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Things
concerning
HIMSELF
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This first issue of THE CHRISTIAN POST is sent on its way with the earnest prayer that our ever-gracious Lord will use it for His glory.

Its aim is to cheer, maybe to help, Christians wherever they are, and it is hoped to present simply and pointedly something of the great truths of Christianity. In short to bring before readers, Christ—His Person, His Work and His Word.

To this end the interest of those who love the Lord is sincerely sought. First, in definite earnest prayer that the Lord will guide, and supply all needs. Secondly, in introducing it to their acquaintance and in distributing it wherever they can.

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WHITHER BOUND?

A GOOD many years ago now, a fishing boat had come to the end of the day's labours; the crew were thinking of a little rest at last, and went below, leaving the youngest member of their crew on deck to keep a watch. It was getting late, and daylight

soon began to yield to "shadows of the evening"; it grew a little misty. Keeping his watch, the youngster noticed some two or three miles off a large full rigged ship bearing down towards his craft—a ship which came on, turning neither to right nor to left. He called below to his father—the skipper—to come on deck and take charge of the situation. Still the ship bore down upon them until it came within hailing distance, when a member of the crew stood in the lower rigging and hailed the fishermen. They had a question to ask: "Which way does the land lie?" They were told by the fishing skipper that they were then forty-five miles nor-west of a certain headland. Shouting their thanks, the sailor explained that they had not been able to take an observation for some days, and were very anxious as to their proper course. They were bound up the Bristol Channel, but feared that in the dull and misty weather they might have missed their way and gone south of the Land's End. But you are not surprised at their anxiety—it meant a lot to them, to know whether they were on the right course.

But what about that journey we are all embarked upon—our journey through this life to what lies beyond? What of its end—of *your* destination? If it was of moment to those sailors that they were steering a true course on their short voyage, how important to be sure of that journey which no man retraces, and which lands him for weal or woe where there is no recall. Do you say, "Well, we can but do our best, and can never be sure." Poor comfort that for our mariners—poor comfort when we are facing the end of our journey, not to know where we are to land. *Can* we be certain? *Is* there a sure guide? Thank God, yes; in His great love to mankind—to YOU, He has given a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, His own Son; and that you may know it for certain, He has preserved His holy Word—the Bible—to give us the knowledge of salvation. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME."¹

Another scripture affirms that " Christ also hath once suffered for sins the just for the unjust, THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD "². Yet another passage tells us " He is able also to save them to the uttermost THAT COME UNTO GOD BY HIM "³. These straightforward and simple passages of Holy Writ make it perfectly plain that the way to God, the way to heaven is through Jesus Christ our Lord ; that He went to the cross of Calvary, there to give His life a ransom for all, to make that way to God ; and that those who trust Him as Saviour and Lord can be absolutely sure of their eternal salvation.

There are many subjects which you can afford to leave open—undecided—but not this one. It claims your most immediate attention, " Which way does the land lie ? " " What must I do to be saved ? " Thank God for a straight, simple answer to that urgent and anxious cry—" Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST and thou shalt be saved."⁴

¹ John 14. 6. ² 1 Pet. 3. 18. ³ Heb. 7. 25. ⁴ Acts 16. 31.

THE INVITATION.

*" Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me and ye shall find rest unto your souls."*¹

SOME eight hundred years before our Lord spoke these words, a wonderful invitation from God was given through His prophet, Isaiah. " Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : for I am God and there is none else."²

And in the record in the Gospel of Matthew, there stands a Man on the earth Who expresses the same invitation, and holds Himself out as the One Who can meet and satisfy every heart of man. A Man, we say ; yet ever God ; " True God of True God."

*" God come down a heavenly Stranger
Love to sinners to display."*

Who else—Who less—could use the words ? Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel—all were good men of God—men of special gift and power. So were Peter, John and

Paul, but none of them ever dared use words like these. It would have been blasphemy in them to do so. Some of them indeed point away from themselves to Christ, and say "We have found Him."

Just see how simple, how full, how absolute, is His invitation. "Come unto ME"—not to a creed, a church, a code—"Come . . . and I will give you rest." How truly do these words reveal His deep knowledge of our need. REST: do we not all crave for it? Rest of body; rest of mind; rest of CONSCIENCE! And as if to mock our craving, the speed of our lives increases year by year and it is increasingly difficult to find any time or place of rest. While for the greatest need—rest of conscience—earth has nothing to offer. But in Him! Here is the rest we so sorely need. He alone it is who can say to a sin-burdened soul "Thy sins be forgiven thee"; Who can point to a work He has finished, and so end our labours to make ourselves fit for heaven. Here, in these well known words, we see the very yearning of the heart of God for the blessing of his misguided wandering creatures.

But perhaps most who read these lines have done this—have in their "labour" and "burden" come by faith to Jesus. (If you haven't done this—if in the depths of your soul you are restless and unsatisfied, do *you* come now and say, in the language maybe of the hymn writer, "Jesus, I will trust Thee, Trust Thee WITH MY SOUL." You will find that though He is not now on earth in human guise, His touch has still its ancient power. He WILL give you rest.)

For those who have thus "come" to Him, and have rest of conscience through faith in Him, the next verse takes us a bit further—shall we say explains the position. "Rest unto your souls" is here promised to those who are willing to serve with Him ("take My yoke,") and learn of Him. For it is sadly possible to be unquiet—restless—in spirit, even though we have found peace with God as to our sins. Here is the cure—"take MY yoke" "learn of ME."

These two words contain the very negation of self. Instead of serving ourselves, we serve HIM ; learning of Him, we learn from One Who is meek and lowly in heart. And as " the servant is not above his Lord," it is surely for this meekness and lowliness to mark us too. Here is rest ; there is none in a proud and haughty spirit which forever imagines itself slighted or injured. There is no rest in devoting all my efforts constantly to my own pleasure. But there is the sweetest rest—not maybe of body—but of soul, in His blessed service, and in being content, like Him, to be " meek and lowly in heart."

Then He adds, " For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." We fear the yoke may be hard, and the burden heavy ; isn't it because we are slow to try them ; slow to give up self, its demands and its pride ; slow to go along daily with Him Who is the kindest of Masters, and the most patient of Teachers ?

But the promise is definite. The only conditions are " Come," " Take," " Learn." We shall find, if we do, that as always " He abideth faithful." H.W.M.

¹ Matt. 11 28-29. ² Isa 45. 22, ³ John 1. 45.

" T. AND P. "

HAVE you ever thought of what a number of promises there are in God's Word ? Many you have put to the test, and know they are true in your own case, such as " Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." You have come to the Lord Jesus, and you have found rest. You ventured on His promise and found it true.

Are you doing this daily, resting on His promises, and proving them in your daily life ?

In such a short column one can only remind you of the fact that the Bible is packed with the promises of God to be known and enjoyed in our souls. Search them out, see how many you can find, and then I would recommend the plan an old lady once adopted.

She had been ill for a long time, and one day a servant of the Lord called to see her, and to speak to her of Jesus. Before leaving he took a Bible from a table, from which to read a scripture to comfort the old lady. Upon turning over the leaves he was puzzled to find pencilled in the margin of many pages "T and P."

Turning to the old saint he asked an explanation. Smiling, with a look of satisfaction and joy, she replied, "Whenever I read in God's Word a promise which has been made good in my own experience I write against it, 'T and P,' which means 'TRIED and PROVED'."

I wonder against how many of God's promises you could write "T and P."

The work which His goodness began
 The arm of His strength will complete ;
 His promise is Yea and Amen,
 And never was forfeited yet :
 Things future, nor things that are now,
 Nor all things below nor above,
 Can make Him His purpose forgo,
 Or sever our souls from His love.

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"TO DO GOOD...FORGET NOT."

THE gospel announces salvation by the free grace of God ; we can do nothing to save ourselves or help in our salvation. It is "by grace ye are saved through faith . . . not of works, lest any man should boast."¹ But, having accepted this salvation through faith, we learn that God has "created us in Christ Jesus *unto* good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."² One of the things, God had in mind when He saved us and made us new people "in Christ" was that we should henceforth live to His praise, doing those things that are well-pleasing in His sight. So if we have accepted God's salvation we cannot go on living in our own selfish way ; Peter tells us "that we no longer should live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the

Gentiles "" as though to say " You've wasted enough of your life already in Satan's service."

Of course, if this change of life is manifest, people of the world will think us odd. " They think it strange," says Peter, " that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot." " Why carry on like that? why not enjoy the world as we do? they may say. We find a very full answer in the epistle to Titus. Read the first ten verses of the second chapter—what a lovely community where people live like that—a community where you find people like the " bishop " (more correctly " overseer ") mentioned in chapter 1 verses 7-9—a delightful man to meet! But our critics will object, " All very well if everyone was like that, but they're not. You'll be ever so 'put upon' if that's how you go on. You must look out for your own ends, and not worry about the rest. Why be so particular? "

Well, verse 11 starts with " For . . . " and that introduces the grand reason. The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all men. Everyone was lost, sinners before God and unable to do anything to improve the position. God's grace has appeared, bringing salvation for all, just what they need! But, alas, all won't have it. God's righteousness is *unto* all, but only upon all that believe,^s those who through faith accept God's salvation. This is what has made the difference with the Christian; he can never be the same as he was in unconverted days, let the world say what it likes, or even deal with him unjustly on account of his faith. God's grace has appeared and he has accepted the offered salvation. Now that grace goes on to teach how the Christian should walk in this world. We are to " deny ungodliness and worldly lusts "—the things that occupy and characterise those who refuse the salvation—and to " live soberly, righteously and godly."

He gave Himself for us—wondrous grace towards lost rebel sinners, that He might redeem us from all iniquity. . . . " Yes," you say, " I believe that; He died to save me from my sins." But the verse goes on " . . . to

purify unto Himself a peculiar people (special treasure) " a company of people, purified, cleansed from their sin and defilement, to be His companions in glory, His Bride. And while here on earth they are to show that they are His special treasure by being " zealous of good works." But maybe some will say sadly, " I really am desirous to live so, I am ' zealous of good works ' ; but how can I fulfil my desires ?—I always fail." Chapter 3 adds a little to help on this point. The first two verses again are directed as to our manner of life ; verse 3 again gives the reason " For . . ." we were going on in all the sins common to worldly folk until God in mercy saved us. This involved " washing of regeneration " (as chapter 2. 14 told us Christ gave Himself to " purify " a people for Himself) and also " renewing of the Holy Spirit which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." We are justified by His grace and have hope of an inheritance in glory. The point that answers our query, " How can I live godly ? " is verse 6—the Holy Spirit shed on us abundantly. Every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ has the Holy Spirit as the seal of his inheritance and as the power to live godly. If we try by our own strength to live as grace teaches us we should, we shall fail, because our old nature (" the flesh " as Scripture calls it) is too much for us. We must acknowledge our natural powerlessness, and leave the Holy Spirit free and ungrieved to produce His fruits in us. We shall find there is still a struggle ; old desires still arise. But we are no longer condemned to failure, for it is now the Holy Spirit Who wars against the flesh, as Galatians 5. 17 (Revised Version) tells us, " in order that we may not do the things that we would "—if we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh.

Well might the apostle exhort Titus, " This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God may be careful to maintain good works." As we think of all that God's grace has brought us ; the full salvation meeting all our

guilt ; the " blessed hope " before us ; every provision for our present walk, may we " be careful to maintain good works." C.G.M.

' Eph. 2. 8-9. ' Eph. 2. 10. ' 1 Peter 4. 2-3. ' 1 Peter 4. 4. ' Romans 3. 22.

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" THIS IS THE WAY : WALK YE IN IT."

1. Oh, walk with Jesus, would'st thou know
How deep, how wide His love can flow !
They only fail His love to prove
Who in the ways of sinners rove.
2. Walk thou with Him ; that way is light
All other pathways end in night :
Walk thou with Him ; that way is rest,
All other pathways are unblest.
3. Oh, walk with Jesus ! to thy view
He will make all things sweet and new ;
Will bring new fragrance from each flower,
And hallow every passing hour.
4. Jesus, a great desire have we
To walk life's troubled path with Thee :
Come to us now, in converse stay ;
And oh ! walk with us day by day.

E. P. HOOD.

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THE BIBLE.

READ the *whole* Scripture, for Scripture is a connected whole. Do not neglect the historical, or prophetic, or doctrinal portions. Forget not the book of Proverbs nor the little epistle to Philemon. Think not that there is no food for the soul in the books of the Chronicles, God has given us the whole, and means us to use the whole, for it is all profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. We Protestants speak much, and at times somewhat boastfully, of our great reverence and love for the Bible. Is our glorying in truth ? Do we love the Bible, not merely as a text-book from which to collect proofs for our doctrine, an armoury from which to select weapons to defeat our opponents, but do we love the Bible as God's revelation, in which our minds are to be moulded, by which our hearts are to be influenced ? Are there not many portions

of Scripture so neglected, that if to-morrow some magic hand were to efface them from our editions, very few of us would miss them? Have we not received it more as a theory, than a real and practical belief, that all the books of Moses, and prophets, and apostles are inspired, authoritative, profitable? Let us be really disciples, learners, not selecting, not rejecting, but receiving *all* our Lord has graciously caused to be written for our instruction.

If such diligent study of Scripture should interfere with our reading of religious literature we may rest satisfied that we shall not be losers to say the least of it. While we use with gratitude the books in which men communicate their thoughts and experience, we must always, not merely in theory, but in practice, hold them in a subordinate position. The more the Bible has the pre-eminence, the greater will be our power of discernment, and the more shall we be truly benefited by the writings of men. A diligent study of Scripture will place us in the true position of not being in bondage to man, and of being willing to learn with gratitude from all servants of the Lord.

Has a Christian ever regretted on his death-bed, that he spent too much time in reading the Bible, and too little time in reading men's writings? But many of God's people have expressed their regret that they have not studied the Word of God more. Let us then act as they would have acted, had their life been lengthened; let us start now, as they, by the solemn and clear light of their last days, saw it was good, and wise, and blessed to start. Let us give time to the regular and diligent reading of "*all* Scripture."

Read Scripture connectedly. It is true, every word of God is pure; precious is every expression, and on a single line or verse we may meditate only to find that its depth is inexhaustible. But besides this minute reading and meditation, there ought to be also a more rapid and connected reading. It is a mistaken reverence which at times interferes with our understanding of the Word.

We fancy every word is emphasised, and do not gain the meaning of a whole chapter or epistle. Bring all concentration of mind to the reading of Scripture, and then apply your intellect to it as to any other book. Reverential reading includes the lower attitude of attention, exertion of mind, and earnestness. The Spirit is promised to reveal and apply to us the truths of Scripture. But one result of the Spirit's influence is an honest application of the mind to the Bible. If we read in a kind of mental paralysis, with a mysterious feeling of performing a duty which somehow or other will benefit us, we misunderstand the nature of the Bible. It is used by the Spirit to convince, instruct, comfort, guide, and this through the understanding, conscience, emotions; therefore in the Bible we have history, argument, poetry, maxim, suggestion, appeal. All that is within us is exercised by this Word, and the more the Spirit aids us, the more will all our mental and moral faculties be brought into activity in the reading of Scripture. Again I say, let us give ourselves to frequent, copious, honest reading of the Bible, in dependence on the grace of God, Who alone giveth the increase.

"Christ and the Scriptures".—DR. A. SAPHIR.

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THE CHRISTIAN HOPE.

ON the last night before He was crucified, the Lord Jesus had spent the evening hours with His twelve Apostles gathered round Him, to prepare them for His forthcoming absence: He would fortify them against the time of stress that lay before them, and would comfort them in their sorrow at losing Him.

What does He say? If one we love has to leave us for a time, what greater comfort can we have than for him to say "I will come again." Such indeed are the Lord's words.

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."¹

And afterwards, after He had been into death and had risen out of it ; after those wonderful forty days during which He showed Himself as risen to His disciples, this hope was confirmed to them. As He ascended, they gazed till " a cloud received Him out of their sight " : and as they turned their eyes earthwards again, the angelic messengers greeted them with these words :

" This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Still later, this same hope is evidently an essential part of the truth received by the infant church at Thessalonica, who turned to God . . . " to serve . . . and to wait for His Son from heaven." It is the subject of very many references throughout the epistles. Truly the hope of the Christian—the hope of the Church—is the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We are confidently to expect Him to come back, the One Who loved us and gave Himself for us ; the One Who endured the cross, despising the shame. We shall look on His face, once marred more than that of any man, then to be radiant with all the glory that belongs to Him. Could anything be happier than such a hope ? Is there anything we could more delight to look forward to ? And He is coming *for us* : His love would not be content without our presence with Him. " Where I am there ye may be also."

Some will tell us that He comes for us at death : and no doubt He does " gild the bed of death with light." But this our hope is a brighter, fairer one than that. It is not death we look for, but life in its full manifestation. " That mortality might be swallowed up of life." " We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Throughout the New Testament we gather very many details as to the manner of it : it is mentioned relative to many subjects—to earthly persecution, rewards for

service, motive for godliness of walk and many others. Much knowledge may be gleaned from the Old Testament concerning it, in the light of the New. Maybe (if He do not come first) we shall be able to examine some aspects of this "blessed hope" on another occasion; but now it is our desire just to stress the fact of it—to remind our hearts of those wonderful words from the very heart of Jesus, "I will come again." Surely our hearts will gladly respond, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

¹ John 14. 3. ² Acts 1. 11. ³ 1 Thess. 1. 9-10. ⁴ 2 Cor. 5. 4. ⁵ 1 Cor. 15. 51-52.

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Lord Jesus, shall we gaze upon Thy face,
That face of perfect beauty, love and grace;
That blessed form, once nailed upon the tree,
Lord, shall these very eyes in glory see?

We shall, we shall, for Thou hast said it Lord,
And faith rests ever on Thy changeless Word.
"Behold I come", "Surely I quickly come";
Even so, Amen. Oh take Thy loved ones home.

C.H.V.P.

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"HE OFT REFRESHED ME."

HAVE you ever noticed the service of a brother named Onesiphorus? I believe it has a special word for us in these days, when many are isolated and often unable to meet with the Lord's people for fellowship. The apostle Paul said of Onesiphorus in 2 Timothy, chapter 1. 16-18, "He oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain . . . he sought me out very diligently, and found me . . . in many things he ministered unto me."

What a lovely list of things are mentioned here, and how suggestive surely to any whose heart is filled with the love of Christ! "He oft refreshed me"—like a morning breeze, full of freshness and vitality, Onesiphorus had often refreshed the heart of the great apostle. Although Paul may at times have been cast down, here was one who had ministered to him, who had encouraged his heart, who had cheered his spirit and sympathised

with the Lord's prisoner in his bonds. Are there not some whom WE could refresh? Some drooping spirits whom we could water . . . some whom we might be able to cheer and encourage? And then, having done it once, do it often.

Of Onesiphorus it is also said, "He sought me out very diligently and found me." And there are some lonely ones who will be found only in this way. They will need seeking out and finding, and such service is noticed by Him Who could seek out the poor outcast woman at Sychar's well. They are known to the Lord, and never forgotten by Him, yet He would have us search them out, and by so doing remind them of that link which binds us together and to Christ in glory.

Both in Rome and Ephesus Onesiphorus ministered to the apostle Paul, in what way we do not know, but it was known to the Lord, and was precious to Him because done to one of His own; He says "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it UNTO ME." Oh that we too may be ready thus to serve Him as we are found serving those that are His own!

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ANY QUESTIONS ?

IN the course of our reading of the Scriptures—perhaps, too, in seeking to apply them to daily life—we very often come up against things we don't understand. It isn't that we are "looking for trouble," or trying to find fault with the Scriptures as some do; but it is only to be expected that the enemy of our souls will use every effort to instil doubt, despair or difficulty into our minds. And beyond this, too, we are faced with a Book which is inexhaustible in its depths of wisdom and knowledge; Paul tells us that of such "now we know in part," we learn bit by bit.

Probably we can all profit by the consideration of each other's questions; for so often what troubles one Christian is also perplexing many others—think how much we

are indebted to the disciples in the Lord's days for the questions they asked and the answers that are recorded for us? See *e.g.* Matthew 15. 15; John 14. 8. 22.

Another thing to remember is that one may know "all the answers" without the truth having much practical effect or being reflected in one's Christian experience—a dangerous state of soul.

With this introduction, we invite readers to send along any questions or difficulties they come across in their Scripture readings. We shall do our best to give an answer from Scripture, and publish both question and answer, as this will, we are sure, be a help to many other readers who are thinking of the same problems. If we haven't room to print all the questions and answers, we will certainly see that a reply is sent to the enquirer personally.

Questions may be addressed to:—

THE EDITOR, THE CHRISTIAN POST,
39, Fore Street, St. Ives, Cornwall.

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BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE.

(Cut this page out and keep it in your Bible for reference.)

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"GUILTY BEFORE GOD."

1. *WHO?* Romans 1. 18—3. 19 shows "all the world guilty before God."

Chapter 1: The pagans (*Note*: God created no pagans—how did they get into that state? Romans 1. 24, 26, 28). These are without excuse as having testimony of creation. (Read Psalm 19; Acts 14. 16-17; and Romans 1. 19-20).

Chapter 2 deals with more civilised nations, *e.g.* Romans of Paul's day; they had a fine legal system ("a law unto themselves" as Roman 2. 14 says); they condemned pagan excesses but contemporary history adds weight to Romans 2. 1. They were not under Jewish law and so are not judged by it (ch. 2. 12). This is the position of civilised nations at present time—held responsible as having knowledge of good and evil—symbolised *e.g.* in Roman laws or our English laws, which conscience supports (chapter 2. 14-15). Men accept this moral standard as good, but fail to meet it. They are more responsible than pagans. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee . . . thou knewest" (Luke 19. 22).

