at some place known to himself and to them also.

From his words on this occasion we are led to think that this would be his last visit to them. Probably he had heard that already much had happened there which was contrary to the spirit of his teaching : and if we pause here to read the first two chapters of the Epistle to these Ephesians, we shall realise more completely what Paul had taught them in their midst. Paul's anxiety may be imagined. These dear saints press on his heart,—he longs to see them once more, to help and warn them as to what he sees so clearly is about to come in amongst them. It is illuminating to turn to the 20th chapter of Acts, where this meeting is described, and to read the words which Paul spoke to these Ephesian elders.



Also if we turn to I Timothy, 1st chapter, verses 3 and 4, we are let into the secret why Paul was very concerned about these Ephesian saints, and we see what were the false doctrines which had already come in amongst them. It was indeed sad to think that men like these, in whom the Apostle had showed such a great interest, and to whom he had communicated such great truths, should have allowed themselves to become defiled—and this even before Paul himself had passed off the scene.

Two other references in connection with Paul and Ephesus are recorded for our instruction, both in the second Epistle to Timothy, 1st chapter, 16th and 17th verses. The beloved Apostle, standing before Nero, the vile persecutor of God's people, was sought out by one of the Ephesian saints, who, Paul said, was not afraid of his chain, though all others had forsaken him. What a cheering experience it must have been to the Apostle at that time! How sweetly he prayed for Onesiphorus, whose service of love to Paul was a continuation of that service which had been rendered to the Apostle when at Ephesus.

It is one thing to render service to a beloved teacher or master when all is well, and things are going smoothly; it is quite another thing to render the same service in the face of cruel persecution. There were those who could not continue, and they forsook Paul; so we can imagine how greatly the Lord's servant would

appreciate this service of love which persisted in spite of all.

The next mention of Ephesus is in the last chapter of this epistle: “*Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.*” Still the heart of the Apostle goes out towards these converts of his, to whom he had committed such precious truths.

Before continuing with the history of Ephesus, let us turn and see what the Church of God is, and of what it is composed. To understand this, we need to turn to the second chapter of Acts, commencing at the 1st verse: “*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*”

The above is the history of the New Thing set up for God on earth—The Church—composed of all believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, the dwelling-place of God in the hearts of all His blood-bought ones. Paul says elsewhere: “*Know ye not that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*” (I Corinthians, iii, v. 16). Peter also has told us who they are that compose the House of God. 1st Peter, chapter ii, verse 5): and in Hebrews chapter iii, verse 6, we find another confirmation of the same truth.

Before turning to the Scriptures where we find the Lord speaking to the various Churches, taking them up on the ground of responsibility to Himself, we must bear in mind that there is only one CHURCH, as seen from God's standpoint. Although there are many so-called Churches to-day, each having its own head, with its own special lines of teaching, these are not THE CHURCH; although, without doubt, there are many frequenting these places who are members of the true Church—members of the Body of Christ. The Lord Himself is the Builder of the Church, as He said in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew, verse 18—  
*“ Upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*  
That is the Church which will abide, and go into Eternity, and be for the glory of God and for the eternal pleasure of Christ—His companion and joy. Truly He will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied!

But what we are about to consider now is the Church in its responsibility to Christ, and how it has answered to its responsibility. As we shall see, it has been a complete failure. Let us turn to Revelations ii and iii, bearing in mind that these words are the words of the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God in these two chapters is giving us the history of the Church of God through the ages—as God sees it, not as we see it. The Church is seen in all its lovely perfection in the end of the second

chapter of Acts; but now, as recorded in our two chapters, what a sad difference! Yet our blessed Lord, willing to give all the credit He possibly can, has to say to the Church—and that means to each of us believers—“*I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*” Those for whom He gave up His precious life, those whom He had linked with Himself in and by His holy Spirit, have allowed their love to wax cold; have permitted evil and false doctrine a place in their hearts, and in that which He left here to be a testimony for Him in the hour of His rejection.

Yes, evil has been allowed; and, as the beloved Apostle Paul said: “*Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things.*” What a sad reflection upon our human weakness it is when evil springs from the inside; but so it is, and has often been in the past. Tracing the history of the Church, we see the same thing repeated over and over again. Close upon the heels of every reformation, following each religious revival, evil has stalked, casting a tragic shadow over the good; and in many cases it has sprung from the midst of the very men who took part in the revivals.

The details of the gradual declension, as recorded in these two first chapters of the Revelation, form a beautiful picture of our Lord lingering over that which is called by His name—His Church. But it saddens us to learn that the decline set in at the very place where the

greatest light had been shed. The falling from grace began at Ephesus, and has continued.

There was somewhat of a revival after the declension of the Church of Ephesus — in Smyrna—for in that church the saints were giving their lives in love to the Lord and suffering awful persecutions, yet it was followed by a relapse, because they were allowing a place for false teachers. The Churches still continued downward. At Philadelphia there seems to have been some measure of revival, as there was with it that which the Lord could commend, and not condemn; but in Laodicia the fall has become beyond repair.

So, in reading the Lord's words to the different local Churches, we see how things have gone from bad to worse, until we are brought face to face with the facts of the present day; a great mass of profession, but little or nothing for God or Christ. So obnoxious does it become that we may as well begin to believe that shortly the Lord will spue the whole of Christendom out of His mouth.

The question might be asked: What is to be done if we are to avoid being included in this calamity? What is the Lord looking for in the midst of this awful state of affairs? The answer is—*individual faithfulness*, as we shall see if we turn to Timothy, 2nd Epistle, 2nd chapter, 19th to 21st verses—“*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, 'The*

*Lord knoweth them that are His.' "* And,  
*" Let every one that nameth the name of Christ  
depart from iniquity."* But in a great house  
there are not only vessels of gold and of silver,  
but also of wood and of earth; and some to  
honour, and some to dishonour. If a man, there-  
fore, purge himself from these, he shall be a  
vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the  
master's use, and prepared unto every good  
work. Flee also youthful lusts: but follow  
righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them  
that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Soon—we know not when—that blessed  
One, the Lord Jesus, is coming to take each and  
all of those who have been washed in His pre-  
cious Blood to be with Himself, to live and  
reign with Him. And in due time—how won-  
derful is this promise! (Ephesians, chapter ii,  
verses 5-7)—God will take all the redeemed  
ones and display them before the eyes of men,  
angels, and demons, to show His great delight  
in having us for Himself.

Scarborough.

C. S.

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*" Walk in the light ! thy path shall be  
Peaceful, serene, and bright,  
For grace, by grace, shall dwell in thee  
And God Himself is light."*

## The Vine.

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TREES have a remarkable place in the Scriptures. God begins with the planting of two trees in Eden—the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. These were fruit-bearing trees.

Afterwards the nation of God's choice is likened to another fruit-bearing tree—the Vine. "*Thou hast brought a Vine out of Egypt. Thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. . . . And didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. . . . She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river*" (Psalm lxxx, 9-11). The sea here is, of course, the Mediterranean and the river is the Euphrates. This was the extent of Solomon's kingdom.

This was then the beginning, in a national way, by God, in view of filling the whole earth with the wine of joy. In the two trees in Eden we have set forth in symbol the great question of good and evil, while in the vine we learn that the solution will result in the fruit of joy.

But the immediate effect with Israel was not joy, but sorrow. The sorrows of Israel are very touching, and it is remarkable that the nation of Jehovah's choice should suffer such unparalleled sorrow. We get the plaintive cry going forth to the world in its indifference—the cry of Jeru-

salem—“ *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow* ” (Lam. i, 12).

In the wisdom of the God man is constituted so as to be capable both of deep sorrow and of deep joy. Sorrow is produced by the deprivation of objects of delight and also by suffering occasioned by evil. Joy, on the other hand, comes with the alleviation of distress, and also by the acquisition of objects of delight. It is God's will that His people should reach the mount of joy through the vale of sorrow. By sorrow the capacity for, and appreciation of, joy is deepened, for sorrow intensifies the appreciation of joy. It is difficult to gladden a person who has never known sorrow, while one who has known sorrow is more easily gladdened.

It being God's way that sorrow should precede joy, we find in the Psalms that the bear of the woods was allowed to waste God's vine and the wild beast to devour it. This is an allusion to outlying envious and hostile nations. God is therefore invoked to look down from heaven and visit the vine, and the vineyard, and the branch.

This Psalm refers to Israel at the end of the age, for it is prophetic. When outwardly all is ruin the heart of the nation turns to God. The *branch* is part of the vine, the branch which the vine has put forth, and which God has made strong for Himself. This Branch is clearly



Christ in His strength, which the weak and ruined vine has borne by the power of God.

But Christ is more than a branch. He has taken the place of the true vine—“*I am the true Vine*” (John xv, 1). He is thus the source of all fruit for God and is God’s resource in regard to the weakness and fruitlessness of Israel. He is also Israel’s resource in regard to her barrenness. God brought forth Israel out of Egypt that Israel might bring forth Christ. When Christ was born to that Nation the outward and apparent failure proved to be a great success. “*Unto us a child is born.*” Israel will thus be instrumental in filling the world with fruit.

The Vine, the vineyard and the branch, have not only an important place in the Psalms, but also in other scriptures. In Israel iv, 2, the branch is called the “*Branch of Jehovah.*” The Branch is for glory and beauty, for excellence and for ornament. Jehovah has visited the nation in His anger for her sins, and left but a very small remnant. It says seven women shall take hold of one man. This statement refers to the scarcity of men, and supposes the land depopulated by war. At such a moment Christ will appear as the Great *Resource* for the salvation and glory of God’s City. Christ is the source of all Glory and beauty—He will invest Judah and Jerusalem with His glory, and Jerusalem will be glorified and protected by His presence. The cloud of Jehovah’s glory will rest upon her as in days of

yore, as it rested over the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The Glory of Jerusalem will be great in that day! “*Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the Glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee*” (Isa. lx, 1).

In Isa. xi, 1, we have the *Royal branch*—the government of the whole earth rests upon His shoulder. A branch out of the root of Jesse. This carries our thoughts back when the youngest son of this Jesse of Bethlehem was anointed by Samuel the Prophet. Now we get the anointing of the true son of Jesse by the spirit in its sevenfold plentitude, poured out upon the reigning Christ. So we see the seven horns and the seven eyes in the slain Lamb of Rev. v, 6, the seven eyes being the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Righteousness and faithfulness are the characteristics of His Throne. The elimination of the savage nature of the brute; The earth filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea; The regathering of the twelve-bribed nation;—are some effects of His reign; then the song of praise (ch. xii)—God known, Jehovah known, as salvation to Israel, and water drawn from the wells of salvation, with Joy,—for the Nations. Lastly, Zion shouting out the greatness of Jehovah and the whole earth filled with His praise. Isaiah thus takes the place of Israel’s hymn writer. The song is continued in chapter xxvi—“*In that day shall this song be*

*sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city: Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." Also "In that day sing ye unto her a vineyard of red wine. I Jehovah do keep it; I will water it every moment . . . I will keep it night and day" (chap. xxvii, 2 and 3). Then "He shall cause . . . Jacob to take root. Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (v. 6).*

In Isaiah liii we find another aspect of the Branch—the tender branch, or tender plant—the one green plant in the midst of barrenness; all the earth a wilderness, absolutely no fruit for God. This tender sapling springs forth under God's eye. The strong Branch of the Psalms, the Branch of glory and beauty, and the royal Branch of Isaiah—a parallel to these, but yet a contrast. *Those being strong and glorious, this tender and feeble. Yet it is by this sapling that all the fruit-bearing is accomplished by His (its) inherent virtue. He was tender and beautiful in the eyes of Jehovah, but how did Israel regard this sapling? This is their confession—"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him there is no beauty, that we should desire Him."*

Yet the mysteries of the trees of Eden are solved in this tender sapling, in this lamblike sufferer. His way leads from oppression and affliction to prison and to judgment, and into the gates of the grave. Men appointed His grave

with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence, neither was deceit in His mouth. But He is not left in death, He passes into the realm of resurrection, and from thence he sees the travail of His soul and is satisfied. It is in this One—He who was cut off from the land of the living, and yet has a generation—it is in this One that the question of good and evil, and the question of life is solved, for the *Vine* is the answer to the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Jehovah's Vine, Israel, has been capable of the greatest good and the greatest evil—the greatest good in the birth of the One Who is the Vessel of divine goodness—the greatest evil in the rejection of such a One. But the Branch the Vine has brought forth is also the Tree of Life. He is the Last Adam, and as the Last Adam Christ has the ability to fill both the heavens and the earth with fruit, of which He as the dead Christ is the source (see John xii, 24).