Chapter 2. 17—3. 18 deals with Jews. Most privileged race—boasted in their privileges. Willingly undertook to keep God's law (Exodus 19. 8), but failed to keep it ; quotations from their own Scriptures show how far they failed.

Hence in answer to " Who ? "—" ALL . . . guilty before God."

2. **CONDITION—GUILTY.**

Force of word—" subject to judgment of God."

Not all equal in privilege or knowledge but all " hold truth in unrighteousness " (Rom. 1. 18), *i.e.*, do not act on what they do know.

One failure entails guilt (James 5. 10 ; Galatians 3. 10). Not only those under Jewish law, for sin was in the world before that (Romans 5. 13). Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3. 4, N.T.) and is seen in every age—read Gen. 6. 5 ; Judges 21. 25 ; Psalm 14 ; Proverbs 1. 25 ; Isaiah 53. 6., and 66. 3—not steady improvement as modernists tell us ; right on to the " last times " we find the principle at work (2 Timothy ch. 3).

The full expression is seen at the Cross, " Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked (lawless) hands have crucified and slain " (Acts 2. 23).

3. **MEASURE—BEFORE GOD.**

Sin may be harmful to society, but is in the first place rebellion against God. The prodigal says, " I have sinned against heaven " (Luke 15. 18), and the same truth is expressed by David (Psalm 51. 4), and Joseph (Genesis 39. 9), and in the cases of Belshazzar (Dan. 5. 23), and Ananias (Acts 5. 4).

God has full knowledge of us (Psalm 139 ; Hebrews 4. 13) though we may deceive others and even ourselves.

A sense of God's holiness makes us feel weight of guilt, as the experiences of Isaiah, Peter and Job show us (Isaiah 6. 5 ; Luke 5. 8 ; Job 42. 5-6). Before God, as Romans 3. 19 tells us, every mouth is stopped.

4. **RESULT.**

Romans 3. 19, " all subject to the judgment of God."

Romans 1. 18, " the wrath of God revealed against those holding truth in unrighteousness."

This introduces the subject of judgment, which we will consider (D.V.) in another study.

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STOP ! LOOK !! LIVE !!!

THESE words were noticed recently on a placard in connection with a "safety first" campaign in a London borough; they are evidently a variation of the familiar "Stop, look, listen" so often seen as relating to the danger of the roads.

But these words are capable of a message even more vital and arresting as we apply them to the vital issues of eternity. The message of God to this world—to you, if you are still away from Him—may be summarised thus, Stop, Look, Live !

STOP,

—if you are living for yourself, without giving God His place. Probably your life is not so bad, judged as men judge; but God is crowded out. God makes it clear in His Word that such is a state of spiritual death—"when we were dead in sins,"¹ wrote one whose outward life was a model of rectitude. If this is YOUR course, God says to you "Stop." Stop a minute to think of

your relations with this thrice-holy God, with Whom you must have to do. Stop, in your self will (which is sin), to listen to Him say "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, . . . for He will abundantly pardon."²

LOOK.

What at? Take a look at yourself as seen, not in your own self-satisfied esteem, but as revealed by the searching light of God's Word; there we read "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."³ And then LOOK away from yourself to Him Who says "Look unto ME and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am GOD and there is none else."⁴ Do you say how? It is so simple, but so real. "Look unto ME," "Come unto ME," "He that believeth on ME"—they all mean the same. Put your faith, your trust, your hope in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and see in His suffering and atonement on the Cross, the answer to your guilt before God. Come to Him as the Lord of your life.

"There is life in a look at the Crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee."

Do you say "It is too great a sacrifice, I should have to give up all that makes my life worth living"? No, my friend, the opposite is the case. Not till Christ is owned as your Saviour and your Lord, will you know the real joy of living.

LIVE.

"I am come," said that blessed Saviour Himself, "that they might have LIFE—and have it more abundantly."⁵ Did you think that a life spent in pleasure was the summit of happiness? The world itself will belie that—and Scripture says of those who live in pleasure that they are dead while they live—what a frustrated existence! Ah, no, my friend, the happiest, fullest, most successful life, is that which is lived to the glory of God—occupied in His service, spent for Him. And it is most important to note that this occupation,

this service is not to save yourself—it is and can alone be the outcome of the life HE gives to the man or woman who comes—looks to—believes in—Him. You come as you are, “weary, and worn and sad”; you come as you are, with all your sin and self will; you come to, look to, One Who can meet all your need; Who can and will say “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” You come to One Who said “I give unto them ETERNAL LIFE, and they shall never perish.”⁶ And that is the start of what is “really life”!

¹ Eph. 2. 5. ² Isa. 55. 7. ³ Rom. 3. 23. ⁴ Isa. 45. 22. ⁵ John 10. 10. ⁶ John 10. 28.

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
 Jesus, I come! Jesus, I come!
 Into Thy freedom, gladness and light,
 Jesus, I come to Thee.
 Out of my sickness into Thy health,
 Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
 Out of my sin and into Thyself,
 Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of unrest and arrogant pride
 Jesus, I come! Jesus, I come!
 Into Thy blessed will to abide
 Jesus, I come to Thee.
 Out of myself to dwell in Thy love,
 Out of despair into raptures above,
 Upward for aye on wings like a dove
 Jesus, I come to Thee.

W. T. SLEEPER.

“PROVE ALL THINGS : HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD.”¹

AT the present time more than ever before, there is need to emphasise the authority of the Scriptures.

The Bible gives us the whole counsel of God—given to us by men who wrote “as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” Furthermore, the Bible is the only such Book; God has not given any fresh revelation of Himself beyond the Scriptures, and certainly not in contradiction of them.

This importance of the Scriptures comes to mind in reading the 17th chapter of Acts. Paul's manner of preaching was to "reason out of the Scriptures" (verse 2). Let any Christian who seeks to serve God in the preaching of the gospel take special note of this, for much preaching these days contains very little reference to Scripture except for the 'text.'

But not only the preacher needs to have constant reference to the Bible, but the hearers also. The Bereans, we are told, were more noble than the Thessalonians because "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (verse 11). Are we as diligent as they in confirming what we hear or read by the Word of God? It is not sufficient that what we hear appeals to us; that it "sounds right" or is "a nice thought." There are many excellent books written in exposition of the Scriptures, and we rightly value them very highly. Let us read them, however, with Bible at hand, confirming what we read. Then our faith will rest upon the Word of God itself, though directed to the passages concerned by the expositors.

Let us "search the Scriptures, whether those things are so." The Bereans did, so it is no wonder that among them "*many* believed" (v. 12), while at Thessalonica we read of only "some" who believed (v. 4). C.G.M.

¹ 1 Thess. 5. 21.

TWO FRAGMENTS CONCERNING THE SCRIPTURES.

CHRIST is the grand theme of the Scriptures, and the enlightened heart gratefully traces every reference to His grace and majesty. The Bible is clear in its unfolding of the greatness and worthiness of Christ. It opens with the declaration "In the beginning, God"; it unveils the Son of God before the worshipping gaze of His servants; and it ends with the benediction of grace from Him to whom it bears unfaltering witness.

We need not borrow any trouble about the old Book—that it is not going to stand. Some people think it is a back number. Well, you and I will become back numbers, but the Book is going to remain. A doubter asked a young Christian how he could possibly believe that the Bible was inspired. “Oh,” he said, “because it inspires me!” We should as soon doubt our own existence as doubt the truth of that Book.

* * *

Oh may these hallowed pages be
My ever dear delight !
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light.

- - - - -

TWO PRAYERS.

**Here are two inspired prayers by the Apostle Paul for the Church.
Do we pray like this for our fellow-Christians ?**

“**T**HAT the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”—*Eph.* 1. *vv.* 17-23.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being

rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

“ Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen.”—*Eph.* 3. *vv.* 14-21.

CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR.

THIS is the first character under which we come to know our Lord Jesus Christ. Son of God, Son of Man, the Christ of God, and others—all these are titles and glories of which we have but little if any conception, until we have known Him as meeting our need as sinners, and by faith have laid hold upon Him as our Saviour.

In considering Christ as Saviour, two things are mainly included : viz. His person and His work.

HIS PERSON.

The *person* of Christ as the Saviour then, first engages our attention. Many scriptures stress the importance of this. Thus in Romans it is “ the Gospel of God concerning His Son (I quote the true order), who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh ; and declared the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.”¹ In Matthew also He is said to be the Son of David, the Son of Abraham ; and then to have been begotten of the Holy Ghost²—before He is announced as the Saviour. It is the Person that attracts the gaze before we can consider His work. The blessed Lord Himself, in His conversation with Nicodemus, first declares the mysterious dignity of His person ; and then proclaims His rejection and death. “ No man hath ascended up into heaven, but He that

came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."³ (It is the other way with the sinner. As a rule he learns the value of the work of Christ before he considers the truth of His person).

There are two sides to the truth as to the person of Christ. He was God manifest in flesh. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." The Word was the Eternal Son, and the Eternal Son became man. He was thus God and man—a union of extremes which was not possible in any other, and rendering His person so unfathomable, so incomprehensible, that He Himself said, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father."⁴ But it is essential that we hold fast His true divinity and His equally true humanity. For if He had not been true man, He could not have been a sacrifice for sin; and had He not been God, His sacrifice could not have been available for all. Satan knows this, and hence, in every age, he has sought to undermine the one or the other of these truths, insinuating doubts sometimes concerning His humanity, and sometimes His divinity. But it is the glory of the person of Christ that He is both divine and human; that He is, in His one person, both God and man. This truth lies at the foundation of our redemption, and indeed gives character to it.

We cannot too often bless God for the four Gospels, in which are blended these two aspects of the person of Christ. Hence they are the profoundest of all the scriptures—because they contain the unfoldings of a divine-human life. No doubt the narratives are simple on their surface; but as we are led on by the Spirit of God, we begin to discover that there are depths of which we have never dreamt, and into which we must gaze and continue to gaze, if we are to grasp the treasures therein contained. And the more familiar we are with their

contents, the more we shall be impressed with the majesty of the person of Christ as the God-man, God manifest in flesh. And it should never be forgotten, that there can be no stability where there is uncertainty as to the person of our Saviour.

HIS WORK.

We may now pass to the *work* of Christ. By it we generally understand what He accomplished on the Cross—His death. In a larger view of it, there would be included His life as well as His death : but there is a most important distinction between these two things. *It was in His death alone that He bore the sins of His people.* His life revealed what He was, showing, if we may say so, His qualification to be an offering for sin ; it proved Him to be the Lamb without spot or blemish—the Lamb of God ; but it was on the Cross alone that He stood in the sinner's place, met all God's righteous claims, and endured the wrath that was due to sin. It is the blood that maketh atonement. It was therefore, *on the cross alone* that God dealt with Christ concerning the question of sin and sins. All the way through His life, though He was the " Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," He enjoyed the consciousness of the Father's love and smile : not a cloud ever passed between His soul and God. But when He was on the cross, there was a total change ; for it was there that He was made sin ; and in the unfathomable anguish of His spirit, when all God's waves and billows rolled over Him, He cried " My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? " * He was then forsaken of God—forsaken because of the place He had voluntarily taken as the sacrifice for sin. At that awful moment therefore, God was dealing with Him instead of with us, about the question of sin ; though He was never more precious to God than then, for it was on the cross that He proved His obedience to the uttermost. " Therefore doth my Father love Me because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

It was therefore on the cross—by the shedding of His

blood, by all indeed that He suffered there, by His death, that atonement was accomplished. All the blessings of all the redeemed, the millennial blessings of the earth, the reconciliation of all things, the eternal happiness of the saints of all dispensations, the perfection of the new heavens and the new earth—all these manifold blessings and varied glories will flow from the finished work of Christ.

GOD-WARD—MAN-WARD.

This work, to speak generally, has two aspects—towards God and towards man. The first, and we may add, the essential aspect is God-ward. “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The value of the blood of Jesus is infinite in the eyes of God. Thus, if the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat availed, on the one hand, to make propitiation for the sins of His people; on the other, because of its unspeakable preciousness before God, inasmuch as He has been glorified by it, it became the foundation on which God is able to deal in grace with the whole world, and to send out His servants with the entreating message, “Be ye reconciled to God.”

The other aspect we have alluded to is that of substitution, which is our side. This is what we have in Romans; at the end of chap. 3, Christ is shown as the mercy seat through faith in His blood, and then at the end of chap. 4 we read, “Who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.” Thus not only has propitiation been made to God through the blood of Christ, but, if I am a believer, I can say that He was delivered for *my* offences, that He has borne my sins in His own body on the tree.

Now comes the question, How are we brought into the blessings of salvation? It is by the grace of God, through faith. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Again, “He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” “Being justified by

faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁸ God, in the gospel, presents the Christ of whom we have spoken as the Saviour. It is therefore the gospel of Christ's glory as well of God's grace. Receiving His testimony, bowing before Him in self judgment, exercising repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, we are saved, linked with Christ, and are brought to God in all the acceptance of Christ Himself. How unspeakably blessed, then, it is to be able, by the Spirit of God, to say CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR.

Condensed from "Christ our Saviour."—E. DENNETT.

¹ Rom. 1. 1-3. ² Matt. 1. 20. ³ John 3. 14-16. ⁴ John 1. 14. ⁵ Matt. 11. 27. ⁶ Matt. 27. 46. ⁷ 1 John 2. 2. ⁸ Rom. 5. 1.

THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

SOME years ago, a Christian—he is with his Lord Snow—had been to Blackpool for a holiday, and the time had come for him to return home. Outside the station, the Salvation Army were holding an open-air meeting; a collection was being taken and our friend was approached by a lassie with this in view. He held a coin towards her and said, "I will give you this if you can tell me the way to heaven."

She looked very puzzled at this unusual question, and seemed not to know just how to answer. He tried to help her, saying "I want a direct word from Scripture, to show me the way to heaven."

Still she hesitated, and his train was soon to leave: but at last it came. Her face brightened as she quoted to him, "I am the way, the truth and the life."¹

Looking at the context of this Scripture in John chapter 14, we see that it was the answer of the Lord Himself to one who really wanted to know the way. "How can we know the way?"² How pleased He would be to give the answer to that simple question—the answer, too, so simple that you and I can understand it, and trust our souls to it.

Two brief morals: if you are not sure of the way, how important to go to the right Source for direction. It

would be foolish to think all roads lead to London ; and even when we find the London road, we need to know which direction to take—North or South. So in this all-important matter, we need a Guide, and through God's grace we have been provided with this—the unerring Word of God : we can truly go back to His Word and read " I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE."

The other moral, for the Christian, is to be well acquainted with your Bible, and so, in the words of the apostle Peter, " be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."³ J.H.

¹ John 1.4 6. ² John 14. 5. ³ 1 Peter 3. 15.

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OUR SURE RESOURCE.

THE presence of the Lord Jesus is always a safe and happy place for us on all occasions. This is very beautifully seen in our Lord's life, and especially perhaps in the incident we get recorded for us in the 6th chapter of Mark (verses 27 to 32). " And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus." He had sent them out, as we read earlier in the chapter, and their mission had been marked with blessing, so that even the devils were subject to them. No doubt they came home to their Lord and Master in high spirits.

But there is another company just at that time coming to Jesus. John the Baptist, the Lord's faithful fore-runner had been put to death by Herod ; and those who had followed that good man had just completed the sad task of the burial of their beloved leader. Matthew's gospel tells us " they went and told Jesus."¹ No high spirits for them, their hearts were bowed in deep and bitter sorrow. Might it not grate upon their hearts, to find a company such as the Lord's apostles in the enjoyment of success? Ah, no : for they met in the presence of the Lord. Indeed nothing is said of their meeting ; only that both companies came to Jesus.

What a safe place to be, when lifted up with seeming prosperity ! How truly He will give them praise as good and faithful servants ; but how truly too, will He keep them from all that would make them puffed up. After all, when we are in *His* presence, we realise that it is not us but Him, Who alone is worthy of praise. For all we do must be empowered of Himself. He said on one occasion " Without Me ye can do nothing."^a It is well then, to seek His face when things seem to go well with us ; perhaps we are sometimes lacking in this. What wonderful lessons He would have taught them " privately . . . in the desert place."

But on the other hand, how wise, how good, to come to Him in sorrow. The enemy of our souls may try to fill us with hard and bitter thoughts : but there is no comfort in these. There is only one source where we may find unfailing succour and comfort when bowed down with grief : and that is in His presence. He knows all the bitterness and sorrow, and how tenderly He will bind up broken hearts, and wipe away tears. In this instance, we are not told a word of what He said ; only that these disciples of John, under the fresh grief of a loved master cruelly murdered to satisfy the whim of a wicked woman, came " and told Jesus." There is something touching in the very helplessness of it. They could do nothing about it—no grief could bring John back from the dead. There was nothing for it but to " cast their burden upon the Lord,"^a assured that He would sustain them. Such is still our resource ; for " though ascended, He feels afresh, what every member bears."

Happy place, safe place, to be consciously in His presence. There only are we safe from the temptations of the enemy ; there only can the wounded spirit find peace and solace. And there are we most welcome ; for Hebrews 4. 16 tells us, " Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." H.W.M.

^a Matt. 14. 12. ^b John 15. 5. ^c Psa. 55. 22.

OUR SANCTUARY.

Jesus, before Thy face we fall,
Our Lord, our life, our hope, our all ;
For we have nowhere else to flee,
No sanctuary, Lord, but Thee.

In Thee we every glory view,
Of safety, strength, and beauty too ;
'Tis all our rest and peace to see
Our sanctuary, Lord in Thee.

Whatever foes or fears betide
In Thy blest presence let us hide ;
And while we rest our souls on Thee,
Thou shalt our sanctuary be.

Through time, with all its changing scenes,
And all the grief that intervenes,
Let this support each fainting heart,
That Thou our sanctuary art.

S. MEDLEY.

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE.

IT is true that, stated in one sentence, the Christian's hope is the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But this opens up a vast subject which concerns many things. It leads us to consider the results of this second advent, to the nations—especially to Christendom ; and that in their religious as well as their political bearing. There are far-reaching results to God's earthly people, the Jews ; there are the effects of His coming in cleansing and blessing the earth in preparation for His Kingdom.

But our purpose in this article is to consider the Lord's return with special reference to Christians—those who in this day do really believe in Him as their Saviour.

There are, however, many scriptures which give us clearly the details of these things, and they show us without doubt that this "Coming" is in two parts—on two occasions ; separated one from the other by a space of time comparatively short. In other words, we learn that He is coming *for* His saints, before His glorious appearing to this world, and before the time of display and reward. First the secret "rapture" of the saints ;

then the display of glory in the eyes of heaven and earth. First "in the air"; then to the earth. First *for* His saints; then *with* His saints.

The passage which gives us this "coming *for*" with complete exactitude is 1 Thess. 4. 15-17.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This passage clearly teaches that the Lord Himself will descend "in the air" and will summon those who are "dead in Christ" (lovely expression), and also those who are alive and remain. Both these classes are to be "caught up" together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. "So shall we ever be with the Lord"! It is worthy of remark that this wonderful, almost breath-taking truth, is conveyed not in poetic language, but in the most simple and matter of fact sentences.

This is perhaps the central passage on the subject: but it illumines many others. Take, for example, the Lord's word to Martha, in John 11, and notice how it compares exactly with the passage in Thessalonians. (We give the comparison in brackets). The Lord said, "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" ("the dead in Christ shall rise first"); "and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." ("We which are alive . . . shall be caught up").

Also let us take 1 Corinthians 15. 51-53. "The *dead* shall be raised incorruptible, and *we* (the living) shall be changed. While in verse 53, "corruptible—incorruption" would refer to those who have died, while "mortal" refers to those who, though subject indeed to death, are still alive: "shall put on immortality" surely clearly indicates "shall be caught up."

Another scripture bearing on this is in Philippians 3. 21, where we read, "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change our vile body (body of humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." This is what we look for; not for death, though indeed if He tarry, we too may be found among them that "sleep in Jesus."

One more scripture is 2 Corinthians 5. 4. "Not that we would be unclothed" (the spirit leaving the body at death—we are not looking for that, the Apostle says), but "clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life." How beautifully this fits in with the detail of 1 Thessalonians 4!

Such then is our immediate and personal hope; to be caught away from this world and changed into the likeness of our blessed Lord. There is nothing that must precede this—it is to be without warning. What a hope! Do all our Christian readers enjoy it? If not, will you not, like the Bereans, "search the scriptures, whether these things are so"?

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BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE.

(Cut this page out and keep it in your Bible.)

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" JUDGMENT."

1. SUBJECTS OF JUDGMENT.

As we saw in our last study outline the Scriptures show "ALL . . . guilty before God" (subject to the judgment of God). Romans 3. 19.

2. CHARACTER OF JUDGMENT—RIGHTEOUS.

No respect of persons with God. (Romans 2. 11). No guilty one will be excused. (Job 34. 12, and Exodus 34. 7).

Judgment "according to truth" (Romans 2. 2) by God Who knows all. (Heb. 4. 13). We may deceive fellowmen, and hence their judgment is not according to truth; not so with God (see 1. Samuel 16. 7, and Psalm 130. 3).

A realisation of the true and righteous character of God's judgment will lead us to exclaim "Enter not into judgment with thy servant." (Psalm 143. 2).

3. NECESSITY FOR JUDGMENT.

Because God's glory is at stake.

Man cannot be allowed to exalt himself against God—see the cases of Pharaoh (Exodus 14. 4), Herod (Acts 12. 23), and, in days

to come, the Antichrist (Revelation 13. 6-8 and 19. 20). What chaos there would be if God did not deal with man's rebellion ! He is the ultimate source of right and justice and must exercise judgment to maintain His position. (See e.g. Psalm 9. 16-20, and Isaiah, chapter 45). This is owned as right by the heavenly company. (Revelation 19. 1, 2).

Because man's good is at stake.

Examples : Man's wickedness in early years was so terrible that the flood was a necessity to safeguard the race from complete depravity. (Genesis 6).

The Canaanites' idol worship was so revolting that judgment was necessary lest the Israelites be ensnared and corrupted by it. (Deuteronomy 7. 1-15—the result of the people's disobedience to the command shows how necessary it was—see Psalm 106. 34-39).

In God's presence there is fullness of joy—this can be only because no sin enters there. (Revelation 21. 27).

4. THE WITNESS OF JUDGMENT.

Propheied by Enoch (Jude 14. 15).

Spoken of by the Lord (Matthew 25. 41-46, and Luke 16. 19-31).

Confirmed by the inspired writers (2 Thessalonians 1. ; Romans 2. 9 ; Revelation 20. 12-15).

In present day part of the Holy Spirit's mission is to convince men of judgment to come. (John 16. 8).

All these witnesses testify that the punishment is of a most terrible and everlasting character. They also show the two stages at which judgment will be executed ; first, among those living when the Lord returns (Matthew 25. 41-46 ; 2 Thessalonians 1. 9 ; Jude 14. 15), and secondly at the "Great White Throne" where the dead are raised to be judged. (Revelation 20. 12-15). Both these stages are mentioned together in 2 Timothy 4. 1.

5. THE DELAYING OF JUDGMENT.

God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He wishes all to be saved (1 Timothy 2. 4).

In the time of Noah, judgment was delayed to give men further opportunity to repent (Genesis 6. 3 ; 1 Peter 3. 20).

In the present day God waits in longsuffering mercy (2 Peter 3. 9), although men may misinterpret the delay (2 Peter 3. 3-7), and, despising it, lose the benefit of it (Romans 2. 4).

6. THE AVOIDANCE OF JUDGMENT.

There is a class that "shall not come into judgment" (John 5. 24. R.V.). God has provided a salvation whereby mercy rejoices against judgment. This we shall consider (D.V.) in a further outline.

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“ I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE ”¹

WE often hear, as the closing words of a Gospel appeal, the expression, “ Will you take Christ, as your Saviour and Lord ? ” And these words are no mere figure of speech. For to “ take Christ ”—that is to receive Him by faith into our hearts—is to have every spiritual blessing. He is Himself the “ way to God ”—to heaven : He is also the only Source of our new life, and further, the only food to support that life.

You may say “ What do you mean by Christ being the way ? ” Perhaps it can be illustrated by this simple story.

We were motoring in an unfamiliar part of the country, and that by night. Naturally the driver was anxious to find and keep on the right road. As we stopped at a road junction to make sure of a sign-post, another car came up and stopped. “ Where are you making for ? ” shouted the driver. We told him. “ Well, follow me, I am going that way ; ” he replied. Now our road troubles

were ended IF (and only if) we trusted that friendly driver. No more anxious watching for sign-posts: all we had to do was to keep that tail-light in view. That friendly driver might have said "I am the way."

But there are two ways in which the illustration falls short. For one thing, were we right to trust that driver? We did not know him, he was a complete stranger and might have misled us. The only answer can be that we did just trust what seemed to be his genuine goodwill. But why should we *not* trust Jesus? Was ever one so kind, so loving, so TRUE? Does not the sacrifice of the cross stand for ever as the great evidence of His undying love?

" His love to the utmost was tried
But firmly endured as a rock."

How entirely is He worthy of all our trust !

Another point is this: we might have missed our guide. A corner, a road junction, and he might have vanished. But to receive Christ is to be "in Him"—just as if our friend had taken us into his own car. How perfectly secure, and how final is such a salvation. "I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."²

¹ John 14. 6. ² John. 10, 28.

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SOME SAYINGS OF SAMUEL RUTHERFORD.

A MAN OF GOD OF THE SEVENTEENTH
CENTURY.

" The floods may swell and roar, but our ark shall swim above the waters; it cannot sink, because the Saviour is in it."

- - - - -

" Because I am His own (God be thanked), He may use me as He pleaseth."

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" There are many heads lying in Christ's bosom, but there is room for yours among the rest."

"Oh! Men's souls have no wings, and therefore night and day they keep their nest, and are not acquaint with Christ."

"Be patient; Christ went to heaven with many a wrong. His visage and countenance was marred more than the sons of men. You may not be above your Master: many a black stroke received the innocent Jesus, and He received no amends, but referred them all to the great court-day, when all things shall be righted."

"ABOUNDING."

A Message for Sunday School Teachers.

"Always abounding in the work of the Lord."

NOTICE the word which begins this wonderful verse. "Always"—not by fits and starts—not when we feel like it, but *always*. Some of us feel like having a class occasionally, or when the children are good and attentive, but we soon tire if discouragements appear. If the Lord gives us the work, we must not lightly give it up; the word here is "always."

"Abounding."

Next we have "abounding." What does that mean? It means not doing the work merely from a sense of duty, but doing it joyfully, freely, unceasingly; from a heart that is not only full, but overflowing. The same precious Saviour Who loved us and died for us, claims our willing happy service. It is *His* work—this labour amongst the children. It is to tell of Him that we are called. What can be nearer His heart than to have the children told of Jesus, Who Himself told of the Shepherd's joy in finding His lost sheep, and of the joy of heaven over one sinner repenting? How His loving care for us would call us in devotion to Him, to be "always abounding" in the work of the Lord.

"Abound in Love."

How necessary this is in work among children. How often a loving look controls a wayward child when a

frown might only make matters worse. We must love the children if we are to win them—and not only so but we must “abound in love.”

We are in our classes to represent the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is the very personification of love. It is a serious thought that the Sunday School teacher may be the only Christian, known as such, with whom the child comes in contact. How much harm then may be done, if we manifest a harsh or hasty spirit. Let us ask Him to give us love for the perishing souls around ; let us pray for warm affection for our own dear scholars. May we feel the value of their immortal souls, and yearn over them with that true love which finds its source in the very love of God.

It is this which wins souls. Clear Gospel teaching is needful in its place, but nothing can take the place of love to open hearts to receive the message. Nothing but love will give us patience to bear with the children. Let us then “abound in love” remembering that “we love, because He first loved us.”

“Abound in Hope.”

The last thought is in Romans 15. 13, “Abound in hope.” How needful this is in seeking souls. If we go to our classes dull, depressed and heavy we cannot expect blessing. A bright cheerful manner, born of the knowledge of the love of God, commends itself to all. We can fancy our children thinking of their depressed teacher, “I should not like a religion that makes me like that.” How sad we should be if we thought they said such a thing of us. The children in our care should be able to see how happy the Lord Jesus makes us, so that they may realise we have something worth having. Let us then “abound in hope,” filled with all joy and peace in believing—hope in the coming of our beloved Lord, and hope, too, in the sure harvest to be reaped then from the seed sown week by week in our classes. What joy then, to see those over whom we have wept and prayed, gathered with us in His own presence in that day ! Ah, we may well abound in hope, for we have

the precious promises of the Word of God to rest upon. "In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."

We hear those last words of the sacred page ring in our ears, "Surely I come quickly." Soon indeed He will come, and then all labour, all service here will be over. May we then just use the precious moments for Himself "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

¹ 1 Cor. 15. 58. ² 1 John 4. 19.

"WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT."

WHILE we should serve the Lord Jesus from no other motive than love to Him, yet the Christian pathway is cheered by many rewards which He grants to His servants. He Who says, "Go, work today in my vineyard" adds, "whatsoever is right I will give thee."¹ Most gracious indeed is this, because it is only His power working in us that enables us to do any service for Him at all.

Some of these rewards are mentioned in 2 Timothy, chapter 2, verses 1 to 6—a passage which is a very stirring challenge to the Christian. Especially at such a time as the present, we need to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," and to be ready to endure hardness for Him. This path may seem to be austere and harsh, but as we seek to follow it, we find that the rewards and encouragements are many. We might consider the three in these verses in Timothy.

In verse 6 we have an indication of the patience and diligence needed by those that would serve the Lord. The husbandman must first (as the verse might be read) labour before partaking of the fruits. If we are to be of use in the Lord's service, we must be prepared to labour, and indeed one who has found a Saviour in our Lord Jesus would not desire it to be otherwise.

"I cannot work my soul to save,
For that my Lord hath done.
But I would work like any slave
For love of God's dear Son."

Often, it is to be feared, we are like the "slothful man" who desires, but has nothing : it is, however, the diligent one that is prospered. And if we thus labour for Him, we shall, as this verse tells us, be partakers of the fruits. What a joy to see fruit for our labours ; maybe to see others brought to know our Saviour ; or for some other Christian to be helped or encouraged.

But this does not constitute the whole of our reward, for the previous verse speaks of being "crowned." This reminds us that when our service here is over, the Lord will show His approval of what has been done for Him. We read of "a crown of life," "a crown of righteousness," "a crown of glory." But if we desire these rewards we must "strive lawfully" ; not only work hard, but also lawfully—according to the rules. In all our service, let us remember that a good cause does not justify bad means of advancing it ; we must strive lawfully.

But there is yet a higher reward. We are able to "please Him Who hath chosen us" : and the knowledge that we please Him is surely more than seeing fruits for our efforts, or even than being assured of a crown in heaven. But here again, there is a condition to be fulfilled. We cannot have the sweet knowledge of God's pleasure if we are entangled with the affairs of this life. This does not mean we cannot be diligent in our daily business ; but it does mean that the interests, cares, pleasures and thoughts of the world are not to be allowed to hinder our communion with the Lord. We are not to "entangle" ourselves—to get "mixed up" in anything dishonouring to Him. In other words, we are to be "separated to God," seeking above all to do those things which are pleasing in His sight, in all things showing ourselves "approved unto God."

As in all our Christian path, the Lord is our perfect Example in these things. None laboured as He laboured ; and surely even now He is partaker of the fruits—you and I who have trusted Him are the fruits

of His labour ; and soon He shall see fully of the " travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

He knew well what it was to strive, and to strive lawfully, not using His power for His own comfort or advantage, submitting Himself always to His Father's will ; and while, as we sometimes sing, " The crowning day is coming," even now we Christians can say that " we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour."²

He above all others was " separate from sinners," wholly set apart to the service of God, and He above all others knew the joy of God's pleasure resting upon Him. He said Himself, " I do always those things that please Him,"³ and twice we read the Father's declaration, " This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."⁴

May He help us to labour for Him, in all our efforts subject to His Word, separate from all the entanglements which would hinder us. Then indeed we shall know something of the joy of His rewards—His " Well done "!

¹ Matt. 20. 4. ² Heb. 2. 9. ³ John. 8. 39. ⁴ Matt. 3. 17.

C.G.M.

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" MAKE ME A CHANNEL OF BLESSING I PRAY."

The believer is the temple of the Holy Ghost ; and that temple is double-gated. Faith is the gateway of communion with God, the gateway open God-ward. Love is the gateway of ministry to men, the gateway open man-ward. Through faith, the divine life, so to speak, flows in to us. Through love, it flows out to others. " Faith, which worketh by love." See Galatians 5. v. 6, and John 7. v. 38.

Through faith (the gateway open God-ward) we constantly receive the divine life in communion ; through love (the gateway open man-ward), we constantly give out in ministry and service. But a channel of which one gate is shut ceases to be a channel ; inflow without outflow means stagnation, and outflow without inflow means emptiness. He who shuts either the gate of communion or the gate of ministry, writes over his life " No thoroughfare." But he has no sooner done this

than the Spirit as with an invisible hand, writes over that same life "No abiding."

J. H. McC.

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"UP THERE."

A BUSY station, hurrying, anxious passengers, burdened with luggage, and preoccupied with catching their connection ; at the gate a ticket inspector, doing his duty of checking each passenger's ticket. Some people tried to pass him—oh, yes, they had their ticket, but buttoned in an inside pocket, and they were in a great hurry. But he politely insisted on its production. There were passengers unreasonable enough to resent this, and give vent to expressions of impatience or exasperation. But our friend went patiently on with his task. A bystander, noticing this, said to him, "You don't seem to be very popular with some of these people." The railwayman replied, "Oh, I do not trouble about that ; where I want to be popular is up there"—pointing to the manager's office above the platform.

There is a scripture which says, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light,"¹ and surely this inspector is a good illustration. He certainly was not going to risk the displeasure of his superiors to please the passing throng. But what about us Christians? We are told "Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven"²; we are enjoined "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth"³; and yet how often do we not forget this heavenly calling—nay are we not sometimes unfaithful to it—to keep some popularity in the world? And then the parallel is but a poor one: the relationship between the inspector and his manager was but one of duty—love probably did not come into it. But dear fellow Christian, think of the love of Christ to you—with what labour He won you—and you will have to own that such love "demands our soul, our life, our all." Thank God our eternal safety does not depend upon our faithfulness, for our Lord will see us safe home: but surely to be "acceptable" "UP THERE" in our

walk, day by day, should be the ardent wish of everyone who owns the Lord Jesus as Saviour. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but UNTO HIM WHICH DIED FOR THEM and rose again."⁴ What touching words are these! And how unanswerable they are! May the Lord make us all think more—much more—of "up there."

¹ Luke 16. 8. ² Phil. 3. 20. ³ Colossians 3. 1. ⁴ 2 Cor. 5. 15.

Go, labour on ; spend, and be spent,
Thy joy to do the Father's will ;
It is the way the Master went ;
Should not the servant tread it still ?

Go, labour on ; 'tis not for naught ;
Thy earthly loss is heavenly gain ;
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not ;
The Master praises—what are men ?

Go, labour on ; your hands are weak,
Your knees are faint, your soul cast down ;
Yet falter not ; the prize you seek
Is near—a kingdom and a crown.

Go, labour on while it is day ;
The world's dark night is hastening on ;
Speed, speed thy work ; cast sloth away ;
It is not thus that souls are won.

Toil on, faint not, keep watch, and pray ;
Be wise the erring soul to win ;
Go forth into the world's highway,
Compel the wanderer to come in.

Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice ;
For toil comes rest, for exile home ;
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,
The midnight cry, "Behold, I come !"

" IN THE MIDST."

- " JESUS IN THE MIDST ".....John 19. v. 18
The Centre on the Cross—" God's wrath and Satan's power."
- " JESUS . . . STOOD IN THE MIDST ".....John 20. v. 19
The Centre in Resurrection.
- " IN THE MIDST . . . A LAMB".....Rev. 5, v. 6
The Centre of the glory of Heaven.
- " THERE AM I IN THE MIDST ".....Matt. 18, v. 20
The Centre of His Church.

TWO FRAGMENTS FOR SORROWING HEARTS.

“ There are hours that leave scars on hearts and whiten the hair. The world in its rush is so unconscious of all the tragedies that are taking place around. But Christ comes to us in these dark moments, as of old to the disciples, and says ‘ Believe in Me.’ There is no comfort like this : just to believe that He is ordering each detail ; just to know that love is prompting each action of His hand, and each thought of His mind.”—*Meyer*.

“ A stick in the water looks crooked, but take it out of the water and it is quite straight. So will it be when we look at God’s dealings with us ; when we see all, we will say of our bitterest sorrows that it would have been unkind of our God not to have allowed them. But it will be to our praise and glory, too, for we are to be rewarded for burdens borne ; and perhaps the brightest rewards will be for those who have borne burdens without murmuring.” — *Bonar*.

THE CHRISTIAN PERSUASION.

What shall we say to these things ? If God be for us, who can be against us ? He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things ?

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8. 31-39.

THESE verses are the very climax, and indeed the summing up not only of this chapter, but in a way of the whole Epistle. They come, of course, at the end of the main doctrinal teaching of the Epistle.

“ If God be for us.” This thought brings in the great theme of Romans, which is God’s righteousness. It is not only that God loves me—I myself might conceivably love one that has offended against me; I could not defend him—I could not be “ for him.” Nor could a righteous God be “ for us ” unless He could be so righteously. And this, praise His Name, He can be and is, through the work of the Cross.

The Apostle uses the words of verse 32 to drive home his argument. He might have used words much less moving; but by the Holy Spirit, the thought is expressed in these memorable words, which are surely calculated to touch our hearts in the deepest way. “ He that spared not *His own Son* ”—the greatest gift of all has been given. Are not all the lesser gifts included? “ How shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ”

But what about a possible charge being made, judicially, against “ God’s elect ” (that is, those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world)? The magnificent answer is “ **It is God that justifieth.** Who is he that condemneth? ” The supreme Court, the Judge of all the earth that doeth right, hath justified me. Who then can bring a charge?

Then there is the death of Christ—rather His resurrection, and the apostle passes on to speak of the available help for our pathway. That blessed Saviour, Who once died and rose for our justification is now “ even at the right hand of God,” and it is He “ who also maketh intercession for us.” We can count on His help, His succour, His sympathy in all our affliction and temptation.

The subject turns on to those things which may be against us in our life down here—tribulation, distress, nakedness, peril or sword: shall these separate us from “ the love of Christ? ” Just note the beautiful expression, “ love of Christ.” It brings to our mind the sufferings of this sort which so beset His pathway here on earth—how He knew what these things meant, and hence how comforting to have His love brought in here. Is it

conceivable that His love should fail us just when we need it most ?

And if it comes even to death (according to the quotation from the forty-fourth Psalm), shall that separate us from His love ? Why these trials all drive us closer to Him—we realise His love more in the trials ; and even death itself does but place us finally and for ever in His loving presence. Hence we not only gain the victory, but are better off ; we are **more than conquerors** as to these things.

But these are not the worst foes, nor the most deadly. He goes on to enumerate unseen and terrible opponents, including, it may be “ spiritual wickedness in high places.” But they are listed only to be dismissed. Not only these, but every created intelligence—all the realities of life and death—are unable to separate us from the love of God. “ The love of God ” is a wider and greater term than we saw in verse 35. There the sweetness and tenderness of the love are prominent. Here is rather the majesty and power of “ the love of **God,**” to triumph over all to keep us in every danger. And this love is “ in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Ours is such a full salvation, All must be well.

Is God for me ? I fear not, though all against me rise.
When I call on Christ my Saviour, the host of evil flies.
My Friend the Lord almighty, and He Who loves me, God—
What enemy can harm me, though coming as a flood ?
I know it, I believe it, I say it fearlessly,
That God, the Highest, Mightiest, for ever loveth me ;
At all times, in all places, He standeth at my side ;
He rules the battle's fury, the tempest and the tide.

Gerhardt.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

IN our studies on the Christian hope it has been remarked that there is to be a brief interval of a few years between the coming of the Lord for His saints and His coming with His saints to judge the earth and to set up His Kingdom. It is in this brief interval that we believe the words shall be fulfilled in 2 Cor. 5. 10,

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”

These words are a source of fear to some Christians, who would say, “So after all I shall come to judgment : what if I am rejected ? ”

Our purpose in this paper is to see these words in their right sense : this will show them to have no such meaning, while on the other hand they certainly are intended to give us serious thoughts.

First of all the meaning may be cleared by pointing out that the word “appear” is better rendered “be manifested.” It is not as we speak “to come before,” but our deeds, and the motives behind them, are to be seen—manifested—in the light of the presence of Christ.

Secondly, the Greek word is not the same as is used for “judgment,” “damnation” of unregenerate and ungodly sinners. It should convey the thought not of a judge of a criminal court, but rather the judge of a contest—a competition.

Another comforting thought is this. “We must all appear . . . etc.” Who? Who are caught up to Christ at the rapture? Why, they *that are Christ's* at His coming. By calling us up to Himself, whether asleep in Jesus, or as “alive and remain,” He has shown each one to be *His* ! Will He now disown such a one?

It is a time of review of our lives, as seen apart from the hindering influences of this world, in the light of His own presence, so that we shall see every detail as He sees it. Would you not welcome it? Would we not desire to see all in our lives that was not according to Him, judged and put away? For it is *our works* not *ourselves* that are the subject of this discrimination. He has Himself borne the judgment for me. *I* shall not come into judgment : this is the review of my *works*. Surely we would like at the outset of being “forever with the Lord,” to have His thoughts of every detail of our lives.

But while it should not terrify, it should surely be a sobering thought. The apostle lived in a daily, conscious

sense of "being manifest" to God. If we were to be so, surely our walk would be much closer—much cleaner—than it otherwise often is. It *will be* manifested. Let us seek to live daily in the light of His Presence, that we may be "acceptable unto Him." It should not make us fear but the more welcome His Coming when we shall go

" To see Thy glory and to be
In everything conformed to Thee."

H. W. M.

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" EVEN SO, COME LORD JESUS."

" Lord Jesus, come : Thy saints for Thee are waiting,
To see Thy face, and be with Thee at home.
E'en now our endless bliss anticipating
With all our hearts we say " Lord Jesus, come."

Lord Jesus, come : our hearts for Thee are longing,
To share Thy joy in those bright courts above
Where Thou wilt have Thine own around Thee thronging
In all the blessed fullness of Thy love.

Lord Jesus, come : with hearts and voices blending
Soon shall we praise Thee in Thy Father's home.
Soon shall we sing " the new song," never ending,
But now we sing to Thee, " Lord Jesus, come."

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QUESTION PAGE.

Please explain I John 3. v. 9. " Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Does this mean that the Christian is sinlessly perfect in this world ?

Answer. In approaching any passage of Scripture which presents a difficulty, there is one cardinal principle to remember ; namely, that no scripture contradicts any other scripture. If it seems to, then we must reverently look for some other meaning.

To hold that we are sinlessly perfect in this world would be contrary to our common experience ; but more than that it would be contrary to other scriptures. For instance, we read (ch. 2. vv. 1 and 2), " My little children, these things write I unto you (in order) that ye sin not-

And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." This plainly states two things : firstly, that we *need not* sin ; secondly, that we *may do so*. Moreover, in chapter 1. v. 8, we read, " If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." The verse we are considering cannot therefore mean sinless perfection of our life in this world.