There is yet a final aspect of the Branch which contains the *secret* of all we have been considering. In Jeremiah xxiii we get the Name of the Branch. Hitherto we have been scanning *what* He is; there remains the question—*Who* is the Branch? Here He is the righteous Branch (v. v) and “*In His days shall Judah be saved and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is the Name whereby He shall be called, ‘Jehovah our Righteousness.’*” Here we get the secret of

all—the secret lies in the Name, for His Name  
discloses to us the identification of the Jehovah  
of the Old Testament with the Jesus of the New.

H. S.



## **The Nazarene.**

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O who will follow the Nazarene  
With faith and love unshaken?  
As a tender plant grew the branches green,  
But yet from the earth was taken.

Kings shall fall down at His dread Name,  
All nations bow before Him,  
And louder still shall sound His fame,  
As all the spheres adore Him.

He shall see of the travail of His soul,  
The spoil with the great dividing,  
The heavens and earth shall He control,  
In grace and truth abiding.

E. L. B.

## The Devotedness of Christ.

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*T*HEN his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever ” (Exodus xxi, 6).

“ *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened (Lit: digged): burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart* ” (Psalm xl, 6-8).

“ *The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting* ” (Isaiah I, 4-6).

I know of no theme more blessed than the contemplation of the lowly grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in His path and life of humiliation here. I feel sure we do not fully understand that humiliation; indeed, no one but God His Father can fully and perfectly comprehend it. Yet we can dwell on that lowliness and meekness, those sufferings at the hands of men. Do

we realise what Jesus suffered? Oh! my brethren, let us read again those words in Isaiah; let us dwell on what they mean, and seek to realise WHO it was that thus spoke prophetically, that thus suffered—as J. N. Darby wrote, “*Object of man’s proud despising.*” He was none else than God’s only begotten and well-beloved Son, He who had created all things, who was with God and who was God, yet He is found in this lowly guise, this bondman’s form, in the world of man’s glory, which is also the world of his shame.

Deep indeed as was the humiliation of Christ, it is His infinite perfection, for shining in that humiliation is the devotedness of Christ, and I took these Scriptures as illustrating that devotedness in its most precious activities. Never has there been seen such devotedness like this. It is something the natural heart rejects; this intense lowliness of obedience and faithfulness to God in a Man (though infinitely more than man). Have we any desire for this hidden manna, “*reserved for heaven’s delight,*” this “*hidden bread of Christ once humbled here?*” I know of nothing which so tests the heart like this. It is far more testing than the glory; far more testing to the heart than the knowledge of being “*raised up together, and made to sit down together in the heavenlies in Christ!*” Do our hearts appreciate above all else the lowly self-emptying life of devotedness and obedience of this blessed Incarnate Son of God? Then it is the fruit and result in us of Divine grace; the

Father's grace and love have formed it there as the moral reflex of His own Divine delight in Jesus. That Life which men thought so worthless, that they terminated its history on a malefactor's cross, is the very food of God. And in His sovereign boundless grace He calls us to share His perfect pleasure in His own Beloved.

Now in each of these Scriptures we have the "ear" referred to. I do not attempt to unfold them, for their full exposition would fill volumes: I would rather leave them *to speak for themselves*, with that still small voice of Divine power in the innermost recesses of the soul, yea, speak of the grace and perfections of Jesus. We have the ear "bored through" in Exodus xxi; the ears "dugged" in Psalm xl; and the ear "wakened" and "opened" in Isaiah l. Love, obedience, devotedness, humiliation, meekness and lowliness of heart—all these mingle in their own Divine perfectness, to bring out the fragrance of the life of Christ. As He says Himself, "*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me*" (John vi, 38).

In Exodus the devotedness of the *love* of Christ is presented to us; one who would not go out free. *He* might have gone out free; but He elects to serve in love for ever. Matthew xxvi 53, 54, shews how real it was to the Lord to be *brought to the door*," but He will not go out free. He took that bondman's form that He might serve us; that He might accomplish God's will; and through having gone into death



and taken His life again in resurrection, He will serve eternally, will even take the "subject" place as Man; and thus every feature of Divine perfectness in man will be for ever displayed in Himself. He will bear for ever the marks of His own devotedness to God His Father, and to His beloved people. No one can ever rob Christ of this pre-eminence in devotedness. No one has ever served like Him, none can or will receive the honour that He will receive, and has received. But what He is, in His own Personal worth, none knows, none appreciates save the Father, and, *in measure*, those also in whom grace has wrought.

In Psalm xl we find the devotedness of *obedience* to do God's will; the glorious and eternal fact that that will was everything to the heart of Christ. It meant for Him that stupendous stoop into Manhood: hence the Holy Spirit in Hebrews x, 5 interprets—"ears hast thou digged me" as "a body hast thou prepared me." He took that body; He took flesh and blood: "And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us" (John i, 14). Redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, purgation: all these, yea, all the moral results of the death and resurrection of Christ—God, fully, perfectly, and eternally glorified—all is a consequence of that one great act of obedience to God's will, that stepping downward into humanity by the blessed eternal Son of God. The "ears" convey the thought of His intrinsic devotedness, His perfect *willingness* to do God's

will, to carry out *all* His purposes, to effectuate every desire of His heart. Such is the excellence of Christ!