What then is its meaning ? Simply this : we often get in John's writings, and especially in this epistle, subjects treated strictly according to their own characteristics, apart from practical considerations. And that is how it is here. The apostle by the Spirit is tracing the root source of " righteousness " on the one hand, and " sin " on the other. So, just as " sin " is of the devil, it is contrary to the nature of God. Now we know that every believer is born again. He has a new life, which of course has a new nature suitable to it. In this respect then, he is born of God, and *as such* has a nature that cannot sin.

But as long as we are in this world, that is not our only nature. We read " That which is born of the flesh is flesh."¹ We are indeed told that this old nature has been judged by God, that we should reckon it dead, but we are also told that it " lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh so that ye cannot (or rather, should not) do the things that ye would."

It is helpful, however, to remember that just as we are always (and of course) spoken of before we are saved as being of this old nature, so, after we are saved, we are regarded as belonging to the new.

¹ John 3. 6.

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BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE.

(Cut this page out and keep it in your Bible.)

In our last outline we saw all subject to the judgment of God, and the terrible character of that judgment, but yet there is a class who "shall not come into judgment." Those who enjoy this happy confidence have taken two important steps.

THE FIRST STEP—"He that heareth My word."

This obviously does not merely mean being under the sound of God's Word (as e.g. Acts 2. 8), but giving attention to and obeying what is told us (e.g. Matthew 10. 14).

The importance of listening and acceding to the message the Lord came to bring is emphasised by the voice on the mount of transfiguration—"Hear Him" (Matthew 17. 5).

Hear Him : because of Who He is. He came from above, and is above all ; He declares to us the counsels of the Godhead (John 3. 31-32). We have "His word" now in the scriptures (see Romans 10. 17 compared with John 5. 24). If we "hear," we set to our seal that God is true (John 3. 33)—we acknowledge that His judgment is right (see also Romans 3. 4). We view ourselves as He views us.

SECOND STEP—"and believeth on Him that sent me."

To believe ON God we trust ourselves entirely to Him. Note the big difference between this and popular expression, "I believe there is a God" (see James 2. 19).

Owning the rightness of God's word we realise we are shut up entirely to God because :

No one can be made righteous *before Him* by their own good deeds (Romans 3. 20) (perhaps they appear good in the sight of men, but not in the sight of God).

No other person can help us (Psalm 49. 7).

We can believe on God with confidence because His word tells us of

His Grace : Salvation—bringing to all men hath appeared. (Titus 2. 11).

His Power : in the Gospel to save "all that believe" (Romans 1. 16).

THE RESULT :

Before God—we are "justified" (i.e., made just, counted righteous). Before other people—our faith in God will show itself in good works.

For ourselves : We shall have "peace with God" (Romans 5. 1).

We shall have the grand confidence that we have everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but have passed from death unto life (John 5. 24). Note the present tense "hath everlasting life," "is passed"—not something we have to wait and hope for.

THE BASIS :

All this rests on a perfectly just and righteous basis. God's righteousness has not been given up, as we shall see (D.V.) in a further outline considering how God is "Just and the Justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus."

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NEW YEAR GREETINGS.

THIS is the first issue of THE CHRISTIAN POST for 1948; what this new year holds for any one of us, we do not know. It may be that the Lord will come this year—glad, but soul-subduing thought. But whether He comes or waits a little longer, it is still true that the year will “bring with it nothing but He will see us through.” “He abideth faithful.” What about us? Surely the best wish the Editor can express for every Christian reader is that we may be with “loins girded about and lights burning . . . like unto men that wait FOR THEIR LORD, when He will return” (Luke 12. 35, 36). And if he may presume to offer a word of counsel, particularly to younger Christian readers of THE CHRISTIAN POST, it shall be in the words of Paul to Timothy, “Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine . . . meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them.” So only can we be men of God, complete, “thoroughly furnished to all good works.”

THE EDITOR.

ADORNING THE DOCTRINE.

“ That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”
Titus 2. 10.

THE connection of these words is noteworthy. Paul is instructing Titus what to say to that element in the Cretan mission congregations which consisted of slaves. No one can read the Epistles without realising how considerable that element was all over the rising Christian world; again and again, St. Paul devotes special instruction to the slave-converts, notably when writing to Corinth, to Ephesus, to Colosse. St. Peter, in his first Epistle, addresses them in a passage full of the tenderest sympathy and deepest spiritual truth.¹ But of all these allusions to the slaves, none is more striking in some respects than this in the Epistle to Titus. For these slaves were Cretans, or living in Crete, and St. Paul himself reminds us how bad a reputation Crete bore for the low type of its national character, untruthful, cruel, selfish, indolent. A Cretan master, like most other slave-owners of the ancient world, was the almost irresponsible despot of his slave; a formidable despot too, he often must have been.

How impressive, when we remember this, is the appeal to “ adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things ” ! The Apostle tells them, not only to do right, to tell the truth, to be faithful in every trust, to see that their answers, even to the harshest speech, were modest and Christian. The right deed was to be done not rightly only, but beautifully. It was to be done so as to show that the divine principle of life was not only strong, but lovely. They were to “ adorn the doctrine.”

It was a great demand. It was an appeal to people whose walk always led them through the busiest and stoniest paths of life, to walk there with dignity and grace. It asked the slave-Christian to find a secret which should enable him so to rise above himself and his surroundings that there should be something in him positively winning. He was to live so that others should wish to be like him, because they should be so impressed by the comeliness of

his character, and through it, by the comeliness of his creed.

It is hardly necessary to point out at any length the moral of this simple but noble passage. It speaks for itself. If the Cretan slave, himself quite recently, as little Christlike as his heathen master, was called upon to live a beautiful life on Gospel principles, how much more are we, with all our English circumstances, called upon so to live ! Let it lie then prominent among our Christian ambitions to do so ; let us covet, day by day, to “ adorn the doctrine.”

If we recognise, as we should do, that the blessed Gospel is intended not only to rescue us, but to mould us, to impart a noble impress to our character, we shall surely give a leading place in our thoughts to this call so to live, as to “ adorn the doctrine.” We shall take loving pains about it ; we shall think and pray about it. Perhaps above all things, in this direction, we shall study the blessed art of considerateness in the common things of the day. We shall remember that two obvious items of Christian duty are to take trouble and to save trouble. We shall pray for the gift and grace to “ look upon the things of others,”² and to look at them in an important sense, through the eyes of others, putting ourselves in their place.

This, as we well know, was “ the mind that was in Christ Jesus,”² and they will soonest catch it who, believing in Him, live much with Him.

DR. H. H. MOULE.

¹ Peter 2. 18-25.

² Phil. 2. 5, 6.

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**Jesus, Master, whose I am,
Purchased Thine alone to be,
By Thy blood, O spotless Lamb,
Shed so willingly for me,
Let my heart be all Thine own,
Let me live to Thee alone.**

F. R. HAVERGAL.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

Read Matthew 28. 20 ; Luke 10, 38-42 ; Phil. 1. 23 ; Song of Solomon 5. 9, 10, 16 ; and 6. 3.

IN these days when any service we may do for the Lord seems to call for so much energy—when we try to get people in to Gospel meetings, and often meet with so small a response—when life is so strenuous, it is very needful to be reminded of the place of personal communion with the Lord Jesus, which is brought home to us in the incident with Mary and Martha. It is a Scripture which has often been used in such a way as to arouse the protest, “it is all very well, but there have to be some Marthas.” But please do not think I would say one word to belittle service in any way ; it is a great honour to be engaged in any kind of service for the Lord—I know no greater privilege myself. Still, there is a deeper joy in just being in the presence of the Lord Jesus for communion, for fellowship, for worship. And this was what Mary had chosen ; the Lord said, “it shall not be taken away from her.”

I used to think that the Lord’s promise in the end of Matthew, “Lo, I am with you alway,” referred to His presence with His disciples in missionary work : but surely it means something more than that. He speaks of His presence with us at all times ; for service certainly ; but not the less for communion, for worship. “I am with you *alway*.”

And it is from this communion that true service flows : indeed service *must* flow out from a heart engaged with Him in this quiet personal way. It does not always happen like that ; I may be so engaged in service as to crowd out this sweet personal communion. But the true servant gets his orders in the presence of the Lord, and straight from the Lord Himself. For example, I serve, in a sense, the King of England. “In a sense,” I say, for I get my own orders from my immediate chief, who gets them from his director. The director is one of a Board which gets its directions from the Council to which it is responsible, and the Lord President of the Council is appointed by the King. So although I may

say I am indirectly a servant of the King, yet it is a long way off. But there are those who actually wait in the presence of royalty—the King has his equerries; the Queen, her ladies-in-waiting. At the first indication of a wish or command, they go with all speed to execute it. I might say to one “Why the haste?” He would reply, “It is the King’s command”—a complete and satisfying answer. Now we are privileged to be in the very presence of the Lord Himself, and to learn His will in direct communion with Him. I know, of course, that it is through the Scriptures, but it is the result of personal contact with Himself, the Highest of all, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

This personal devotion is beautifully expressed in the words of the bride in the Song of Solomon. “What is thy beloved more than another beloved?” She replies, “My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.” Is He that to you—the chiefest among ten thousand—among a hundred million? And the reason for her devotion—that He is “white and ruddy,” seems to anticipate the New Testament declaration that “God is light” and “God is love.” “White” surely speaks of the spotless purity of the blessed Lord—we speak of the whiteness of the driven snow, so spotless, so dazzling in its purity. And “ruddy” is the word used of David—the father of the author of the “Song”—when Samuel was to anoint one of the sons of Jesse. None of the elder sons would do, so young David must be fetched in from the field. And then the word of God came to Samuel, “Arise, anoint him, for THIS IS HE”; and the Spirit of God says he was ruddy, of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. Surely it is not stretching the Scripture to see Christ in it. A ruddy complexion is usually the result of a rich supply of blood; and as we, in His presence, gaze upon His “beautiful countenance” shall we not become aware of the precious blood of Christ, shed in His love for us? He, too, is “goodly to look to,” yea He is altogether lovely. THIS IS HE, God’s own choice, and He has become our choice, too.

“ I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.” It is the personal realisation, not only of the love of the Lord Jesus for His own, but of the soul’s love for the Lord Jesus that is so sweet. A Christian said to me lately that he did not think one had really got far in his soul who had never in the Lord’s own presence lifted up his heart to Him and said, “ Lord Jesus, I love Thee ; Thou hast done so much for me.” There may be an understanding of the truths of the Gospel—and indeed a knowledge of sins forgiven, but until the soul has found the delight of His own presence in communion (which leads to worship) there is something lacking.

We are, then, to enjoy His presence with us all along the way in this world, and then when death comes, *if* it comes, it just ushers us to be with Him. He with us all the way down here ; and then we with Him, the same joy and communion to be continued above.

May the Lord give us this personal and practical enjoyment of His own presence—as He says to us, “ Lo, I am with you always.”

W.C.M.

“ FORGIVEN.”

A SCOTTISH doctor, well known—equally for his medical skill and that charity which comes from true piety, had died, and his affairs were being wound up. In his books, there were several accounts across which were written in red ink, “ Forgiven : too poor to pay.” His wife, however, did not share her husband’s generous disposition, and determined to claim for these accounts, taking the matter in some cases to the Court. After examining the books, the judge asked her “ Is this your husband’s handwriting in red ink ? ” She had to admit that it was. “ Then,” said the judge, “ there is not a tribunal in the land that can obtain the money where he has written ‘ forgiven ’.”

So when God “ for Christ’s sake ” forgives our sins, we may rest assured that there is no power in heaven, or earth, or hell, that can ever raise that question again. “ Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.”

“WHAT TIME I AM AFRAID, I WILL TRUST IN THEE.”¹

HAVE you ever noticed how often children are referred to in the Scriptures as examples of the spirit that God looks for in those who are His? Our Lord said, for instance, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”² And again the well known “for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”³ What is the meaning of this thought?

A Christian lady was on her way one evening to visit her father who was dying. On the way (it was dark) she heard a childish voice appealing to her, “Please would you mind taking me to my mummy? I know the way, but it is so dark and I’m afraid to go any further.” Needless to say she gladly took the child’s hand and went with her. But what struck her was the change in the child’s manner: it had been troubled and fearful, but now the wee girlie brightened up and chatted quite happily. Why? Because she *trusted* her new friend. Here is the lesson the Lord would teach us. Children really *do* trust; they do not, as we so often do, pretend to trust and continue to bear the trouble still.

When this lady reached her father—an old Christian—she told him of this little incident, and together they enjoyed again the assurances of Him Who said, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee,”⁴ and enjoyed again the confidence of the Psalmist in the well-known words, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, FOR THOU ART WITH ME!”⁵

Oh, for more of that simple confiding, the artlessness of the little child. How much trouble we should save ourselves, and how much more honouring to our blessed Lord, if we really did *trust* Him. We should surely sing

**And my way has brighter grown,
Since I learned to trust Him more.**

¹ Psalms 56. 3. ² Matt. 18. 3. ³ Matt. 19. 14. ⁴ Isaiah 43. 2. ⁵ Psalms 23. 4.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

No. 1.—THE VISION AND THE RESPONSE.

(Gen. 11. 31 to 12. 5).

THE first book of the Bible is largely composed of biographies. Men, good and bad, are introduced to our notice—some to occupy a large portion of the narrative, others to have but a passing reference. But when the story of Abraham is reached, it is a record that continues without interruption from page to page, taking us through the instructive details of the life of the first man who was called to *walk* by faith in separation from the world. And even in the later books of the Bible, constant references to him occur; all this proving the importance of this man's history. For this reason we conclude that the story is of benefit to believers in all ages—to all who walk in the steps of their father Abraham. For whether we are Jews or Gentiles, this man *is* our father, for we walk by faith as he did, do we not?

The great incentive to Abraham's faith was a vision—he saw "the God of Glory." As to the way in which God appeared to him there is no record; but the vision was to him of such power that his life was completely changed; his motives received a new impetus: from that day Abraham became a pilgrim who, in spirit, had left all his former interests, and was one who knew he had "a treasure in a brighter sphere." All this was wrought in his soul through that one all-transforming appearing of the God of Glory.

The Christian is in a similar position to Abraham. At some moment in his life he has seen the Lord Jesus Christ and the sight of that Person has won his heart. Maybe he later has learned something of the value of the work of Christ on the cross for him, and something of the many blessings into which that work, and the present place of Christ in glory have won for him. But it was the *attraction of the Person* that for ever won his affections and which now keeps him running—sometimes eagerly, sometimes stumblingly, but always truly—towards the Object

before him. Christ is not only the Author of faith, but the Completer also. He is not only the beginning of the way, but the way itself. We have often sung "Christ is the path and Christ the prize."

The narrative of Genesis 12 gives the actual words spoken by God to Abraham: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." But the story of the martyr Stephen, recorded in Acts 7, gives us the complement. Stephen, with the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, takes us higher in thought; he gives not only the words of God, but speaks of the God Who gave them. From Whom but the Holy Spirit Who gives all Scripture, could Stephen have known that "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he dwelt in Mesopotamia"?

First Failure and Recovery.

The record of Abraham's life is instructive, because his triumphs and failures are both recorded; we are encouraged by the one and warned by the other. We have seen that the terms of God's call to him were explicit: he was to break entirely from three spheres—his country, his kindred, and his father's house.

The scripture at the head of this paper should be carefully studied. In Gen. 11. 31 it is stated that Terah took Abram his son from Ur of the Chaldees to go into Canaan, possibly because that chapter has more of chronological character, giving the genealogy of the line of Shem: thus Terah would, in genealogical importance be superior to his son Abram. But in Genesis 12 the story of Abraham *personally* is commenced and thence continues. Terah is not even mentioned.

As others have suggested, these verses from both chapters probably indicate the failure of Abraham to break from the influence of his father's house. He certainly left his country as commanded by God, but this fulfilled only the first injunction God gave to him. The remaining two were not immediately complied with.

The separation demanded by God must be complied with, and no other claims placed higher than (or equal to) those of the Lord. "Let me first go and bury my father" was the excuse of one who was not ready wholly to follow Christ. Abraham never reached Canaan till Terah had died.

Then, not only was Abraham allowing his natural affection for his father to detain him, but he was in Haran "and *dwelt* there." This again, was a loitering on the way and not consistent with the powerful call of the God of Glory.

If Ur of the Chaldees was located at the mouth of the Euphrates, it is understandable that the natural route to Canaan (lying due west) would be northwards along the river as far as possible into Haran, and then in a southerly direction into Canaan. Flocks and herds, besides a large household would need the nourishment and refreshment thus afforded. Other scriptures would support the thought too, for the "king of the north" is identified as being from Assyria (due east of Canaan); and in a coming day he will invade this same land to which Abraham was travelling, suggesting that his route will probably be also via Haran, from which land the attack may be made.

But alas for Abraham's tardiness! He had been commanded to go to Canaan, and we see him accepting something which was in the right direction, but not the full distance. He failed, as some of his descendants did later when brought to the border of the promised land. The two and a half tribes preferred to dwell in the pleasant land—near to that promised, but just outside of it.

This teaches a solemn lesson which everyone should ponder. God's full thought for us is that we should take by faith even now, our place in the heavenlies where Christ is sitting. It *is* ours, as the Epistle to the Ephesians teaches; but every Christian knows the temptation to be content with only a *measure* of the experience of blessings. May we have grace to view the "promised land" again and thus be energised to occupy it!

But through the grace of God, Abraham made a

complete recovery. The early call and the early vision were revived in his heart, and rising up with something of his former energy of faith, Abraham finally came to the actual place where God intended him to be. What joy would possess Abraham's soul when he realised that he was now really in the very path God intended for him. What joy can be greater to any Christian than to know he is in the will of God?

Abraham's failure is recorded thus, "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran." The record of the recovery reads with a ring of triumph: "They went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and *into the land of Canaan they came.*"

May we be able to keep before us that early vision of a glorified Lord, and endeavour quietly to tread the path into heavenly places where He has gone for us. J.R.G.

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THE PILGRIM'S SONG.

RISE my soul, thy God directs thee,
 Stranger hands no more impede;
 Pass thou on, His hand protects thee,
 Strength that has the captive freed.

Is the wilderness before thee,
 Desert lands where drought abides?
 Heavenly springs shall there restore thee,
 Fresh from God's exhaustless tides.

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

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

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J.N.D.

Two LITTLE sparrows were chirruping as they hopped about. One of them seemed to say, "I love you, I love you." To which the other's brisk little chirp made reply, "Show it, show it." "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but also in deed and in truth." (1 John 3. 18.)

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE—THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.

“ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and 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 righteous acts (R.V.) of the saints.” Rev. 19. 7, 8.

SCRIPTURE often alludes to the bridal relationship as setting out the special place the Church has in the counsels of God. By the Church, we mean of course, the true Church—composed of every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, from the day of Pentecost till the Lord calls us up to be with Himself. There are various relationships in which Christ is spoken of regarding saints of different dispensations, and regarding the restored nation of Israel. But His purpose for the Church, as described above, is that it shall be in a special way for His personal delight and communion: so much is this so, that the figure of a bride is used to describe it. It will be seen at once, that although a bride may share her husband’s official glory, and all his activities will be a source of intense interest to her, yet these are not her chief, her special sphere. She is, first of all, the personal object of the affections of her husband—his companion and his joy.

With this thought in mind, we may understand what God would teach us in His Word, by referring to the Church as the bride of Christ. That is, the saints of this present dispensation are to be for the personal delight and companionship of our blessed Lord: a nearer and dearer thought than His Kingdom, however blessed that may be.

The verses quoted at the head of this article speak of “ the marriage being come.” The long waiting time is over; the Divine Bridegroom has claimed His bride at last; and now to the hosts of heaven there is to be displayed the consummation of redemption of the whole Church, in its presentation to and everlasting union with Him Who is the object of all her hopes and affections.

The Church, as thus spoken of, is of course complete.

At any one time on earth there is but a proportion of His people. Some have passed away—they “sleep in Jesus”—others have not yet come on the scene. But then, as we have seen in previous papers, the “dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”¹ It will be complete and perfect, “not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but . . . holy and without blemish,”² no longer “by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed,” but perfect as He would have it.

In our last issue we spoke of the “judgment seat of Christ.”³ That, we believe, is past before we reach the scripture we are now considering; so without a cloud between Himself and any individual composing it, the Church is now to be presented as His glorious and fair bride—the fruit of “the travail of His soul,” for whom He gave Himself—now to be with Him in perfect bliss for ever. This is the real consummation of the hope of the Church—the Christian hope. The Lord will soon after this enter upon His offices of Conqueror, and Judge, King of kings and Lord of lords, and in all these, His bride will be with Him; but she will never reach a higher pinnacle of joy and happiness and satisfaction than is pictured in this wonderful thought of “the marriage of the Lamb.”

The title taken by the Lord here is deeply moving. It is the book that describes His glory, His conquests, His reign. But here, in this greatest of moments to Himself and His Church, He will be called “the Lamb.” Surely this word recalls even in that moment of joy and delight, the pangs of Calvary.

Behold with what labour I won thee ;
Behold in My hands and My feet
The tale of My measureless sorrow—
The love that made suffering so sweet !