In Isaiah I the perfect Servant is again presented to us. Such is God's delight in Christ that He never wearies of shewing Him to us. He is before us here in His *Humility*, as One instructed, One who has "*learned obedience by the things that He suffered*" (Heb. v, 8, 9); One who took all from the Father's hand, whose every step was in the path of that will, without any turning back or turning aside; an intense, supreme, undeviating faithfulness to God; tested to the full, yet only the more perfect in all its trial, the more delightful to the heart of God in every step. As He Himself says—"*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father*" (John x, 17, 18). "*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love*" (John xv, 10). "*Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*" (John xviii, 11).

Perfect submission and obedience!—that one Life of faithfulness to God, thus becomes through the work of grace in the Christian the delight of his heart. At whatever cost to Him-

self, He would accomplish that will. So He could say: "*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*" (John xvii, 4). And the perfection of Christ's sympathy for His own, is according to the perfection of His faithfulness to God, and His devotedness to His will. And because we, too, in our feeble measure seek to be found in the path of God's will; therefore we need therein the constant sympathy of Christ; His grace, succour, and strength; the deep sense of His compassions; His love and His care for those given to Him of the Father, those for whom He gave Himself, those whom He delights to nourish out of His own fulness. As a lowly humbled Man here, the ear of Jesus was ever opened, ever wakened; and none could speak words of life to the weary as He (Matt. xi, 25-30); and to-day none else can succour His own in devotedness in their path as He who was alone perfectly devoted in His. Such is His grace towards us.

Bath.

V. W. J. H. L.

## The Coming of the Lord

and

### The Unclothed Condition of the Saint.

THE Lord Jesus is the hope of the Christian, the solution of every difficulty, and the One who will fill all things to the glory of God (I Tim. i, 1; Eph. iv, 10). The believer is converted to await God's Son from heaven, the

consummation of his joy will be to see Christ in His glory with all His saints unblamable in holiness, and he finds comfort and encouragement knowing that Christ will shout with joy to assemble His heavenly saints to meet Him in the air that they may return with Him in the day of manifestation (I Thess. i, 10; ii, 19; iii, 13; iv, 16; Col. iii, 4). The individual believer may fall asleep, but he is looking with all the saints for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. iii, 20). The Lord's word to us is "*What I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH*" (Mark xiii, 37).

It was revealed to Simeon that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ, but to Peter, who was one of the chosen witnesses to bear testimony to Christ coming in His glory, the Lord intimated that when he was old he should have the privilege of *dying* for Him (Luke ii, 26; John xxi, 19). Paul, who was privileged to have the revelation of the distinction between the heavenly saints being caught up and afterwards coming with Him, when a prisoner the second time knew that his departure was at hand. But the hope of Paul, Peter, John and every Christian is to see Christ coming in "*His own glory,*" "*in His Father's, and of the holy angels*" (Luke ix, 26). Therefore, though all believers look for the coming of their Lord, the individual saint may be called to wait *with* his Lord above, instead of *for* Him where He is rejected, and this is "*gain*" for him and "*far better*" (Phil. i, 21, 23).

In the Old Testament the condition of those after death is not plainly nor fully revealed. The godly died in peace in hope of the coming Redeemer and of resurrection. They knew it was well with them and that the ungodly went down to the pit (Ezek. xxxi, 14; Psalm ix, 15). The godly and ungodly passed into the unseen condition of which there are graphic descriptions in the Old Testament (Isaiah xiv, 16). The prophetic testimonies concerning Christ and the blessings to come would enlighten them to some extent, but until Christ came the full light regarding the dead was not unfolded (Psalm xvi, 10; Isaiah xxxvi, 12-19).

But when Christ came He lifted the curtain and plainly stated the great difference between the conditions after death of both the godly and the ungodly. The rich man was “tormented” and Lazarus “comforted.” The riches had helped the one to shut God out of his life on earth, but the poor man had experienced the mercy of God in the dogs licking his sores. After death all was reversed. The one who lived without God was in hopeless misery, and the one who experienced mercy had the happiest place a Jew could conceive—“Abraham’s bosom.” The former may have been given an elaborate funeral by man, but the one who knew God’s mercy here was cared for there by God and served by the angels.

The two malefactors railed on the Lord of glory crucified by their side. Suddenly they hear Him pray—“*Father forgive them; for they*

*know not what they do.*” The grace of God thus expressed shone into the heart of one malefactor. He rebukes his comrade and said to Jesus—“*Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*” The Lord immediately replied—“*To-day thou shalt be WITH ME in paradise.*” The Lord afterwards departed to be with His Father, and the first to be welcomed there was this trophy of grace. Thus we have a little further light in regard to the believer who departs into the condition after death. It is characterized by “*with me*” in a place of untold delight.

It must be remembered that life belongs to God. God alone can give life, and He only can recall the life He has given. He may in His overruling providence use an instrument, but the giving and recalling of life belongs to God. Neither Satan, demon nor man can impart life to another. Satan delights in destruction, but God delights in the fruits of life. Satan leads man to destruction, but all things are under the overruling of the God from whom man has departed. In the future the man of the world’s choice will *appear* to make the image to live, but the fact that it is a delusion of Satan will be clear to the godly (Rev. xiii, 15).

In the Old Testament the absolute control of life and death is viewed as in the hands of God, but now it is in the hands of one Man—the Man Christ Jesus. He has the keys—i.e., complete and absolute control—of death and hades (Rev. i, 18). The entire dominion over

death and the condition of the spirits after death is in His hands. Satan is a defeated foe, the judgment of God upon sin in the flesh has been borne, and so the might of death, which Satan used so as to hold man in bondage, has been broken. The saved and the unsaved pass from this life under the control of the "*Lord both of the dead and living*" (Rom. xiv, 9). He will call the spirits of the whole human race from the unclothed state and their bodies out of the grave. Not one will remain in death. There will be the "*resurrection of life*" and the "*resurrection of damnation*" (John v, 29). The "*resurrection of life*" will call the righteous into the full blessedness of life for evermore, but the "*resurrection of damnation*" will cause the unrighteous to stand before God as a Judge and to pass into the lake of fire (John iii, 19; Rev. xx, 15). The disembodied condition will be finally ended, and all will receive eternal recompense (Rev. xx, 14). What comfort, what joy, what rest there is in knowing the One who has triumphed over death and hades, and, thank God, it is rest that no creature can disturb!

It gives us great comfort and cheer to know that if we are called to pass through death it is Jesus who puts each of His own to sleep. A loving mother asks her daughter to put the baby to sleep, and in like manner with all the tenderness of divine love Jesus has put to sleep each of the departed saints. It may be through heart failure or some other cause, but it is Jesus who

puts the saint to sleep. Jesus had to die, to taste death in all its bitterness on our behalf, but now He can triumphantly put each of His own to sleep, to rest with Him on high from all the exercise and toil caused through being left in this world. Jesus having broken the power of death has laid thousands to sleep and will awake them so that they may come with Him when He appears (Col. iii, 4). The individual saint as living a natural life with all its moral connections is put to sleep, but the same one having life in Christ, and being one with Him, lives for a time without a body to enjoy unhindered and unclouded communion with Him. The believer identified with his body, falls asleep, and is buried: but identified with his spiritual being, departs to be with Christ. Sleep is connected with the believer having lived a natural life, but having a consciousness in a spiritual life. Hence the departed saint sleeps in regard to all sympathies and movements connected with the earth but lives with Christ as with an intimate friend, enjoying His secrets.

A second feature of those who sleep by Jesus is expressed in the words "*Thou shalt be WITH ME in paradise*" (Luke xxiii, 43). In the departed condition all the dead "*live to Him,*" but with an impassable gulf between the saved and the lost, and the one is "*comforted*" and the other "*tormented*" (Luke xix, 38; xvi. 26).

A third important consideration is *identification* between what is sown and what is raised—



“*It is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body* ” (I Cor. xv, 44). All connected with natural life ends in the grave, but the spiritual life which we have while in flesh and blood, will be continued in the spiritual body. Our beloved Lord “ *was put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit* ” (I Peter iii, 18). The identification is in what is spiritual.

A fourth point to weigh is that the changed body will be suitable for those who will be in heaven. The body in its present condition is likened to a “ tabernacle ” or tent to be dissolved, in contrast to the changed body spoken of as a “ house ”—a permanent dwelling out of heaven (II Cor. v, 1). The identification between the unchanged and the changed body is given in I Cor. xv, and the characteristics of the unchanged and the changed in II Cor. v, 1. Until the saints who have departed receive their changed bodies they are with Christ in the unclothed condition.

The fifth privilege is the *gain* of the departed, and is worthy of careful consideration and should produce thanksgiving to God our Father. “ *To die is gain,* ” to depart to be with Christ is “ *far better* ” (Phil. i, 21, 23). The departed saints are not only free from all hindrances connected with the unchanged body, but are with Christ as intimate friends in the power of divine life enjoying full and unhindered communion. He will share with them His secrets, His joy, and all the privileges involved in having oneness of nature and life. They are there as one with

Him, and not merely in His presence as expressed by “*with me in paradise,*” but in the most intimate relation possible.

The sixth blessing is that those in the unclothed condition are with Christ in full communion *waiting with Him the day of His manifestation*, whereas those still in the body await that day, *where He is rejected*, and labour for the accomplishment of the divine purpose when the whole scene will be lightened with the glory of His appearing.

London.

J. S. G.

## Rest of Soul

in

### The Knowledge of the Father.

Song of Solomon i, 7-8. Matt. xi, 25-end.

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**T**HERE is nothing so lacking among men and women in the world to-day as rest of soul. Wherever we may look—among nations, in industry, in the professing religious sphere, in the family circle—all is upheaval, unrest, anxiety—“*upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.*” And why? Because men are out of touch with God. Like the prodigal son away from his father, the link is broken between man and the divine Centre of the Universe, in communion with whom true rest and peace of soul alone can be enjoyed.

Even among the Lord's own people, dear souls who love Christ, these conditions are very common. Saints, taking account of what is passing around, in fear of what may be coming, in distress in their circumstances, in bodily sickness, are almost in despair. They need rest but cannot find it.

*“ Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedeth, where thou maketh thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? ”* The expression “ turneth aside ” is derived from the word “ veil,” “ to be veiled.” The thought expresses being outside, in public, wandering. It is the language of a soul in unrest, the cry of a wandering sheep.

Noon is the high heat of the day, when the sun shines most fiercely, when the early energies are beginning to flag. Then it is we need rest, and Christ alone can give it. It is He who maketh His flock to rest at noon. It is He who feeds His sheep. Are we His? Have we learned Him in our need as the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep? Then let us follow the footsteps of the flock. There is only one and it is His. *“ He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters ”*—literally “ waters of quietness,” the very essence of rest.

*“ The pastures I languish to find  
Where all who their Shepherd obey,  
Are fed, on His bosom recline,  
And are screened from the heat of the day.”*

And where is the way to it? It is no new path. It is by the well-trodden road—the footsteps of the flock!

In Australia, in the dry bush-lands, there is no need to ask where the water-holes are. The track is well-defined, worn by the feet of the hundreds of sheep going down to drink.

“ The Lord is Himself gone before,  
He has marked out the path that we tread.”

“ *I am the way, the truth and the life—no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*” There we have the secret. It is in the knowledge of the Father made known on earth by the Beloved Son, that the heart of the saint finds rest. The root of our trouble is that we do not know God as Father, with all the love and sweetness that Name implies. The word in the Hebrew consists of the first two letters of the alphabet, Ab-ba—the easiest sound to form, the first word a child can lisp, the foundation of all language.