Just a word on the marriage robe. It is “the righteous acts of the saints.” Some have found difficulty in this; they imagine that it conflicts with the scriptures which speak of the righteousness of God, in which alone we can stand before Him. But this robe speaks not of our

fitness for heaven ; all that question has been dealt with before. This is a question of how our Lord will have His Church displayed in the courts of heaven to all the heavenly hosts. And in His tender grace He has decreed that it is then that every act of faithfulness and love to Him shall be brought to notice—shall be displayed before all those worshipping and admiring hosts. This does not mean only or mainly what we call the big things—a great mission, for example, where hundreds were saved. He notices and values in our lives all that is done for His glory and out of love for Him. And then it will all come out and be shown out as that which He has valued in the long waiting time. How worth while then will seem every sacrifice made for Him, every slight patiently borne, every effort made. He might have found other ways to display His bride, but this is His choice.

If this is our hope, fellow Christian, should it not thrill our hearts ? It is intended to do so—to lift our hearts in longing love to Him Who also is waiting ; waiting for the moment when He will claim for Himself His Bride, His Church, His own. It means much to Him ; may it ever mean more to us.

¹ 1 Cor. 15. 52. ² Eph. 5. 27. ³ 2 Cor. 5. 10.

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THE BRIDE.

There amidst the songs of heaven,
Sweeter to His ear
Is the footfall through the desert
Ever drawing near.
There made ready are the mansions
Glorious, bright and fair ;
But the Bride the Father gave Him
Still is wanting there.
Oh, the blessed joy of meeting,
All the desert past !
Oh the wondrous words of greeting
He shall speak at last !
He and I together entering
Those bright courts above ;
He and I together sharing
All the Father's love.

Where no shade nor stain can enter
Nor the gold be dim ;
In that holiness unsullied,
I shall walk with Him.
Meet companion, then, for Jesus
Of Him, for Him made :
Glory of God's grace for ever
There in me displayed.
He Who in His hour of sorrow
Bore the curse alone ;
I who through the lonely desert
Trode where He had gone.
He and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share,
Mine, to be for ever with Him :
His that I am there.

“ Praise Songs.”

BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE.

(Cut this page out and keep it in your Bible.)

How can God be "A Just God AND a Saviour" ?

1.—THE DILEMMA STATED.

(a) In Old Testament times.

God is of purer eyes than to behold evil (Habakkuk 1. 13), yet God pardons iniquity and passes by transgression (Micah 7. 18). God keeps mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity . . . but will by no means clear the guilty (Exodus 34. 7).

(b) In New Testament language : All the world is guilty before God. God . . . will render to every man according to his deeds (Romans 2. 6-9) ; yet all that believe are justified (Acts 13. 39).

We have . . . forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1. 7).

Has God forgone His righteousness to pass over sin ? (David did this once—see 2 Samuel 14. 33, and the history preceding).

2.—THE ANSWER FORESHADOWED.

Many instances in the Old Testament pointed on to Christ, the one great atoning sacrifice for sin.

God clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins—the animals died so that Adam and his wife could be clothed (Genesis 3. 21).

When God judged the Egyptians, He passed over the Israelites because they had killed the passover lamb (Exodus 12. 3-13).

The Levitical offerings enabled guilty men to draw near to God—the death of the victim was accepted, making atonement for them (e.g. Leviticus 1. 4). Not that these animals were able to exhaust God's judgment (Hebrews 10. 4)—they merely served as an object for faith and pointed on to Christ. The principle was explained in Leviticus 17. 41—the life is in the blood ; so the shed blood spoke of the death of the victim, and the offerer could go free. All this pictured the time when Christ would give His precious blood (1 Peter 1. 18) laying down His life to atone for sin (Hebrews 9. 12-14).

3.—GOD'S ANSWER SET FORTH.

Romans 3. 25 tells us of the Lord Jesus Christ set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.

(a) In answer to the Old Testament need

to declare God's righteousness in passing over "the sins that are past", i.e. the sins of men of faith in Old Testament times to whom God showed forbearance. God bore with them and passed over their sins because of what Christ bore on the cross.

(b) In answer to present needs

"to declare His righteousness" in justifying (reckoning righteous) everyone who hears the Gospel and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

4.—THE JUSTICE OF THE ANSWER.

God's wrath against sin has not been lessened or turned away—it has been borne (Psalm 88. 7, 16-18, show in prophetic language something of the unabated fury of God's wrath against sin). The full penalty of sin was borne by Christ (1 Peter 3. 18 ; Hebrews 9. 28), and a little may be grasped

of the dreadfulness of it, by the Lord's anticipation of it (Luke 22. 42-44). God's standard has not been lowered—it has been upheld. Even when undergoing the judgment, the Lord could say "Thou art holy" (Psa. 22. 3). What unswerving justice that demanded so great a sacrifice! It was in order that God might maintain this just and righteous character that the atonement was necessary (Romans 3. 26).

This was not an unfair punishment of an innocent third party for "God was in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5. 18). God in justice passed the sentence on sin. God in love came in the person of Christ to undergo the sentence.

5.—THE COMPLETENESS OF THE ANSWER.

The judgment has been exhausted. Christ had no sin of His own to suffer for (2 Cor. 5. 21; 1 Peter 2. 22). Men cannot exhaust judgment—Christ alone could because He was the sinless Son of God.

There is no judgment left for those who trust in Him (Romans 8. 1; John 5. 24). They are "perfected for ever" (Hebrews 10. 11-14).

6.—THE FINALITY OF THE ANSWER.

The sacrifice will never be repeated.

"Once . . . He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9. 26).

He offered Himself "Once for all" (Hebrews 10. 10-18).

7.—THE GLORY OF THE ANSWER.

Sin had spoilt God's universe—sin made the "dilemma." Satan seemed to triumph (Genesis 3), but God's purpose was fixed before all this and in due time He sent His Son "to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4. 14). God was glorified in the finished work of redemption (John 12. 28 and 17. 4). All will ascribe glory to Him Who has done such a work (Revelation 5. 13). Satan's apparent triumph has but served to bring greater glory to God by God's turning of it to His praise. Revelation 5. 13 (which is prompted by the thought of God's answer to the sin question) is a higher and greater tone of praise than Revelation 4. 11 (which is prompted by God's glory in creation).

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THE THREE TENSES OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE.

"Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." (1 Thess. 1. 9-10).

THE second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is a theme given primary importance throughout the epistles of the apostle Paul, and is often uppermost in his thoughts. In this Epistle, written to the saints at Thessalonica soon after his departure, he seems to be speaking particularly to those young in the faith. The early part of the epistle was given by the Holy Spirit to confirm these new disciples in the foundation truths already taught them, and then they are exhorted to go on in holiness.

The two verses quoted above give us a very clear view of Christian life it may be said in three tenses. We have the past tense, "Ye turned to God"; the present tense, "to serve the living and true God," and the future tense, "to wait for His Son from heaven."

Past.

It is interesting to note that as these are recorded for us in Holy Writ, they follow logically, and in natural sequence. We, who have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, can look back to the day when by His grace, we turned to God from idols. And how was it? Surely the third verse of the chapter answers the question: "the work of *faith*." Nothing of ourselves could fit us for the presence of God; nothing but faith in the redemptive work of Christ at Calvary. In John chapter 6, when the Lord had passed over the sea of Galilee to Capernaum, the people followed Him and asked Him, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" And He answered them, "This is the work of God, that ye *believe* on Him Whom He hath sent." So that from the day when we turned from "idols" (which speak of the world and of sin), we have passed into the present tense of our verse.

Present.

The desire of a truly converted soul right from earliest days, is, or should be, "to serve the living and true God." But alas, how quickly we seem to fail, and the joy of our new life seems to grow cold: perhaps the burning desire to "serve the living and true God" has cooled down within us, and we have largely returned to our old ways. The question might be asked, "Does it matter, seeing that I am saved? Once saved, I can never become unsaved." My dear reader, it does matter. How it must grieve the heart of God, as He looks down from heaven upon His children, for whom Christ died, to see some growing cold and becoming uninterested; losing perhaps the desire for meeting with other Christians; ceasing to commune with Him—perhaps forgetting Him altogether. How tender, how full of love and care, is a mother's heart toward her child, but even this is not to be compared with the tenderness of the heart of the Saviour, Who gave His own life to win us for Himself. Then we suffer too: we lose the sense of the countless blessings and benefits which are for us in Christ; we

cease to enjoy the things of God. We become as the saints at Ephesus to whom the Lord had to write that they had left their first love.¹

There is in the third verse of our chapter also a beautiful connection, as it speaks of the "labour of love." Our "labour of love" is surely to "serve the living and true God." To do this we must be in constant communion with God through Christ, being before Him in prayer, spending time in His presence, reading and meditating upon His Word, and keeping company with those that call upon His Name out of a pure heart.

Future.

The future tense is brought in with the words "to wait for His Son from heaven." Here again this connects with the third verse before mentioned, where it is expressed as the "patience of hope." The standard of the Christian life is high, far beyond the highest of earth's standards; yet surely when we come to consider this future tense, it is worth while! Having been born again, and now serving the living God as He has given us ability, we are waiting for this future event, which is the believer's hope. As we try to consider what the second coming of the Lord will be like, we may well feel it is beyond our comprehension, but the words of Scripture keep it simple for us and within the grasp of faith: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."² Precious hope! This vale of tears will all be over, our faults and failures will be forgotten, and we shall be occupied only throughout the countless ages of eternity with Him Who will be revealed as King of kings and Lord of lords.

May this hope inspire us to "serve the living and true God" faithfully and devotedly until "we see His face."

I.S.B.

THE LORD IS GOOD.

“The LORD is good ; a stronghold in the day of trouble ; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.”—
(Nahum 1. 7).

The LORD is good. Yea, none is good as He,
Who called us from our darkness to His light ;
Gave us to know His Son, and ever be
Conformed to His image, in His sight.

He is our Stronghold in earth's darkest hour,
When seas run high, and tempests shake the soul ;
His way is perfect and no adverse power
Can swerve His purpose from the eternal goal.

“ He knoweth,” yea, He knoweth all the way
We take ; each heavy trial is to mould
Our wills to His, that we can truly say
“ When He shall try me, I come forth as gold.”

“ He knoweth them that trust in Him ” ; His love
Is worthy of our confidence entire.
His end will show, in those bright realms above
The full accomplishment of all desire.

Yea ! Thou art good, our Father, and our lines
Are fall'n in pleasant places. Give us grace
To know that for Thy glory all combines,
And for our good, until we see Thy face.

F.L.

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THE PRAYER OF THE SON TO THE FATHER (John 17).

IT should indeed be with a deep spirit of reverence that we read this chapter, which gives us the revelation of the prayer of our Lord Jesus to His Father God. It is God the Son speaking in prayer to God the Father, asking for various things ; the disciples I believe, were allowed to hear it, and we in this generation are allowed to read it. In it are requests on behalf of those for whom He was about to suffer—the purchase of His precious blood ;

how it thrills us to realise that we are included as much as the disciples of old, as He says, "neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word."

In this paper, I would like to notice a remarkable expression used by our Lord in this wonderful prayer—used seven times in the chapter. "Those whom Thou hast given Me." In verse 2 we are given to Christ, that He may give us eternal life. How this brings to our minds the words in chapter 6, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and . . . I will in no wise cast out . . . but will raise him up at the last day." And in chapter 10, "I give unto (my sheep) eternal life, and they shall never perish." We were dead in trespasses and sins with no life toward God. But now, having believed the record that He hath given concerning His Son, that He was given to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, we find that not only have we forgiveness (for which we bless His holy name) but we have a life given to us whereby we are able to know the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

In verse 6 we have the same expression "those whom thou hast given Me" in connection with the manifestation to us by Christ of the Father's Name, and we have believed that manifestation. Notice the words "out of the world." Surely this verse takes us back into the ages before time began, when in the eternal counsels of God, He thought of us, and made provision that in time a means should be devised whereby we be not banished from His presence, but should "out of the world" be given to His beloved Son. But this could only be through the completing of the work He came to do—the atoning work of Calvary alone could deliver us "out of the world."

Notice the gracious words concerning us, "they have kept Thy word," "they have known," "they have received," "they have believed." Not a word here about our failures—not that we have no failures, but He is looking at us from His side, where everything is perfect.

Then in verse 9 He prays "for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." Though given by the Father to the Son, we still belong to the Father. How good to know that though we are still in a world which will hate us because we belong to Christ, as He said, yet here we are the subjects of Christ's prayer. It is like John 10, where we are told of the security both in the Father's hand and in Christ's.

In verse 11 He makes request, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me." Here it is associated with God's holiness; He requests that those who believe should thus be kept in connection with their calling, which is holy. They have been called unto holiness, and our blessed Lord desires that holiness should always characterise us.

In verse 12 the same expression comes in again, "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept." We are, then, kept by that loving Saviour, and not left to ourselves. We have no power of our own to sustain us in any way; but we are kept by the power of God; we can rest on His almighty power and know we are safe. He prays that we might be kept from the evil of the world: as His representatives He wants us sanctified—that is, not only kept from evil but set apart for Christ both in heart and life. We are to be His witnesses (verse 18), and we need all these qualifications for His service.

Our future is also linked up with these words. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory" (v. 24). He loves us with an everlasting love, and will not be in glory and leave us behind. How wonderful that our company should be precious to Him, Who is the Son of God, and that this companionship shall be for ever.

He died to redeem us, to reconcile us, that He might present us unto Himself a glorious Church. Now He lives for us in the glory awaiting the time when He will come again and receive us unto Himself in the glory that where He is, we may be also.

HEALTHY LIVING.

THERE are three things which will mark a healthy person—three essentials which generally go along with robust bodily health. These are, a good appetite, a sound digestion, and a desire for fresh air. It would doubtless be going too far to say that these would cure “all the ills that flesh is heir to,” but none will deny that they have a great bearing on physical fitness.

To eat largely and well, without due digestion—we all know the unhealthy state that will follow; to shun fresh air will lead to heaviness, dullness, a vitiated system and loss of appetite. True indeed that men, more foolish than the brute creation, often transgress these rules; but that they are right will hardly be challenged.

I think there are lessons here for us Christians; we have been given by our Lord a new life, a life that cannot find any sustenance in this world as such. True, thank God, this life is eternal, we shall not, cannot lose it: but it is sometimes a poor weak life as we manifest it to those with whom we meet. Like our natural life it needs to be sustained, to be nourished: and He Who gave us this life has provided also the nourishment, the environment, that is good for it. The question then is, are we practically enjoying this nourishment?

There are some helpful words on this subject in the first Epistle to Timothy. The food on which our souls will grow is undoubtedly Christ Himself (“He that eateth Me even he shall live by Me.” John 6. 57). But how can we feed on Christ? Where shall we learn anything about Him? The answer is obvious; in the Holy Scriptures of truth.

Food.

To feed, then, is to read. And we have the word in 1 Tim. 4. 13, “Give attendance to reading.” It is in the scriptures that we find the material for our food: we do

well to read them ; to read them continuously, carefully and with purpose of heart. There are at least three ways in which we shall profit by such reading.

It will store our minds with truth. We shall acquire knowledge of the mind of God as revealed therein. We shall learn the great doctrines of the Bible ; the holiness, greatness, love and purposes of God ; the fall, sin and depravity of man ; the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; the " sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." We shall find instruction and exhortation about the smallest as well as the greatest matters of our lives. Yes, indeed, we shall absorb much material of inestimable worth.

It will fill a void in our minds. If we are not reading the scriptures, with what are we filling our minds? It is said that " nature abhors a vacuum," and if we are not occupied thus with what is good (and how good !) we shall surely be tempted to fill our minds with what is trifling—or worse still, what is wrong.

It will create a desire for more. Unlike bodily food, which may quickly surfeit, this wonderful spiritual food acts as a continual appetiser. The more we read, the more desire we have to read this wonderful Book ; but the converse is also sadly true ; the less we read, the less we want to.

We taste Thee, Oh, Thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still.

Digestion.

But just as it is not all that we eat, but what we digest, that does our bodies good, so there is a further process than reading necessary in our souls. We read (chapter 4. v. 15), "*Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all.*" You see, the food would do him good ! So let us think of this meditation, as digestion—the quiet thinking over of what we have read, dwelling on it in our minds.

Just here, however, is a difficulty. Our lives in this hurried age are not adjusted to meditation. We live in a whirl of movement, and often noise, that is not conducive to meditation. But time and occasion must be found for it, if our reading is to do us all the good it might : and perhaps if we really desire it, we shall find it is not so impossible after all. It has been aptly said, " You cannot meditate to order, nor can you in a hurry." We need the spirit of the prayer,

" Drop Thy still dews of quietness
Till all our strivings cease.
Take from our souls the strain and stress."

May the Lord help us to go over in thought, the precious things we read, that they may indeed do us good.

Fresh Air.

In chapter 2. vv. 1-3, the Apostle stresses the value of prayer. This is surely the " fresh air " for the Christian ; the atmosphere of dependence, trust and expectation, which is the true spirit of prayer ; that quiet waiting on the Lord—reading as in His presence, that His Holy Spirit may be free to " lead us into all truth." It is by " prayer and supplication with thanksgiving " that, having made our requests known to God, our hearts may be kept in the peace of God.

And how it helps the other parts ! Just as fresh air gives us a desire for our food, and promotes that lively circulation that helps digestion, so prayer, the Christian knows, will beget a new desire to read the Word. While as for meditation, how shall we ever know its sweetness without the Psalmist's prayer, " Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law " ?

God grant that our Christian life shall be fuller, richer and more of a testimony for Him, as we " give attendance to reading," as we " meditate on these things " and as we " pray everywhere " and " pray always."

H. W. M.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

The Tent and the Altar.

(Read Genesis 12. 6 to 13. 4).

IN our last study, we saw that Abraham at first hesitated to enter the promised land ; we now observe, however, that when once established there, he moves about in it with the dignity and freedom of one in conscious possession of what was his own. We can almost see his quiet calm progression as we read " And Abram passed through the land ! " The land was his, and although " the Canaanite was then in the land," these enemies have no power, or influence even, against one who moves in the will of God.

Further, Abraham not only passed through the land, but took possession of it with the boldness of one who knows he enjoys God's protection. The late war has emphasized the indiscretion of a small force moving into unknown territory to meet unassessed forces, but Abraham had no such thoughts disturbing his mind : he not only passed through the land, but he came to " the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh." A glance at the map shows this location to be as near as possible to the geographical centre of the land. What a triumph was here ! His faith had brought him not only into the sphere of blessing, but to the very heart of it. And all this has a lesson for us ; that since God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ, it is incumbent on us to move by the energy of faith into the enjoyment of the place in which He has thus set us.

Jehovah's Appearing.

So far in the narrative it has only once been recorded, that God appeared to Abraham ; that was at the time of his initial call when he still dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees. A second appearing of God to Abraham is now mentioned, probably to indicate Jehovah's approval and pleasure in the obedience of His servant. " And the

Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land : and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, Who appeared unto him." When this same Jehovah later was manifest in flesh in this world—known as Jesus (Jehovah the Saviour)—how frequently did He express His pleasure in the faith of those who thus gratified His heart ! To mention one case, what joy He had in the faith of the centurion of Matthew, chapter 10—" Jesus . . . marvelled ! " Faith not only honours our Lord, but it pleases Him.

Abraham walked " by faith, not by sight," and these appearances of Jehovah to him occur only at intervals. It is nowhere suggested that daily or regularly were these visions given, but apparently they occurred only when the God of glory in His wisdom knew that such were necessary for the help and comfort of His servant : at times to forewarn before a trial ; at others to refresh him after it.

On the first appearing of Jehovah to Abraham, He had commanded him to enter the land ; in this second, He gives it to him. And the promise that it would be his, was given to Abraham after he had simply obeyed : was Abraham thus one of those who by faith " obtained promises " ?

A Pilgrim and a Worshipper.

We do not know whether Abraham himself selected his next stopping place, or whether he was directed thereto, but if scriptural names have any significance, our attention is arrested by the position being so precisely located. It was between Bethel, the " house of God " and Hai, " a heap of ruins." There seems to be some hint at least here of the position occupied by the pilgrim of any day or dispensation ; avoiding the one place and having aspirations towards the other. And here it was that Abraham was seen in his true character : he was marked by the *tent* of the pilgrim, and the *altar* of a worshipper of the true God. " He pitched his tent . . . he builded an altar."

Although the land was Abraham's, he made no permanent lodging ; he dwelt in " tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." Paul could teach his Corinthian converts on one occasion that it was possible to be in the world without abusing it ; just as, later, he could faithfully reprove them for seeking to " reign as kings " before the time that all believers shall together share that privilege. So Abraham's tent, of flimsy structure, was a witness to the Canaanite that Abraham's true possessions were of a higher order, that he was only a pilgrim in the land which he could rightly call his own. And do not we recall, morning by morning, that although we still occupy the same circumstances as yesterday, yet spiritually, we are a " day's march nearer home " ?

If the tent was a witness of one kind to the Canaanite, the altar was of another. What a sight to those heathen, as they looked on, morning by morning, to see Abraham gather together his family and household, relatives and servants, to present his sacrifice to the great God, unseen yet Almighty ! The solemnity and simplicity of his rites (whatever form they took) would speak in marked contrast to their idol worship. Who can tell whether even in that early day, some onlooker would feel, what he could hardly express in words—" God is among you of a truth " ? And as Abraham moved to further fields, the simple, silent altar remained as a fitting memorial to them of scenes they had witnessed, whose meaning was so far beyond their comprehension.

We in this age are called to be worshippers. We worship privately, we worship in assembly, " when ye come together." But we also have the privilege of worshipping in our households on the same principle (though not in the same character) as Abraham. We have the privilege and the responsibility of offering our morning and evening sacrifices to Him Who is God and Father, Who sought us " to worship Him." The details of how our household worship is conducted will suggest themselves to any exercised heart, but the principle of

worship of the Father remains unchanged among the children of God.