“ *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.*” He as the perfect Man on earth has become the Pattern for all His own, and He rested completely in the Father’s will for Him. Was this a moment of success in the Lord’s pathway? No, indeed, just the reverse. It was a moment of extreme trial—doubts expressed by His great forerunner John the Baptist, indifference by the nation at large, rejection by those cities which had witnessed His mightiest works. And at this moment the Lord answers,

*“ I thank thee, O Father, ”* He turned to the One He knew in that Home from whence He had come to do His Father’s will, and as the Only-begotten He continued in the bosom of the Father and rested in that eternal love. He could accept the lowliest pathway here with all its sorrows. In this His soul found rest and it is this rest He promises to His own. *“ Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ”*

It is to the babes that these revelations are made—it is they who know the Father. *“ Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us . . . Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. ”* That was the Lord’s answer to Philip, and how long a time had Philip had to know the Father as revealed in Christ? Only three years at the most! And the Church has had two thousand years of the Spirit’s teaching, and how little even now does it know of the Father! How much do we know? Have we learned in all the gracious activities of the Lord Jesus on earth the love of the Father’s heart? The babes know it; the wise and prudent miss it. That is why it is so little known. May we enter more fully into it and so enjoy the preciousness of *“ rest unto our souls ”*—rest as learning complacency in His love and will.

(Notes of a reading with C.W.F.)

# Paul at Ephesus.

Acts xx, 17-36.

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VERY touching are the farewell words of the Apostle Paul to the Ephesian elders at Miletus. Ephesus was the crown of his apostolic labours, and on the occasion of this farewell he gives an outline of the things he had ministered to them in his capacity as the servant of the Lord.

This ministry had been carried on under great exercise of soul and with much opposition from without. He had learnt the truth of the Lord's word at the beginning of his service—" *I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*" (Acts ix, 15). Hence, looking backward, he has to speak of "tears and temptations," while looking forward, he sees "bonds and afflictions" awaiting him.

The great truths he here enumerates seem to rise in an ascending scale of importance. At the commencement he speaks of

*REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD.* Here every soul must begin, for all have sinned against God. This he pressed upon both Jew and Greek, for Jew and Greek are alike guilty before God. He pressed it upon them publicly and from house to house. At the street corner and in the homes of his hearers he enjoined upon all—*Repentance toward God.* But along with it

he preached *Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*, for a door of faith is open to him who repents, through the mercy of God our Saviour. And preaching of this kind is as much needed to-day as it was then, and God will bless none other. He next speaks of

*THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.* This would of course involve the whole plan of salvation, and in preaching this he would unfold to his hearers the great blessings of the Gospel. This he does at great length in his Epistle to the Romans. Briefly, these blessings are—Forgiveness, Justification, Peace with God, Eternal Life, Reconciliation, Sonship, and of course, with it all, the gift to the believer of the Spirit of God. Pursuing his discourse he now speaks of

*THE KINGDOM OF GOD.* This truth occupies a great place in the teaching of the New Testament. What then is the kingdom of God? It may be described as a sphere of blessing for man set up on the earth to-day, consequent upon the session of Christ at the right hand of God and of the coming of the Holy Spirit here. In this kingdom Christ is Lord, and the Administrator, too, of all blessing to the soul. We enter this kingdom by conversion. (Matt. xviii, 3). At that moment we are translated by God the Father from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love (see Col. I, 13). Two great blessings come to us through being in God's kingdom.

The soul being made subject to rule, the rule of God, is delivered from the power of evil, on the one hand, and becomes instructed in the will of God, on the other. So the Lord spoke of “ *every scribe which is instructed (or disciplined) into the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*” (Matt. xiii, 52). In fact, the gospels themselves anticipate this coming kingdom, and in the many parables of the kingdom, some fourteen in number, we learn what an important place it holds in the truth of God. The apostle now passes on to speak of

*THE COUNSEL OF GOD.* Here the apostle rose to the height of his ministry, for it was given to him as to none other to unfold the whole mind of God in regard to the blessing of heaven and earth under Christ as the great Head of all things (See Ephes. I, 9-11). To apprehend this our souls must dwell not on ourselves and our relief and salvation, but on Christ Himself as the Centre of a world of blessing. In this world, which as to display, is yet to come, there are many families, each named of the Father and each having its own portion as blessed by Him who is the Father of Glory, the Source of all good and blessing. But in thinking of these many families we know we ourselves belong to one particular family to which the apostle now refers to as



*THE CHURCH OF GOD.* There is much valuable instruction both in the gospels and the epistles with regard to the Church of God. While no doubt it is in itself truly a family, a family of sons, yet it is viewed in many aspects. In relation to God it is His House, His Temple, His Habitation by the Spirit; while in relation to Christ it is His Body and His Bride. In the apostle's discourse here he refers to it as the Flock of God, which He has purchased by blood. Israel had such a place of old—“*The sheep of Thy pasture . . . Thy congregation, which Thou hast purchased . . . . which Thou hast redeemed.*” (Psa. lxxiv, 1-2). To-day, when Israel is set aside the Church of God is His Flock and Christ is the Great Shepherd of the sheep. (Heb. xiii, 20).

Finally, the apostle having brought to their mind—Repentance before God, the Gospel of God, the Kingdom of God, the Counsel of God and the Church of God—now proceeds to commend them to *God Himself*, and the word of His grace. This was most opportune. He was leaving them. They would see his face no more. But if the servant passes, and who has not, as they, had this experience with regard to beloved servants of God, yet God Himself remains. His Word remains also, the word of grace, which is able to build us up and sustain us until the end.

EDITOR.

## Full Assurance.

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**E**VEN the language of Scripture is full of significance; for the language in which its truths are communicated to us is as much inspired as are the truths themselves. This is evident from i Cor. ii. And in calling attention to the use by the Spirit of God of a remarkable word—*Pleerophoria*—translated “*full assurance*”; I desire, as the Lord might help me, to bring out some of the great realities connected with it.

“*Full assurance*,” that is,—Firm or steadfast persuasion; these are the vital thoughts communicated by this word, which is never used by profane writers; for, as with other words in the New Testament, it is as though the common forms of speech were inadequate to be the means of expressing Divine realities. Hence, we have new forms through the inspired writers, pregnant with life and power. Such is “*Pleerophoria*.” It signifies that one’s assurance is *complete*, wanting nothing; that is, it would be impossible to add anything, as needful or even desirous, in order to perfect the assurance we already possess.