Later, in the history of Abraham's descendants, God looked down upon their camp in the wilderness, and observed morning by morning the lamb regularly offered—and every evening a lamb again offered on the altar to ascend to Him a sacrifice, through the silence of the night : and it all spoke to Him of the one Sacrifice that alone brings pleasure to Him—even the worth of the Person and work of His own beloved Son. Here, surely are principles for our guidance ; can we not in our homes, in simplicity offer to God our morning and evening remembrance of the Son of His love ? We are assured that He will not weary of such offerings ; yea rather, “ with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

So the worship continues, “ perpetual throughout your generations,” acceptable to God. But what of the onlookers ? As the Canaanite looked on and saw Abraham's worship, there are, from time to time, onlookers at our seasons of family worship, in the persons of chance visitors or yet unconverted relatives. Who can tell what thoughts may be promoted by the Spirit of God in their hearts, either instantly to impress them, or to carry away with them, to be recalled for their blessing at some future time ? Such results are with God ; our desire in these matters is but to seek His glory and obey.

J.R.G.

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ON READING THE BIBLE.

READ the Bible, and read it again, and do not despair of help to understand something of the will and mind of God, though you think they are fast locked up from you. Neither trouble yourself though you have not commentaries and expositions ; pray and read, and read and pray ; for a little from God is better than a great deal from man ; also what is from man is uncertain and is often lost and tumbled over by man ; but what is from God is fixed as a nail in a sure place. There is

nothing that so abides as what we receive from God ; and the reason why Christians at this day are at such a loss as to some things is because they are content with what comes from men's mouths, without searching and kneeling before God, to know of Him the truth of things. Things which we receive at God's hand come to us as things from the minting-house, though old in themselves, yet new to us. Old truths are always new to us, if they come to us with the smell of heaven upon them.

JOHN BUNYAN.

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THREE FRAGMENTS.

“ **H**ow often we forget to mention the Name of Jesus, and to confess His mighty power. He has answered our prayer, and we have never told anybody. We have taken the blessing, and He has not had the credit. That is not witnessing unto answered prayer in the power of the living Lord. The woman of Samaria—no sooner does she realise that her sins are forgiven than she calls her neighbours and says ‘ Is not this the Christ ? ’

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“ Simon the coward became Simon the courageous. Simon who denied his Master three times before soldier and servant, spoke to thousands of men without flinching, and declared that it was the Spirit of the living God that had been received. Oh, what changes take place when the power of a living Christ comes into a life, and lights up every corner, that there may be no dark parts, but that the Lord may have full possession.”

J. TAYLOR SMITH.

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There is no rest for the conscience of him who does not believe God's Word. He may by various means dull the bitings of conscience, but *rest*, save by the way set out in the divine Book, he cannot obtain

BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE.

(Cut this page out and keep it in your Bible.)

PRAYER :

1. WHO CAN PRAY ?

While God in His mercy is not unmindful of the cry of His creatures, of those who refuse to bow to the law of God it is said : " even his prayer shall be abomination " (Prov. 28. 9) ; the only prayer that suits such is " God be merciful to me a sinner." But among Christians there is no distinction—all may come and present their requests at the throne of grace (Hebrews 4. 16). We are God's children and the youngest convert can pray (Romans 8. 15-16). There is no gift of prayer (1 Corinthians 12. 7-11), because prayer is the common privilege of the children of God.

2. WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY ?

" Praying always . . . " (Ephesians 6. 18). " Pray without ceasing " (1 Thess. 5. 17), i.e. prayer should be the atmosphere in which we live, referring all things to our Lord for help and guidance. This normally refers to the minute-by-minute difficulties and happenings of the day. In addition to this there should be regular times of prayer (see e.g. Psa. 55. 17 ; Dan. 6. 10), when our duties give us opportunity to be before the Lord with more general petitions—e.g. at such times we can pray for others, for the gospel—or for meditation on His goodness and faithfulness (Song of Solomon 2. 3).

These two types of prayer must go together. If Nehemiah had not spent much time in prayer for his people, he would not have been able to make the quick short appeal for God's help when he stood before the king (Nehemiah 1. 4-11, and 2. 4).

Besides these types of private prayer, we should, of course, meet with other Christians for prayer as opportunity offers. (Acts 2. 42 and 16. 13).

3. HOW SHOULD WE PRAY ?

Believingly . . . (Matthew 21. 22 ; James 1. 6-7).

" In His Name " (John 14. 14)—this does not mean just adding " for Jesus' sake," to our prayers, but asking as He would ask ; asking for the things He would ask for.

Dependently.—Prayer is the expression of dependence. Beautifully expressed in many recorded prayers—e.g. Asa said, " we rest on Thee " (2 Chron. 14. 11), and Jehoshaphat, " neither know we what to do : but our eyes are upon Thee " (2 Chron. 20. 12).

Confidently—that He will hear and give us the right answer (1 John 5. 14-15). We approach a Father (Luke 11. 1-2 ; John 16. 23), and should do so with confidence.

Thankfully (Philippians 4. 6) " in everything . . . with thanksgiving."

We should guard against showy prayer (Matthew 6. 5), and " vain repetitions " (Matt. 6. 7)—any words become " vain repetitions " when they no longer represent the real desires of our hearts. We should also guard against asking for things for our own selfish enjoyment (James 4. 3).

4. WHAT SHALL WE PRAY FOR ?

Some things we are definitely told to pray for—for kings and rulers (1 Timothy 2. 1-2). For the Lord's servants (Ephesians 6. 19) ; for the gospel work (Matthew 9. 38).

We can pray for others—even those who oppose us (Matthew 5. 44)—and there are some very beautiful and instructive prayers of this nature recorded in Scripture, e.g. Abraham (Genesis 18. 23-33), Moses (Exodus 32. 11-14 ; Numbers 12. 13), Samuel (1 Samuel 12. 23), Epaphras (Colossians 4. 12).

Apart from these specified subjects, it has been said we may ask for anything for which we could give thanks if it were granted.

“ Ask what ye will,” is the offer, so long as we abide in Him, and His words abide in us (John 15. 7)—this will mean that our will becomes the same as His will. Often this will make our requests seem foolish to those who are not “ abiding in Him ” (see e.g. Acts 4. 29—they didn't pray for safety or quietness). The son spoken of in Luke 11. 11-12 had a good appetite—he asked for nourishing things, bread, fish, an egg ; if we abide in Christ we shall have good spiritual appetites and shall ask for things that are good for us.

5. RESULT OF PRAYER.

From God's side : He is glorified when we pray aright (John 14. 13).

For ourselves : God's peace guards our hearts and minds (Philippians 4. 7). We shall be filled with joy (John 16. 24).

For the rest : “ The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much ” (James 5. 16)—make your own list of prayers recorded in scripture and their results.

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“ HE IS ABLE.”

MR. . . . got up rather painfully, as the Underground train reached his destination ; he had been rather troubled by lumbago of late, and it had not been too good today. He had, however, been asked to preach the Gospel at a hall on the other side of London, and he had hoped strength would be given for this. But the journey had been very trying, and now, as he got out of the train, he could hardly stand. With difficulty he reached the side of the station, and leaned against it, for the moment quite incapable of further action. What was he to do? He felt he could certainly not go on ; nor, as he felt now, could he go back.

And then, to his surprise and delight, he found the pain getting less acute ; rapidly it cleared, till it was practically gone. Cautiously stepping out, he found that he was indeed relieved, and could walk normally. Lifting his heart to the Lord in thankfulness, he went on his way, duly arrived at the hall, and delivered his

message. All the way back, too, he enjoyed this freedom from pain, and when he arrived home he recounted his experience.

His wife and daughter-in-law were interested to hear this; very interested, in fact. They had been concerned for him on the journey, knowing how he had been feeling, and they had both been praying for him, that he might have strength given to him for his errand on the Lord's service and that the Lord would add His blessing. One of them had gone farther, and besought the Lord, if it was His will, He would grant freedom from the pain. "What time was it," she asked, "when the pain passed off?" "It would be about ten past six," he replied. It was just at that time that she was praying for him; do you wonder that they "rejoiced together" as they reviewed this instance of answered prayer. Truly "the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him"¹: what encouragement there is in His Word, to call upon Him—to present our petitions, however simple, however personal, knowing that "He careth for you."

True, He does not always give just the answer we have sought, as it was in this case; but "If we ask anything according to His will He heareth us,"² and how truly does this apply especially in that which relates to His service.

So, fellow Christians, let us "continue instant in prayer." Our God does hear, and does answer prayer.

S.C.

¹ Psalm 145. 18. ² 1 John 5. 14.

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**What a Friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer.
Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear;
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.**

SACRIFICE.

THE thought of sacrifice is very prominent throughout Scripture, and in the types of the Old Testament it appears in two ways ; these are summarised for us under the headings of the two altars of the tabernacle—the brazen altar for sacrifices for sin, and the golden altar for the offering of incense to God in worship. For the Christian today, we may take these to be a sacrifice God has accepted *for* us, and a sacrifice that God will accept *from* us.

A SACRIFICE *for* US.

In Heb. 10. v. 12, we read of a sacrifice that can never be repeated ; it is the foundation of God's glory in this world where men had done nothing but bring dishonour on His Name. It is that by which we can approach God with the happy knowledge that all that was against us, all our sins, had been cleared away ; more indeed than that, we are through it justified and fit for God's holy presence. This is the "sacrifice for sins" made once for all for us, by the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross, a sacrifice that neither needs to be nor could be repeated ; it was "*once for all.*" What glory to God, and what blessing to men flows from that one great act of obedience—such a mighty contrast to the one act of *disobedience* which brought such ruin upon the world.

And it was indeed a sacrifice ; it entailed tremendous cost. "He gave Himself." As the parable beautifully puts it, "he . . . went and sold all that he had."¹

A SACRIFICE *from* US.

But if there is no more sacrifice *for* sins, and the great offering of Christ Himself for us can never be repeated, yet there are sacrifices of which we read in Hebrews 13 vv. 15 and 16, which are *never to be discontinued* as long as we are here. The word sacrifice means "that which costs something". Our worship then, according to these verses is to be a sacrifice ; it is to be the outcome of exercise of heart and conscience. We may then present,

whether in private or in the assembly, that which is acceptable to God, "the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name." Then notice, it is to be "by Him," that we are to express to God, the praise of His beloved Son; we may be assured that this is always acceptable in the sight of God.

**To all our prayers and praises
Christ adds His sweet perfume ;
And love the censer raises,
These odours to consume.**

It is "the fruit of our lips"—it should be heard. How happy it is to give expression in this way, in the quiet of the home, or when (as no doubt the verse would particularly apply) gathered together with the people of God.

But there is the sacrifice of verse 16 too: "To do good and to communicate" (or it might be translated "share what you have"). God is well pleased also with sacrifices we make on behalf of others for His sake. It would remind us of the Lord's comment on the woman in Luke 21, who gave "all that she had"; how highly He prized it! It covers a wide field of service, not only giving of our substance; acts of kindness, going out of our way to speak a word of comfort to a lonely one, for instance. We have fine examples in the cases of Epaphroditus and Epaphras. There is nothing to show that these were gifted men, or holding any special office. They have been called "private christians". But what examples they are of loving interest in the welfare of others!

What a comfort that God is pleased to accept these offerings from our hearts to Himself; that we may be in the spirit of David who said "neither will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."^a When we think of all that our Lord paid for us, surely we shall sing "to God by Him."

**Gladly let us render to Him
All we have and are !**

^a Matt. 13. 46. ^b II Sam. 24. 24.

ANTICIPATION.

In hope we lift our wishful longing eyes,
 Waiting to see the Morning Star arise ;
 How bright, how gladsome, will His advent be,
 Before the Sun shines forth in majesty !

How will our eyes to see His face delight,
 Whose love has cheered us through the darksome night ;
 How will our ears drink in His well-known voice,
 Whose faintest whispers make our souls rejoice.

No stain within ; no foes nor snares around ;
 No jarring notes shall there discordant sound ;
 All pure without, all pure within the breast ;
 No thorns to wound, no toil to mar our rest.

If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus' love,
 Lift our poor hearts this weary world above ;
 If even here the taste of heavenly springs
 So cheers the spirit that the pilgrim sings ;

What will the sunshine of His glory prove ?
 What the unmingled fulness of His love ?
 What hallelujahs will His presence raise ?
 What but one loud eternal burst of praise !

J. G. DECK.

RECEIVING.

LOOK	<i>Receiving with the eyes</i>	<i>Isa. 45. 22</i>
COME	<i>Receiving with the feet</i>	<i>Matt. 11. 28</i>
TAKE	<i>Receiving with the hands</i>	<i>Rev. 22. 17</i>
TASTE	<i>Receiving with the lips</i>	<i>Psalm 34. 2</i>
HEAR	<i>Receiving with the ears</i>	<i>Isa. 55. 3</i>
CHOOSE	<i>Receiving with the will</i>	<i>Josh. 24. 15</i>
TRUST	<i>Receiving with the heart</i>	<i>Psalm 37. 3</i>
KNOW	<i>Receiving with the mind</i>	<i>1 John 5. 20</i>

ABRAHAM'S FAILURE AND RESTORATION.

Genesis 12. 9—13. 4.

IN a previous paper we considered what we may term Abraham's failure and restoration; that was failure in not promptly obeying Jehovah's command, but restoration in finally coming into the place where God intended him to be. We find a similar thought in this section of the record: the failure is Abraham's going into Egypt; the recovery is his coming out again and returning to the place "where his tent had been at the beginning."

For some time Abraham seems to have been gradually influenced by the attractiveness of the southern lands. "Abraham journeyed" we read, "going still toward the south." In Scripture, these southern influences are usually connected with suggestions of ease of circumstances, and all their attendant attractiveness. The master of the ship conveying Paul to Rome was deceived "when the south wind blew softly"; and "thinking they had gained their purpose,"¹ they trusted the circumstances instead of obeying an explicit injunction from God, given through His servant Paul. Disaster overtook them, as trouble followed Abraham's course also.

So if Abraham had been for some time journeying towards Egypt, the famine finally decided him to go into it. Faith may have suggested that the God of glory, Who commanded him to go to Canaan, would surely provide for him during the famine; but Abraham seems now to have left the pathway of faith. His anticipation of trouble ahead, and the arrangements he made therefor (all signs of a certain uneasiness of mind), show us Abraham far removed from the lofty place we have seen him occupy till now. Reasoning and arrangements contrast sadly with faith and simplicity.

But, most serious of all, when Abraham was in Egypt, he lied; and this sad fact we must for a moment consider. We are warned against this form of sinning from the beginning of Scripture to the end. Satan appears as the

father of lies in Eden ; and from the holy city of Revelation 21 is excluded " whatsoever maketh a lie." The Christian guards himself against this, not merely negatively, but by practising simplicity and transparency in speech and ways. How strong and happy was Paul, who could say " In simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshy wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world " !¹

Abraham's Recovery.

How beautiful to read of Abraham's restoration ! The sands of the sea-shore may have been scarred and marred when last we saw them, but there has since been an inflowing tide, so abundantly laving, smoothing and healing them ; and on its ebbing, we see those sands again smooth, peaceful, beautiful. " If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

So with Abraham. After his rebuke (and, we may assume, his confession), he not only " went up out of Egypt, he and all that he had," but it is as though there is a joy in the heart of the Recorder of the incident, when we read that " Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold." Here surely, is grace upon grace ; and how the God of all grace does so emphasise the thought of His abundant grace !

Thus we leave Abraham in this section of the narrative, not only rich with God's blessings, but restored to the place he had momentarily forsaken ; for " he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning." He is a restored pilgrim and a restored worshipper also, for it is also " unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first." What a flood of gratitude would pour from his heart, when here again " Abraham called on the Name of the Lord." How truly these things " were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

J.R.G.

¹ Acts 27. ² II Cor. 1. 12.

“AFRAID TO ASK HIM.”

(Luke 9. 44-46.)

THERE is a rather strange thing spoken of our Lord's disciples in the verses at the head of this paper. It says of something the Lord had said to them that they did not understand it ; it was hid from them ; and they were afraid to ask Him about it. We should of course be quite prepared to find that they could not immediately understand all that was said to them by One Who was in truth very God ; but the words our Lord had just spoken to them were not difficult to understand. They were a plain statement of fact. “ Let these sayings sink down into your ears ; for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men.” Often had He told them of His approaching suffering and death ; though to the end it appears that they never accepted the thought, and were in fact taken by surprise when the Lord actually was crucified.

We are not of course concerned to point out faults in these devoted men, who with much less light than we have, were so much more loyal ; but their failures as well as their triumphs are recorded for our learning. And we might well enquire firstly why it was that they did not understand, and secondly why they were afraid to ask the Lord about it. This does seem strange, for He was ever the most approachable of men.

Looking at this same incident in Matthew's Gospel (chapter 17. 20) we find the Lord speaks of their unbelief. And in our chapter in Luke we read of a reasoning among them who should be the greatest. It is suggested that in these two facts lies their mistake, and consequent ignorance and fear. Lack of faith and selfishness ; here are surely two things that will hide much that is spiritual from our view—and the latter, at any rate, will render us uneasy in the presence of the Lord, and will make us slow to approach Him. How these two evils are related to each other, how one breeds the other, would be an interesting question, but is not our present study.

What *does* matter is that they form what we know as a "vicious circle." That is, unbelief and self-seeking allowed in our hearts keep us away from our Lord ; and this distance in spirit from Him is the very soil to encourage their evil growth.

"Unbelief"—lack of faith ; how this hides from our souls the sweetness, the rich deep meaning of the Word of God. For the Bible is not as other books ; it will not yield its treasures merely to the intellect. It is only as we read it in the consciousness that it is the Word of God to our souls, that we shall grasp and appreciate its meaning. It is only as there is prayer in our hearts, the prayer of faith, "Open Thou mine eyes," that we shall "behold wondrous things out of Thy law." You will remember our Lord's words to His Father, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes."¹ We all know that unquestioning, artless faith is the first characteristic of a "babe." May it be so with us, that we may read the Word accepting it not only generally, but each time we read it, as the Word of God to us individually.

Then selfishness—how can we expect to have the mind of One Who "pleased not Himself" if we are thinking along that line ; our minds are preoccupied and in no condition for God's Holy Spirit to "take of the things of Christ" and show them unto us. So our reading is likely to be barren and unfruitful, even though we do, as a duty, read our portion. But this same sin of selfishness will not only dull our understanding of the Word ; it will prove the greatest hindrance to "knowing what the will of the Lord is." For in Romans 12. v. 2, the secret of proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God is a surrender of body and mind to God. How many Christians lament, "I wish I knew what the Lord would have me do in these circumstances," when this is the hindrance. According to James, too, this hinders our prayers ; "Ye ask and have not, because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it upon your lusts (or desires)."²

What is the remedy? Surely in those moving words in Phil. 2. 5, where we are reminded of the example of our blessed Lord, and His path of humbling Himself—of “going down.” We cannot do better than close this little paper by quoting them in full. These words leave us without answer, without excuse, speechless, before Him Who knows all our hearts.

“LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU, which was also in Christ Jesus : Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

H. W. M.

¹ Matt. 11. 25. ² James 4. 3.

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“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ : Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”—(*Titus* 2. 11-14.)

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Proud Christians—and the Master was meek and lowly ! There is nothing that will so shame us out of our pride as to take a good look at the Lord Jesus Christ. And He says to those who have come and received that promised rest : Learn not to be selfish, and learn not to be proud. These are difficult lessons to learn, but if we would be like Him we must learn them ; they are lessons taught in the school of God.

“ HARDY PLANTS NURSERY.”

SUCH was the wording on a notice that the writer observed by the roadside near Tonbridge.

“ Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up,” said our Lord. “ Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest and causest to approach unto Thee,” says the Psalmist. Every true child of God is a plant of God’s own planting, and will ever remain so to the eternal praise of the great Gardener.

Young plants need care while they are being reared. In virtue of the new life that is in them, the “ babes ” mentioned by John in his first Epistle, know God as Father and can rejoice in the forgiveness of sins.³ But they need watchful care lest the new life should be hindered in its development and they remain in spiritual babyhood instead of going on to spiritual maturity. Peter was honoured with the task of “ feeding Christ’s lambs.”⁴ Young believers need the right sort of food and exercise, and the right environment, for there is ever the danger of drifting ; of allowing the spiritual life to droop and languish ; of a chronic lack of tone and even of invalidism in the things of God.

The Tonbridge nursery contained plants that were *hardy*. They would not be killed by a nip of frost in the air or by cold winds from the north-east. It is true that God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and that Mr. Feeble-mind is a true pilgrim, and the Lord will be mindful of his feebleness. At the same time we read that it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth. Where the spiritual life is vigorous, and the soul in athletic frame, the frost of neglect by others and the cold winds of trial will not paralyse or cripple it, but will rather increase its stamina. It is when the soul is in weak health that it falls an easy prey to the error-germs that are always lurking in the mental atmosphere. Timothy is told to “ endure hardness,” and the early Christians, so we are told, regarded their life as a sort

of military service rendered to Christ, their great Commander. We are not to be creepers and clingers and spoon-fed Christians. Trials and tests are not meant to *break* us, but to *make* us ; to go without is often a tonic, and Doctor Have-to is sometimes an excellent physician.

“ Have salt in yourselves,”⁸ said the Lord. With an abundance of this spiritual vigour and health in us, we shall inevitably and joyfully “ grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”⁶

E. A.

¹ Matt. 15. 13. ² Psalms 65. 4. ³ 1 John 2. 13. ⁴ John 21. 15. ⁵ Mark 9. 50
⁶ 2 Peter 3. 18.

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THE PRAYER OF THE LORD JESUS.

John 17. 2.

IN meditating further upon the prayer of our blessed Lord to His Father, we might notice another expression which occurs three times over during the course of the prayer. The expression is “ that they may be one : ” we find it in verse 11, “ that they may be one as We ” ; in verse 21, “ that they also may be one in Us ” ; and in verse 22, “ that they may be one even as We are one.”