Now that is very wonderful; and when we see later, I hope, the things to which this “*full assurance*” is attached, we shall come to appreciate more deeply the grace of our God which has given it to us. The persuasion or assurance

is thus so complete, so firm and steadfast in the soul, that it cannot be made more stable or more secure. Now the reason for this is simple. It is *Divine* assurance; its steadfastness is founded on all that God is, available in the power of His own living word, through faith. Hence, nothing can add to an assurance based on the word of the living God.

Now there are four references only to the use of this word in the New Testament, and I will take first the following in 1 Thess. 1, 5. “*For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much full-assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*” I connect with this first reference to “*pleerophoria*,” therefore, the truth of the ‘*Grace of God.*’ We begin with the gospel; both in the blessing, liberty, deliverance, and joy which it brings us, and also in the sense of its unassailable character. Why is this? Because the gospel of God’s grace is founded on His righteousness. Simple yet profound reason. In bringing near His righteousness, according to the Divine promise of Isa. xlvi, 12, 13, God has done so in boundless grace. And in acting towards the sinner in all the liberality of His heart, He has not sacrificed one iota of His claims or of the rights of His everlasting throne. And the secret of this is the sufferings and death of Christ. (See Isa. liii.) God’s own Beloved Son has become Man, and has been down under

*all* the judgment of God, that the floodgates of Divine love and grace might be opened, and all the blessings of the heart of God flow out.

This the Thessalonians had received, in living faith, a faith so marked as to be famed not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place; and they had much full-assurance of the power and truth of that gospel, because of *how* it reached them. True, the word of it was preached to them, but they had received it with much affliction (it had cost them something!), and joy in the Holy Ghost; and it came to them also in power—mighty deeds (life-transforming power); also in the Holy Ghost—they had received the Spirit as a result of their faith in the gospel; and, further still, they had the present, practical testimony of the gentle, loving, transparent ways of the Apostle, “*how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.*” No wonder the Apostle could speak to them of “*much full-assurance.*” They needed nothing to add to their steadfast persuasion in this precious gospel of the grace of God.

I turn now to Hebrews vi, 11, “*And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.*” The Thessalonians were at the bright outset of their Christian career; the Hebrews, persecuted and spoiled, were in need of exhortation to patient endurance, to the end that they

might inherit the promises and not fail of the great thoughts of God toward them. Hence, with this reference to "*plerophoria*." I connect the thought of '*continuance*.' And how much we need this word of encouragement to-day! What a scene around us! What turmoil, fear, and dark forebodings! What breakdown in the Church, in which we have all had our share! What collapse of moral institutions in the earth! What opposition of the enemy without, and weakness and tremblings within! Yet, blessed be God, He is not changed, nor is Christ different from when we believed. The same word of "*full-assurance of hope*" given to the sorely-tried Hebrews so long ago, comes in *all* its power and sweetness to our hearts to-day, at the very end of the times. And what a hope it is! Not the uncertain expectations of men, but the sure promises of God. Well indeed might the Apostle write further on:—"*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, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*" Heb. vi. 17-20.

We move on a little further to Hebrews x, 19-22, "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house*

*of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*” Whilst still pilgrims here, passing through the ways of men, fulfilling as an hireling our day, we have this supreme privilege of approach to God in the holiest of all. This “*full assurance—pleurophoria—of faith,*” then, I would connect with ‘*approach to God.*’ The Gospel brings the blessings of God to us; hope strengthens our patient endurance here; whilst “*full assurance of faith*” in the energy of a true heart gives that holy boldness to draw near by the blood of Jesus. Our great Forerunner, Jesus, our high Priest, has gone in; He has made this new and living way; the work of purgation is all His, but it sanctifies us, perfecting for ever the believer’s conscience before God, so that we have this precious, blessed access to God, an unhindered approach into the holiest of all, and can draw near in the full assurance of faith. Faith in the blessed Son of God who has purged our sins; faith in God who has accepted His sacrifice; faith in God’s word — that immutable, unbreakable bond between His promise and our souls; such is the foundation of this full-assurance. Not tremblingly and falteringly, but with holy boldness, we walk this new and living way into God’s very presence, sustained by Jesus, the Great Priest over the house of God.

The fourth and final reference to our full-assurance is in Colossians ii, 1, 2, "*For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement (or full knowledge) of the mystery of God.*" Now this is a very wonderful fact, that the Holy Spirit's use of this word runs right through the scope of Christianity, from the elements of the Gospel received by the Thessalonians, by way of the hope, continuance, faith and approach to God, of the Hebrews, until we reach the spiritual understanding of the Colossians and the "*full knowledge (epignosis) of the mystery of God.*" I connect, therefore, with this "*plerophoria*" the '*Mind of God*' fully known in Christ. God has revealed Himself to us in His Son, both His heart in all its unbounded love, and all the wondrous thoughts and purposes of His eternal Mind. We live in days when man's mind dominates the world around us. His ideas, purposes, determinations, intentions, fill the movements and literature of the day; and God's mind, disclosed in all its blessed fulness, is despised, forgotten, and cast aside.

But we as Christians possess God's thoughts and rejoice in them. We glory in His determinate purpose as to Christ, and the church as given to Him. We see His mind unfolding

itself in relation to a coming day of glory;—a universe of bliss, of which Christ will be the Centre and the Sun, as Conder's beautiful hymn expresses it. This indeed is riches, the only true eternal riches; and it is, moreover, all the wealth of that "*full-assurance of understanding*" which empowers the soul, which elevates it, also, above the poor, vain, empty show around us; and which fills it, to, with the very splendour of God's own glory, the glory and effulgence of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, known by us to-day, yet known in those very conditions of moral and spiritual perfection and blessedness proper to that eternity to come. This, then, delivers us (if our souls be subject), from the influence of man's thoughts, and also leads us into all the blessing proper to this *full-assurance* of grace, and hope, and faith, and, finally, the full knowledge of God's Mind. May the Lord bless these few simple thoughts for His name's sake.

Bath.

V. W. J. H. L.

## Rejoicing in the Lord.

Hab., Ch. iii, Ver. 17-19.