We shall never fully be able to realise how precious are His blood-bought saints to our Lord Jesus ; but, as we read this prayer, we can—only in a measure—see something of His thoughts for us. In our last issue we saw that the saints are the love-gift of the Father to His Son, given to Him as those redeemed by His own precious blood : and as we read this chapter we see how our Lord values this gift by the many requests He makes on their behalf, that He may be glorified in them. His requests for their oneness show that His desire for them is that they may manifest to the world not only the *love* of the Father, but His holiness. The term “ Holy Father ” in verse 11, seems to show His desire that those given thus to Him should be characterised by all that

that Name expressed. He says "keep *through Thine own Name*, those whom Thou hast given Me." Surely this means that all that the Father is, in holiness, love and goodness should mark those disciples who now are Christ's.

But our Lord goes on to request "that they may be one as We." This is not merely brethren "dwelling together in unity" which the Psalmist says is "good and pleasant," but it is a oneness of greater importance. It says "as *We*"; and we know from other Scriptures, how perfectly "one" were the Father and the Son in purpose and object. For instance, as regards our eternal security, we read "I and my Father are one"—the double hand-grip of our security thus given in John 10. 28-29.

Our life here below then should be marked with a oneness toward each other, always seeking the things of God, having the same purpose and object before us, as did the Father and the Son.

The second oneness, of verse 21, is a little different. Here we read "That they may be one *in Us*." If we have the first—the oneness of object, of purpose, seeking to glorify the Father and the Son, we shall, or should have the second. This is a unity which will testify to the world, for we read it is "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." This is more like the truth of Ps. 133, "dwelling together in unity," for what greater testimony could the world have to the keeping and saving power of Christ, than to see a company of believers once diverse from each other in status, in life, religion or nationality, now having all things common in Christ? Look at the early Christians after the day of Pentecost, how they witnessed for the Christ they had confessed as their Saviour, how they were "of one heart and one soul." Perhaps it was partly this that made the people "take knowledge" of Peter and John, "that they had been with Jesus"; and did not the Lord Himself say to them, "By this shall all men know that ye are my

disciples, if ye have love one to another," and this love would show the oneness ?

Our third verse is v. 22. " And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as We are one : I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." This seems to look forward to the coming glory, the hope of the Christian, when we shall see Him, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross : Him Who now is crowned with glory and honour. Surely He is here looking forward to the time when those for whom He died shall share with Him that glory.

**. . . love that gives, not as the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs.**

This is the unity in which all believers will be " perfected in one " (New Trans.) in the coming glory. That day is fast approaching when " to the principalities and powers in heavenly places " shall be displayed by this redeemed company " the manifold wisdom of God," when Christ shall be seen in His saints, even as the Father is seen in the Son. What a testimony to the world that will be ! " That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Christ is to be " admired in all them that believe," " glorified in His saints," when He comes again in power and glory to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

How precious we are to our beloved Lord—how much we have cost Him ; and how gloriously like Him we shall be when gathered home to Him. But our pathway to that glory is through this world, " this valley of the shadow of death," and it is here that He desires us to represent Him during His absence by our manner of life in word and act. And the manifesting of the " oneness " of which He speaks is His great and earnest desire for us ; shall it not be ours too for ourselves and one another ?

H.B.

BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE.

(Cut this page out and keep it in your Bible.)

THE TESTIMONY TO THE DEITY OF CHRIST

(John 5. 32-end).

First Witness.—John the Baptist (verses 32-35).

The purpose of his mission (a) to bear witness of the Light (John 1. 7). (b) to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1. 17) ; this involved repentance. The Jewish nation as a whole were not "prepared for the Lord" so this part of John's mission was incomplete. The first part, however, he unerringly fulfilled as mentioned in John 1. 15, 29-36.

John the Baptist did not perhaps expect the Lord to come in lowly manner : he expected judgment and the commencement of millennial kingdom (Matthew 3. 2-12)—which would have been if the people had received his message (see Matthew 11. 14 and Malachi 4. 5-6). John, languishing in prison began to doubt, and though graciously encouraged by the Lord, he is not the greatest witness—"I receive not testimony from man" (John 5. 34).

Second Witness.—"The works which the Father hath given Me to finish" (verse 36).

Note also the references to this witness in John 10. vv. 25, 37 and 38). These "works" include :

Miracles such as healing the sick (see Psalm 103. 3, etc.) ;

Raising the dead specifically marking Him out as "Son of God" . . . by resurrection of (such as were) dead (Rom. 1. 4).

Command of Nature (Matthew 8. 26-27 and John 6. 5-14).

Only a very few are recorded—note the purpose for which they are written (John 20. 30-31). Especially in John's Gospel they have the object of showing the glory of the Lord's Person as John 2. 11 ; 4. 48 ; 6. 6 ; 9. 3 ; 11. 4).

Kindness, truth and grace showed Who He was (Luke 9. 56 ; 4. 22 ; John. 7. 46).

Most people refused this witness. Notable exceptions are Nicodemus (John 3. 2) ; Nathanael (John 1. 47-49).

Third Witness.—"The Father Himself" (verse 37-38).

There are two notable occasions on which the Father gave public testimony to the Son :

At Jordan when the Lord was baptised (Matthew 3. 17), possibly this was the basis of John the Baptist's statement in John 1. 29-36).

On the mount of transfiguration (Matthew 17. 5)—Peter mentions this as a proof that the Gospel is not "cunningly devised fables" (2 Peter 1. 16-18).

Fourth Witness.—The Scriptures (verse 39).

The Jews thought the possession of the Scriptures gave them eternal life (and they were privileged to have them—Rom. 3. 1-2), yet they would not come to the very One of Whom those Scriptures speak.

Do we understand the Scriptures ? (See Luke 24, verses 26-27, 44-45), or are we like those in 2 Corinthians 3. 14 ? How very solemn to think we can know the Scriptures and still refuse God's Saviour (see Acts 13. 27).

Here the Lord refers to the Old Testament which is full of many prophecies of Himself. How many references can you find in Matthew's Gospel? There are quotations from Micah (Matt. 2. 5-6), Isaiah (Matt. 4. 14-16), Zechariah (Matt. 21. 4-5), Psalms (Matt. 27. 35) to quote only a few.

Note the authority the Lord attaches to the Old Testament (verses 46-47)—a stern rebuke to those who profess to believe Christ and deny the Bible. Moses wrote OF CHRIST by the Spirit of God (note how this thought is amplified in 1 Peter 1. 10-12 and 2 Peter 1. 21). See also Luke 24. 25-27.

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“THE SOUL OF THE SLUGGARD DESIRETH AND HATH NOTHING.”

“I would give anything to be able to play as you can,” said one, as he watched a musical friend at the organ—his hands apparently so easily finding their unerring way. “No you wouldn’t,” bluntly replied the musician, “you wouldn’t give the time.”

Here surely, is a truth that may be applied in things spiritual. The verse in Proverbs 13. which is quoted at the head of this article goes on to say “but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” There are many Christians who will say with a sigh “I wish I knew my Bible like Mr. So-and-so does.” Or “such and such a brother seems to be much more in the spirit of the Lord’s mind than I am.” There may of course be various reasons for spiritual poverty, but here surely is one of them. Maybe I have been lazy in divine things: I do not find time for reading, for prayer, for meditation: I am perhaps, too fond of ease and comfort to bestir myself to “get understanding.”

Sad to say, too, there are those who are by no means lazy in the ordinary affairs of life—their business, their pastimes—who still are very lethargic about their spiritual life. They desire—oh, yes, they are conscious of their lack, but still “they have nothing.”

“The soul of the *diligent* shall be made fat.” How Scripture presses this point! “God is a rewarder of them that *diligently* seek Him” (Heb. 11. 6), “giving all *diligence*, add to your faith virtue,” etc. (2 Pet. 1. 5).

“*Study* to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed” (2 Tim. 2. 15). “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim. 4. 13). “Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15. 58). Here are a few of very many scriptures which impress the same truth so tersely put in Proverbs, “The soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” There is no royal road, no easy path, to experience in the things of the Lord; this experience can be obtained only by the diligence of a devoted heart. We all covet it; may we have grace to pursue it along this road. H.W.M.

“Though God marks what is wrong in His servants notwithstanding all their faithfulness, He never forgets that which is right in them notwithstanding all their imperfections.”

* * *

“When we ask for more communion with God, are we willing to part with all that hinders? Let us take heed that our ways agree with our words, when we come to the Mercy-seat.”

* * *

“By far the greater part of the sins of God’s children are sins of ignorance. How needful therefore is the cry ‘Cleanse Thou me from secret faults’—faults hidden from mine own eye and mine own conscience. Without atoning blood they would bring down God’s curse upon the offender’s head. Let us not make light of ‘sins of ignorance.’”

EPISTLES OF CHRIST.

"Ye are . . . the epistle of Christ"—2 Cor. 3. v. 3.

WHAT an honour belongs to every believer in Christ, that we are called "the epistle of Christ"—a letter which can be read by those who will not read the Word of God. What kind of letter do they see?

Perhaps some of you are saying, "I could not possibly be an epistle of Christ." But you will notice if you turn up the passage, that it does not say we try to be an epistle, but that "*ye are*"—for God by His Spirit is writing Christ on our lives, thus enabling us to be Christ's letters of commendation to this world. May we be subject to His Spirit, so as not to blur the record.

Imagine yourself walking through a cemetery and looking at the tomb-stones. Many can be read quite easily, but some are covered by moss and dirt so that nothing can be seen. If, however, you take a knife and scrape the dirt away, the writing becomes quite distinct, and you can read the inscription.

Sometimes through carelessness and neglect of reading the Word of God, the inscription of Christ is quite blurred, so that those who meet us would not know that we are His. But when the keen edge of God's Word discovers our failure, and we are humbled and own our sin, then again Christ can be seen in us by those around us.

It was said that even the enemies of Peter and John "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." May we be like them! After all, it is what we are left here for, to "show forth the praises (virtues) of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."

* * *

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2. v. 20.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

Faith allows God to choose.

Read Gen. 13. 5-18.

WHEN God in His sovereignty chose Abraham, He "called him alone," and commanded him to separate from both country and kindred. We have seen that Abraham separated from his country; the portion of the narrative we are now considering shows how he finally cast off every earthly tie to walk solely before his God.

Abraham and Lot were both righteous persons; both were (as we speak) saved persons, and in that sense they had much in common. But (as it has been truly said) "The man of God must walk alone," for in the walk of faith, God requires that those whom He chooses must lean only on Himself. As Christians, we are members one of another, and so seek to bear "one another's burdens"; but we have also our individual pathway, and in it "every man shall bear his own burden."

Abraham was "very rich," and Lot also had great possessions. Had Lot prospered because he companied with one who was being so signally blessed by God? Whether or not, the record states in connection with these riches that "*Lot, which went with Abraham, had flocks and herds and tents.*"

The faith of one cannot support another or ask him to walk in the same path; and so the land to which Abraham alone had been called "was not able to bear" the demand now put upon it. To the credit of Abraham and Lot it is said that the strife was not between themselves, but between their respective herdmen: nevertheless Abraham, who had publicly from his altar called on the Name of his God, so confessing Him before the heathen around, was sensitive of the testimony that both he and Lot bore. The eyes of others looked on—"The Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land."

In this incident, we have the first indication of the meekness of Abraham's character; it is beautifully

developed in his later trials. Hear his gentle pleading with one who was in several respects his inferior. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee . . . for we be brethren." Well, he knew the danger of the strife between the herdmen growing till he and his nephew were involved. He checked it at the commencement, and his "soft answer" turned away wrath.

Abraham's offer to Lot is marked both by meekness and dependence—meekness in his attitude to his brother, dependence on the will of God. (How these traits were blended in perfection in the One Who was later found treading the very soil where Abraham walked—the perfect Man, God's beloved Son!) The land was Abraham's, and yet he offers a choice to Lot; he knew that the God Who had called him would amply provide for him, whatever the immediate result appeared to be. And we know the end of each—the one who chose according to the sight of his eyes lost all, and was "scarcely saved" as by fire: he who simply rested in God is rewarded in both outward prosperity and inward joy in communion.

"Lot lifted up his eyes," but no higher than the surrounding scene. He beheld the well-watered plains, and so engrossed in them did he become, that he even imagined they were "as the garden of the Lord" from which his first parents were expelled. Had he but reflected, he might have known that Eve once imagined that the forbidden tree was in "the midst of the garden"—the centre of her desires.

But the choice was made. The separation came, and Abraham dwelled still as a heavenly pilgrim "in the land of Canaan," whilst Lot from then onward was a dweller in "the cities of the plain." Lot obtains nothing but anxiety and conflict and continual vexing of "his righteous soul"; while the man of faith moves on in a purer, calmer atmosphere, enjoying surely something of that peace promised to those who commit all their affairs to God, even "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

This section of the record closes with Abraham in his turn lifting up his eyes, but how different the circumstances ! This is at the invitation of the God Who now has His chosen ones separated to Himself ; and promise after promise (" grace upon grace ") is given. Nothing is too great to give, when God chooses to bless with His own " good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over," consistent with His own nature. And Abraham's heart responds by another act of worship—he " built there an altar unto the Lord." In spirit he exclaims, " Blessed be . . . God . . . Who hath blessed us ! "

J.R.G.

DEPART FROM EVIL . . . AND DO GOOD.

THERE are far too many "negative Christians." They are the sort who are always saying, "I never do that." "Oh, no, I wouldn't say that." "No, I don't believe that." It is true that the Christian is exhorted to refrain from certain things, and indeed wants to ; but there are also very many exhortations as to what he should do. It has been truly said "The Spirit is not satisfied with mere abnegation of evil, but produces positive virtue." Make your own list of good things the Scriptures tell us to put in place of bad things unconverted people are guilty of. Here are a few to start the list.

Reckon . . . yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin	BUT	alive unto God...	Romans 6. 14
Putting away lying ...		speaking every man truth ...	Ephesians 4. 25
Steal no more	BUT RATHER	labour . . . that he may have to give to him that need- eth ...	4.28
Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth ...	BUT	that which is good to the use of edifying	4. 29
Let all bitterness . . . be put away		be ye kind one to another ...	4. 31
Neither filthiness nor foolish talking	BUT RATHER	giving of thanks	5. 4
Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness	BUT RATHER	reprove them ...	5. 11
Be not drunk with wine ...	BUT	be filled with the Spirit	5. 18

C.G.M.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER'S AIM.

(This paper appeared some few years ago in a paper devoted to the Lord's service, "To every man his work". It is reprinted here as being more than ever timely.)

IN days like the present, when the forces of evil are so manifest, and the attention paid to children in every sphere is so increased, all those who teach in the Sunday School should ask themselves what their great aim is, in connection with their work.

Do we set out to educate the children, or simply to teach them scriptures and hymns? Or can we sum up our objective in the words of the apostle when he wrote, "I am made all things to all men, that I might *by all means save some*"¹

There never was a time when the devil was busier in trying to capture the children. His agents are to be found in the cinema, where the children have a chance to see all the wickedness possible, and to hear what no children should hear. Then there are some day school teachers who insidiously instil into the minds of the children that they need not believe the Bible. There are the Red Sunday Schools, some Proletarian, some Communist, all teaching the little ones the most awful blasphemy. The papers that the children read are filled with that which can never lift their hearts heavenward.

We are living in a solemn time! What are we doing, we who know the Lord, know His saving grace, His willingness and power to save? Are we seeking by all means in our power to save some from the clutches of Satan and the doom of the unsaved?

Then there is another question. How much longer have we to bring the Gospel before the children? We speak of the Lord's coming, and everything surely indicates that it is drawing nigh; so we may really have very little time left at our disposal. How the words of the Lord Jesus ring in our ears, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."² How ready He was to meet every need. Nicodemus found Him perfectly accessible

at night. The woman of Samaria found Him equally ready to speak at noonday, wearied though He might be.

Now He is away in the glory and His word to us surely is "*Occupy* till I come." There is a limit to our opportunities ; and His coming, which will call us to glory, will leave those unsaved behind for judgment. May we be stirred up to

**“ Work while the daylight lasteth
Ere the shades of night come on,
Ere the Lord of the vineyard cometh
And the labourer’s work is done.”**

Our desire is that the Lord may bring home to the hearts of each of us who labour among the young, how short the time is, the imminence of His coming, and the realisation that nothing less than the salvation of the children should be our object.

“ Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.” Rom. 13. 11.

“ The time is short.” 1 Cor. 7. 29.

¹ 1 Cor. 9. 22. ² John 9. 4.

- - - - -

**Oh, teach me what it meaneth,
That cross uplifted high,
With One—the Man of sorrows—
Condemned to bleed and die !
Oh teach me what it cost Thee
To make a sinner whole ;
And teach me, Saviour, teach me
The value of a soul !
Oh, teach me what it meaneth—
That love beyond compare,
The love that reacheth deeper
Than depths of self-despair !
Yea, teach me, till there gloweth
In this cold heart of mine
Some feeble, pale reflection
Of that pure love of Thine.**

NEWS THE ANGELS BROUGHT.

WHEN God has news for men which He sends an angel to tell, we may be sure that the tidings is of the utmost importance. There are three outstanding cases of this in the New Testament, and they are all concerned directly with the Person of our Lord.

1. HIS BIRTH. How well we know the story of the shepherds abiding in the fields, and how the blackness of the night was dispelled suddenly by "the glory of the Lord," and by the appearance of an angel. Wonderful task that angel had! By him, God was breaking the silence of four hundred years since the days of Malachi, and breaking the silence by the glad and wonderful tidings "Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which Christ the Lord."

There may have been many baby boys born that night in that land; but this One! How different from them all—from every son of man that had ever been born into the world! Here was the Second Man, the Lord from heaven;¹ Here was Immanuel, God with us;² here was the "woman's Seed" which should "bruise the serpent's head."³ Here, at last, was He of Whom Moses and prophets had written, the Child that should be born, the Son that should be given,⁴ Whose name shall be called Jesus "for He shall save His people from their sins."⁵ Small wonder that such wonderful news should be brought direct from the presence of God by His angel, or that the multitude of the heavenly host should join in the chorus of praise.

But the life so joyously heralded, began under an ominous cloud—"there was no room for them in the inn." This was a true portent of the pathway of Him Who had to say "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." His pathway here on earth was trodden to the will of God; trodden amidst the sin, the scorn, the

coldness of men ; trodden till it ended in the cross of Calvary.

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

No angel heralded His death ; it was plainly seen—seen in triumph by His enemies, in bitter grief by those devoted hearts who had come to trust and love Him.

2. HIS RESURRECTION. But great tidings was at hand—again glad tidings, surely the gladdest tidings that ever reached men’s ears. It can be told best in the words of Scripture. “ And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye ; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified, **HE IS NOT HERE, FOR HE IS RISEN !** ”*

Happy angel to have a message like that ! How much it means ; for in this news we learn that Christ has conquered sin, Satan and death, and won for us salvation. It means that His sacrifice, His death, has atoned for our sins, that the work has been accepted, that our sins are gone and God is glorified. He had been “ delivered for our offences ” ; now He is “ raised again for our justification.” And the weakest believer is made partaker of His victory (1 Corinthians 15. 57).

3. HIS ASCENSION. His work accomplished, He left the world as He said, to “ go to the Father.” We read the account in the last chapter of Luke and in the first chapter of Acts ; how He went up—His hands raised in blessing, and His disciples gazing in rapt wonder till the cloud received Him out of their sight. Then they were accosted by two angels who gave them the great news that He was coming again. What greater comfort in their loneliness, what greater incentive to their efforts than this—“ He is coming back ! ” The effect on these men was that they returned to Jerusalem “ with great joy.”

May our hearts dwell on these great themes, His incarnation, which “ opened first the tale of grace ” ; His resurrection, glorious answer of God to His atoning

death ; and His coming again to claim His Church, His Bride, to claim His Kingdom and His right.

Just one last thought. When He does come again for us, He will not depute an angel to do it, "The Lord HIMSELF . . . shall descend." "

"Blessed hope, blessed rest, of my soul." H.W.M.

¹ 1 Cor. 15. 47.

² Matt. 1. 23.

³ Gen. 3. 15.

⁴ Isa. 9. 6.

⁵ Matt. 1. 21.

⁶ Matt. 28. 5, 6.

⁷ 1 Thess. 4. 16.

FRAGMENTS.

"God holds us accountable for what we have, not for what we have not. If I have only ten minutes to read the Word, do I employ those ten minutes according to my accountability?"

* * *

"How strange it would seem to us to see a prince in sorry garments seated on the ale-bench in company with common men ! How much greater the inconsistency when a child of the living God, a king and a priest unto God, degrades himself to unworthy fellowship !"

PRAYER.

A CHRISTIAN cannot always hear, or always read, or always communicate, but he may pray continually. No place, no company, can deprive him of this privilege. If he be on the top of a house, like Peter, he may pray ; if he be at the bottom of the ocean, with Jonah, he may pray ; if he be walking in the field, with Isaac, he may pray when no eye seeth him ; if he be waiting at table, with Nehemiah, he may pray when no ear heareth him ; if he be on the mountain with our Saviour, he may pray ; if he be in prison with Paul, he may pray. Wherever he is, prayer will not be out of place, or wherever prayer is out of place, there *he* ought not to be. Every saint is God's temple, and "he that carrieth his temple about with him (as Augustine has said) may go to prayer when he pleaseth." Indeed, to a Christian, every house is a house of prayer, every closet a chamber of presence, and every place he cometh to, an altar whereon he may offer the sacrifice of prayer.

THE PARENTHESES OF SCRIPTURE.