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**T**HE prophet Habakuk lived in a day similar to that in which we live—a day when God's people were in a very low state. Jehovah was about to deal with them on account of their unfaithfulness and the prophet was unable to understand why He should use for



their chastisement a nation which, in the prophet's estimation, was worse than his own. But standing upon his watch-tower he learned two profound lessons: that God has a perfect right to speak or to remain silent as He pleases, and also that the just shall live by faith. When God did speak he ordered the prophet to "*Write the vision and make it plain upon tables.*" (Ch. ii, v. 2).

"*Although the fig tree shall not blossom.*" The fig tree spoke of the Jew with national privileges, restored from Babylon. God had brought them out of Egypt where, in bondage, their groans had reached the ear of Jehovah so that He would "*come down to deliver them.*" (Ex. iii, 8). They had promised to be obedient, but the outcome was that God had to say that they were a "*rebellious people*" (Is. lxx, 2). The fig tree speaks of the profession. That nation had great privileges (Rom. iii, 2) and yet when God's Beloved Son came He found on the tree "*nothing but leaves*" (Matt. xxi, 19) just that which in Eden guilty man had used to try to cover his nakedness and to attempt to fit himself for God's holy presence. Thus the natural man with all his culture and profession cannot produce what is suitable to the eye of God. The fig tree did not blossom (much less bear fruit) and the only result of God's Beloved Son coming here in grace to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, and to deliver the captive was that they said—" *Away with Him, crucify Him.*"

The world has stood by that decision ever since, yet while the world's profession is such, the simple lover of the Lord Jesus can "*rejoice in the Lord.*"

"*Neither shall fruit be in the vines.*" In the ways of God's purpose He "*brought a vine out of Egypt*" and "*planted it*" in the land. (Ps. lxxx, 8). There the nation should have produced fruit for God, but failed. What about God's people to-day? How little fruit there is for God! How His purposes seem to be hindered! In view of these serious realities, what is the saint of God to do? He can turn the eye of faith upward to where his Lord is crowned with glory and honour—already in the position to fully carry out the purposes of God, and seeing Him thus can exclaim:—"Yet will I rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of my salvation."

"*The labour of the olive shall fail.*" The labour of the olive produced the pure oil olive beaten for the light (Ex. xxvii, 20), so that the lamp should burn always. The light speaks of testimony. What of the testimony to-day? Is there anything in it that can give the saint cause to rejoice? How the light flickers because of the lack of purity in the oil! What of all the extraneous matter which gets into it: wrong doctrine, unfaithfulness in preaching, etc.? How much there is which is not according to God's holy mind! Yet His own are not to dwell on the failure, but "*rejoice in the Lord.*"

“ *The fields shall yield no meat.*” The seed may be diligently and prayerfully sown in the gospel field, the word faithfully preached and yet months, perhaps years, go by without news of one conversion or any sign of spiritual awakening. Is the saint to bemoan this and become morbid? Even though these facts be true, his privilege is to “ *rejoice in the Lord* ” and “ *joy in the God of his salvation.* ”

“ *The flock shall be cut off from the fold and no herd in the stalls.*” Flocks and herds were evidences of riches and prosperity and from them were taken animals for the sacrifices, but in Malachi’s day God’s people had sunk to such a stage that an animal blind, lame, sick or otherwise unfit for sale was deemed good enough for God. (Mal. i, 8.) Is not spiritual poverty apparent all around us? The simple believer seeking to please his Lord may become despondent as he beholds the vacant fold and stalls, but nevertheless can say “ *yet will I joy in the God of my salvation.* ”

God would have His own to be a rejoicing people. The epistle to the Philippians shows how it works out practically. God’s beloved servant was a prisoner at Rome, and outwardly there was nothing in which he could rejoice. He knew that Christ was being preached with a sad admixture of unworthy motives, yet because Christ *was* being preached, he could and would rejoice. He looked for their furtherance and joy of faith and their more abounding rejoicing,

and with the object too, of being able to “*rejoice in the day of Christ.*” Whatever his portion here, he could rejoice with them and they with him. He sent Epaphroditus to them and reminded them of God’s great mercy in raising him up so that His servant should not have overwhelming sorrow. His adorable Lord knew just how much His servant could bear and eased his burden and thus caused him rejoicing in this regard. In chapter three he exhorts the saints to “*rejoice in the Lord*” and refers to them as those who “*rejoiced in Christ Jesus.*” Later he speaks of them as his “*joy and crown*” and bids them “*Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice.*” With great joy he could address his “*true yokefellow.*” Probably this was one who knew of (even if he did not share) Paul’s sufferings in the Philippian jail. There Silas and he were thrust into the inner prison and shamefully treated (Acts xvi). Did *they* complain that the fields were yielding no meat or that the labour of the olive might fail? No! “*At midnight*”—did they complain how cold and dark it was? No! they “*sang praises to God.*” They had proved the mercy which maintained them in the spirit of praise while they were in physical pain and discomfort. They proved His grace in delivering them. Paul could say in all truth:—“*The Lord God is my strength.*”

“*And He will make my feet like hinds’ feet and He will make me to walk upon mine high*

*places.*” Rejoicing in the Lord, knowing Him as their strength, enables His saints to maintain a path of separation, enjoying spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, and to walk as heavenly people should—with the clean and certain steps of the hind, a clean animal which chewed the cud and divided the hoof (Lev. xi, 3).

“ *To the Chief Singer on my stringed instruments.*” Our Beloved Lord shall Himself lead the eternal praises. Meanwhile He tunes the strings of the heart, producing that praise and thanksgiving which is the fruit of the lips, in those who, notwithstanding what is around, rejoice in the Lord, joy in the God of their salvation, and know the Lord God as their strength.

“ Praise ye the Lord,” again, again,  
The Spirit strikes the chord;  
Nor toucheth He our hearts in vain;  
We praise, we praise the Lord.

“ Rejoice in Him,” again again,  
The Spirit speaks the word,  
And faith takes up the happy strain;  
Our joy is in the Lord.

For ever be the glory given  
To Thee, O Lamb of God!  
Our every joy on earth, in heaven,  
We owe it to Thy blood.

London.

J. E. F.