IT is profitable and important, when reading the Scriptures, to notice the parentheses occurring therein, for there are many such passages in the New Testament. A dictionary definition of a parenthesis is, "An explanatory word or clause inserted in a sentence, which is grammatically complete without it." In the apostle Paul's writings such insertions, some brief, others lengthy, are frequent. The whole of the third chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians is one of the latter; but how necessary and helpful it is, in order to expound the subject of the apostle (or, more correctly, the Holy Spirit through the apostle). Another fairly lengthy parenthesis in the apostle Paul's writings is found in Romans 5. 13 to 17. There are others.

Turning to the Gospel according to John, there are two very important parentheses in the first chapter. In verse 14 one is plainly indicated in the Authorised Version; but the whole of verse 15, not so indicated, is also a parenthesis.

Verses 14 to 18 are grammatically complete without these parentheses—let us read the passage omitting them: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; for of His fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace. For the law was given by Moses: grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the Only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, *He* hath declared Him" (New Translation).

But what fullness and riches those parentheses shed upon the whole passage; surely, they are "explanatory words or clauses" of very great significance.

Verse 14 reads, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (*and we contemplated His glory, a glory as of an Only-begotten with a Father*), full of grace and truth." God was speaking in the Person of the Son, the brightness of God's glory; God manifest in flesh; the

Word (the Word was God) become flesh and dwelling among those who could contemplate His glory ! How John and his fellow-believers delighted to contemplate that glory, and to dwell in its brightness, may be gathered from the opening verses of his First Epistle. And he writes about it with the desire that all believers may share in the joyous contemplation.

John 1. 17 recalls that God had once before spoken, from Mount Sinai, where the majesty of His glory was seen ; but so far from Moses contemplating it with composure, so terrible was the sight that he said, " I exceedingly fear and quake." The people could not stand the light of the glory reflected in the face of Moses ; and they requested that God should not speak to them any more. *That was the Voice speaking through Moses from Sinai : " The law was given by Moses." How different when the Word became flesh : " Grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ,"* Whose glory could be contemplated and delighted in.

What beauty and fulness, therefore, is unfolded in that parenthesis of John 1. 1.4

The parenthetical verse 15 is also very important : it is John the Baptist's testimony to the One Who is presented as the Word become flesh : " He that comes after me is preferred before me, *for He was before me.*"

Wherever the " Spirit of truth " has led the writers of the " Scriptures of truth " to interpose a parenthesis (), a prayerful consideration of such yields much enlightenment.

H.S.

TAKE HEED TO THE MINISTRY
WHICH THOU HAST RECEIVED IN
THE LORD, THAT THOU FULFIL IT.

Col. 4. 17.

A WORD TO THE PREACHER.

(Extracted and adapted.)

“**L**OOK upon every soul before you ; believe that every one has a conscience and a deep-seated want of something far higher and greater than any of the miserable substitutes with which he has been striving to satisfy his soul. Lift up before him the cross ; let your ministry be the bringing him as a sinner, to a blessed Saviour. Let this be not only the front of your address, but let it fill your soul as you deal with his ; and, as the ‘ streams in the south,’ the hardened hearts shall, of God’s mercy, ‘ turn again.’ Settle it in your inmost conviction, that just as far as you are enabled to bring out before men this one central idea of Christianity, just so far do you, in God’s name, command the homage of their souls ; that in it is the strength of Moses’ rod—of the prophet’s voice : that when it strikes, the rocks must melt ; when it speaks the streams must distil ; that it alone can bring the satisfaction after which men’s hearts have all along been thirsting.

Keep ever in view, as you look upon your audience, the true cause of man’s wretchedness, separation from God, and its only cure, the work of Christ.

Carry this out as you would have your ministry blessed. Resolve in God’s strength that you will ever close your ears to the whispers of earthly wisdom ; that against the representations of false delicacy you will ever harden your face ; that against the substitutes of man’s invention in place of this pure and simple Gospel, you will ever testify ; that this, and this only will you know amongst your congregation, ‘ **JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED** ’ ? ”

- - - - -

“ **This is the message that I bring,
A message angels fain would sing.
Oh, be ye reconciled, thus saith my Lord and King,
Oh, be ye reconciled to God.** ”

BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE.

THE WITNESS OF NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES TO CHRIST.

(Cut this page out and keep it In your Bible.)

1. **Additional evidence.**

When the Lord was on earth, people had only the Old Testament (the "scriptures" of John 5. 39), and these witnessed of Christ (Acts. 10. 43). But since His resurrection He has given us further witness; firstly in His apostles (Acts 10. 39) and—preserved to our days—in their writings.

2. **The accuracy of the witness.**

The writers of the New Testament were not left to their own memories. They received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2. 4) as the Lord had promised (John 14. 16-17), one of Whose functions was to recall to their memories what Jesus had said (John. 14. 26).

This is how, for example, John, writing his gospel by the Spirit in A.D. 90, was able to record accurately events of 60 years previously. (Notice how he gives long discourses in full.) This is how Luke had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first". (Luke 1. 3.)

The Holy Spirit also showed writers the significance of the incidents—hence such annotations as John 2. 21-22; 6. 6; 12. 16; 13. 1; and 19. 35 "... that ye might believe," which certainly would not have been inserted by ordinary historians.

3. **The amplification of the witness.**

The Holy Spirit not only gave a correct history of the Lord's life, but was also to "teach them all things" (John 14. 26), and guide into ALL truth (John 16. 13).

According to John 16. 12, great truths which our Lord mentioned only briefly or in parables are expounded in the epistles, e.g. the truth as to the Church, mentioned by the Lord in Matthew 13, and Matthew 16. 18, is expounded in Ephesians, Colossians (1. 25), Corinthians; the truth as to the liberty of believers, mentioned in John 8. 32-36, is expounded in Romans and Galatians; the truth of the Lord's atoning death, mentioned in John 6. 51-57 and Mark 10. 35 is expounded in many parts of the epistles, notably Hebrews.

4. **The completeness of the witness.**

(a) The fourfold account of His life God was manifest in flesh (1 Tim. 3. 16).
"We beheld His glory" (John 1. 14).

Matthew shows the Lord as God's King (Psalm 2. 6) presented to the Jewish nation in fulfilment of prophecy (Zech. 9. 9; Jeremiah 23. 5).

Note the many quotations in this Gospel from the O.T. Scriptures and also the genealogy through the kingly line.

Mark shows Him as God's servant, as prophesied in Zech. 3. 8 and Isaiah 42. 1. He is also seen as serving men in their need.

Luke shows Him as God's Man (Zech. 6. 12). His genealogy is given through Mary (ch. 3), He was "the woman's seed" (Gen. 3. 15) (see Galatians 3. 4). Note frequent references to prayer in this gospel—the Lord as perfect, dependant Man shows us the necessity of this. Note also frequent use of title "Son of man."

John shows Him as Son of God (Isaiah 40. 9). Miracles are recorded to show His deity, e.g. 2. 11 ; 11. 4. Note that refusal of Him by the Jews because of this claim, is recorded by John alone (chapter 10. 31 et seq. and 19. 7).

(b) Rejected by men, His present glories are known by faith.

The Acts and Epistles tell of a glorified Christ, gone into the heavens. See e.g. Acts 2. 36 ; 2 Cor. 4. 6 ; 2 Cor. 3. 18.

(c) His glory to be revealed on the earth in power.

The Revelation shows the consummation of all God's purposes : most of its prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. We see the Lord exercising judgment in His Church (chapters 1-3), in the world (after the Church is taken out of it)—chapters 4-19—and finally the judgment of the unbelieving dead (chapter 20. 11-15).

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“THE WORD OF GOD TO MY SOUL.”

THE Bible not merely was inspired, but is so still. The Holy Ghost not merely inspired the men as they wrote, but He is still connected with the Scripture. It was originally Spirit-breathed, but the Spirit is still breathing on it. When the soul, thirsting after God, reads the words, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters . . . buy wine and milk without money and without price ;” when the burdened heart and oppressed conscience reads the words, “ Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” the words are breathed again by the Spirit. It seems as if the ink were not yet dry, and as if the warm breath of eternal love, from which these promises flowed, was even now quickening and consoling the troubled soul. The Spirit makes the Scriptures a living word. The Spirit breathes here as in no other book. He makes the writing spirit and life, and man lives by it, because it is word proceeding *even now* out of the mouth of God. He who has experienced this can have no doubt about the origin of Scripture ; for in his measure he receives it

from God Himself as David, Isaiah, Paul, John received it. It is to him a Divine word. He knows not merely it is written, but that it is the living word and voice of the Lord. In obeying its precepts, he knows he acts in obedience to his heavenly Father ; in resting on the promises and assurances which he reads in Scripture, he is convinced he is trusting in the Lord his God and Redeemer ; and when, in the hour of his departure, his soul clings to the consolations of strong hope, set before us in the Word, it is the voice of the Saviour Himself, who says to him, " Be of good cheer, it is I."

" *Christ and the Scriptures* "—DR. A. SAPHIR.

THE SILENT MESSENGERS.

TRACTS can go everywhere. Tracts know no fear. Tracts never tire. Tracts can be multiplied without end by the press. Tracts can travel at little expense. They run up and down like the angels of God, blessing all, giving to all, and asking no gift in return. They can talk to one as well as to a multitude ; and to a multitude as well as to one. They require no public room to tell their story in ; they can tell it in the kitchen or the shop, in public or in private, in the railway carriage or omnibus, on the broad highway or in the footpath through the fields. They take no note of scoffs, or jeers, or taunts. No one can betray them into hasty or random expressions. Though they will not always answer questions, they will tell their story twice or thrice or four times over if you wish them. And they can be made to speak on every subject, and on every subject they may be made to speak wisely and well. They can, in short, be made vehicles of all truth ; the teachers of all classes ; the benefactors of all lands.

[*The little piece above is copied from an old magazine published some sixty years ago. But it remains true today, and perhaps one of the most profitable ways today of spreading the Gospel is by the use of well-chosen tracts.*]

THE BIBLE.

Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord
 True wisdom its pages unfold
 And though we may read them a thousand times o'er
 They never, no never grow old.
 Each line hath a treasure, each promise a pearl,
 That all, if they will, may secure,
 And we know that when time and the world pass away,
 God's Word shall forever endure.

Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord
 The lamp that our Father above
 So kindly hath lighted to teach us the way
 That leads to the arms of His love,
 Its warnings, its counsels are faithful and just ;
 Its judgments are perfect and pure ;
 And we know that when time and the world pass away,
 God's Word shall for ever endure.

Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord !
 Our only salvation is there ;
 It carries conviction deep down in the heart
 And shows us ourselves as we are.
 It tells of a Saviour, and points to the cross,
 Where pardon we now may secure ;
 For we know that when time and the world pass away,
 God's Word shall for ever endure.

Oh, wonderful, wonderful word of the Lord !
 The hope of our friends in the past ;
 The truth where so firmly they anchored their trust,
 Through ages eternal shall last.
 Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord !
 Unchanging, abiding and sure ;
 For we know that when time and the world pass away,
 God's Word shall for ever endure.

FRUIT-BEARING.

IN another paper in this issue of THE CHRISTIAN POST, the subject is dealt with of the activities of our God and Father with us in order that we may "bear fruit." What exactly do we mean by the words "fruit bearing?"

In the first place, let us remember that fruit is for the owner of the garden; others may benefit by it, but its first purpose is for the pleasing of the One who planted the garden; this means, of course, that "fruit" in this connection means what is for the glory of God.

Secondly, fruit is not the result of some special effort on the part of the tree; if the tree is healthy and in proper surroundings, then fruit is the natural outcome. The "fruit" of the spirit is contrasted with the "works" of the flesh in Galatians, chapter 5.

Fruit for God, then, is anything in our lives that pleases Him, being for His glory; and this is the natural outcome of a healthy Christian life. But there has only been one Man on this earth of whom God could say "I am well pleased," and that is the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are told in I Peter 2. 21 that He has left "us an example, that ye should follow His steps." We may then say that "*fruit is the expression of Christ in the believer.*" A well-known writer says on this point, "We read in Galatians 5: 22, 23, that 'the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control.' What is this, however, but a beautiful description of Christ as He passed through the world in humiliation? Hence, if such fruit is seen in believers, it will result in the reproduction of Christ in His people. Christ personally has gone from this scene, but it is God's intention that Christ characteristically should be still seen in those that are Christ's."

"Fruit" may be service to others, it may be preaching, or any other work which can be seen and appreciated by many people; but a Christian may not be able to do any of these things, may be in a most humble and unnoticed position, and yet may produce the most

precious fruit for God. To bear trials without pining, to bear insults and slights without getting angry, to serve the Lord's people in any one of a hundred small ways that are so easily passed by in this busy world—what precious fruit these are for the eye of God, for Whom and in Whose strength they are done. “The expression of Christ in a believer”—the expression of Him Who said “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.”²

And how can we learn thus to be the “expression of Christ”? Not by trying and striving—not by making legal requirements for ourselves, but by thinking of Him, living by Him, and looking, by faith, upon His blessed face. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, *are changed into the same image*, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”³

H.W.M.

¹ Matt. 3. 17.

² John 6. 30.

³ 2 Cor 3. 18.

RESOURCE IN SORROW.

We cannot always trace the way
Where Thou, our gracious Lord dost move ;
But we can always surely say,
That God is love.

If fear its gloomy cloud should fling
O'er earth, our souls to heaven above
As to their sanctuary spring,
For God is love.

When clouds hang o'er our darkened path,
We'll check each dread, each doubt reprove ;
For here each saint sweet comfort hath,
That God is love.

Yes, Thou art love ; a truth like this
Can every gloomy thought remove,
And turn our tears and woes to bliss ;
OUR GOD IS LOVE !

J. BOWRING.

“ I HAVE GIVEN THEM.”

(John 17.)

IN this remarkable prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ to His Father, we are told something of the provision He has made for us, “ those whom Thou hast given Me.” It is indicated by the occurrence of the words, “ I have given them ” or similar expressions, and we get four of these in the chapter.

Our Lord was going away from His disciples to His Father, having finished the work of redemption which He came to do—“ to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” But His disciples would be still left in this world—the world which had rejected Him and would surely persecute His followers. He had told them Himself, “ In the world ye shall have tribulation.” So His thoughts were with them in this connection, as they will be to the end.

In verse two we read “ As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should *give eternal life* to as many as Thou hast given Him.” They belonged to Him, and He had told them, “ Because I live, ye shall live also.” This fulfils, too, the word He spoke in the 6th chapter, “ This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone that seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life.” We are to be with Him, to be like Him, as joint heirs with Christ, and as sons and heirs of God ; so He gives us eternal life that all these blessings may have their fulfilment.

He had told them, too, in chapter 14 that in the mansions of the Father’s house He was going to prepare an abiding place for them, so that they might to the full and forever enjoy the love, joy and grace of the Father, and that in His own presence (“ Where I am, there ye may be also ”). These things could be enjoyed only by eternal life—the life of the knowledge of the Father and the Son—the “ true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”

Passing on to verse 8 we read " I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me." What words were these? Surely we find the answer in the remainder of the verse. They were the declarations He had made to them as to Who He was, and from whence He had come; words which told them of the wonderful love of God to guilty fallen men; words which told them how that in Jesus Christ, Whom the Father had sent, all the will of God should find fulfilment.

In chapter 16, verse 27, we read, " For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from God "; their answer in verse 30 was, " We believe that Thou camest forth from God." So verse 30 of our chapter records: " They have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." Included in these words would be the work He came to do, work of untold blessing to mankind, and of infinite glory to God; of His death in order that men should be brought to God. They had received His words, and we, who also have received them and believe, share the blessing.

The next passage is in verse 14, " I have given them Thy WORD." This would seem to imply something greater—more all-embracing. We take this to include all the unfoldings of the purposes of God to those who believe. In a world where they would certainly be misunderstood and persecuted—a world which had rejected and crucified their Lord, how could they be better sustained and preserved but by " Thy Word "? The knowledge of the purposes of the Father that He was *their* Father; that they, through faith in our Lord Jesus, had been begotten of God to be His children; that they live because He lives; that His Father's house was their home, His joy fulfilled in them, they were loved as the Son is loved, and above all, the Father's purposes for the glory of His Son—all this is comprised in " Thy WORD," and how it can sustain the soul of the Christian in adverse circumstances.

They were to be His witnesses, sent forth into the world, and they needed the word that they might be sanctified in such a place. They were to be kept in the name of the "Holy Father" (v. 11), that they should be "holy and without blame before Him in love," and the sanctifying is to be by "Thy Word . . . truth" (verse 17).

Finally He gives us His glory; "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." This is not, of course, His essential Godhead glory (spoken of in verse 5)—none can share that—but it is the glory acquired through His condescension, humiliation and His work to the glory of God.

While it has not yet been manifested, has it not even now been in a measure given to those He loves? Surely so, for He has brought us into relationship with Himself; He is "not ashamed to call them brethren."³ His God is our God; His Father, our Father. Surely this new relationship is the first answer to His sharing this glory with us.

And what is the end, the consummation? It is that those whom He has won at such a cost to Himself should be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He should be "glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe."⁴ We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

H.B.

¹ Heb. 9. 26.

² John 16. 33.

³ Heb. 2. 11.

⁴ 2 Thess 1. 10.

A FRAGMENT.

"WHAT we need in these days are not men like Mr. By-ends (as in 'Pilgrim's Progress') who was born in the town of Fair-speech, and walked with Religion when she wore her silver slippers; but men whom neither the fear of man nor the love of the world will draw aside, who are not tossed about with every wind; but who, with their feet firmly planted on the Rock of Ages, say of pleasures and persecutions alike 'none of these things move me'."

S. A. BLACKWOOD.

THE TWO COAL FIRES.

“ *A fire of coals* ”—*John* 18. 18.

“ *A fire of coals* ”—*John* 21. 9.

VERY interesting is the likeness and then the contrast of the two scenes indicated by these two identical phrases. The likeness consists in several points. There is first, of course the incident, common to both, of the fire and its fuel. Further, there is the occurrence beside each fire of conversation, an interchange of questions and answers, in each case most pointed and memorable. Further, one principal speaker, the answerer, is the same on both occasions; it is Simon Peter, who is drawn on, in the presence of witnesses, each time, thrice in succession, to make assertions about his relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. Lastly, the Lord Himself is both times present, though on the first occasion it is only as an observer in the background, Who, probably from the wide-open chamber where He is placed before the unjust judge turns His sacred face to the courtyard and “ looks upon Peter ” as Peter stands by the fire of coals. On the second occasion He is the central Figure of the scene.

The contrasts on the other hand are at least equally remarkable. The scenes of the two kindlings are strikingly contrasted. The first was the central quadrangle of the high-priestly palace, thronged with a miscellaneous concourse of officials and lookers-on, while he who bore Aaron’s office was busy close by, hastening the doom and death of the true Melchizedek. It was night; it was the hour of the power of the darkness of the eternal night.

The second scene was the fair margin of lake Galilee, in the season of flowers and under the light of the rising day; and the only company was the risen Jesus and those seven favoured men who “ knew that it was the Lord.” From around Him had died away for ever the contradiction of sinners. He sat now, quiet and serene in the loving majesty of His victory for us, to bless, to

command, to empower His happy followers for their glorious work for Him.

Lastly on the first occasion, Peter's voice (as we seem to hear it) rises in its despair in loud appeals to heaven in "anathema and adjuration" denying all connection with Jesus, all knowledge of Him, as one rude enquirer and another, man and woman, challenges him to confess. On the other occasion that same voice is heard again, and once more in three successive utterances. This time it is the Lord who questions; and all that the apostle has to say is "Thou knowest that I love Thee; Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

It is a moving contrast all along; let it speak to us some of its manifold messages. We will look at Peter first, and then at the Lord.

Consider the apostle, first at one fireside and then at the other. Is it possible that we have the same person? This abjectly frightened man who denies his best, his glorious Friend, can he be the same with the man who sits by the side of that Friend and Master, calm, humble, entirely devoted, afraid now (so it seems) only of himself, simply affirming in terms profound for their brevity, his love? Yes, it is the same. Something has wrought an inconceivable revolution, which yet is actual. The ruin has been more than rebuilt. Old things have passed away, behold all things are new, and all things are of God. It is the same man; but it is a new creation. To the end, Peter is now the man, not of the first fireside, but of the second. "Thou knowest that I love Thee" is the account now of his whole life, till he stretches out his hands on the Roman cross, and by death glorifies God.

But then, the Lord. Here is the secret of the wonderful contrast between the Peter of the first fire of coals and the Peter of the second. It is that Jesus is the same, yesterday, on the first occasion, and today on the second. The heart of the wonderful Master is identical in both scenes. He "turned and looked on Peter" in his terrible fall, so that Peter did not throw himself away, but wept;

and He is the same when He approaches the man with that enquiry which opens up His own unalterable heart of love, "Do you love Me?"

And we, dear reader, you and I, in ourselves are just mirrored in Peter's weakness in himself. And for us, for you and me, this same Jesus is still the same, at the side of either fire of coals.

DR. H. C. MOULE.

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"THE first sound of the heart of 'the sweet singer of Israel' might well be thought strange in a world such as ours. It celebrates the happiness of the man who has fellowship with God, but no fellowship with the ungodly. Behold the man! his eye arrested, not by the things of earth, but by what has been sent down from heaven, the law of the Lord. He has found the river of living water. He is like a tree laden with fruit."

A. BONAR.

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"BUT I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words". 1 Thess, 4. 13-18.

WHY PRUNE ?

IN a gardening journal we came across the question "Why do we need to prune roses, shrubs, and fruit trees?" The writer goes on "In the natural state they thrive, blossom and bear fruits without any artificial aid. But compare the size of wild fruits with those on our cultivated trees, the wild roses with those in the rose garden, and the symmetry of well-grown shrubs with the ragged straggling specimens that are found in wild undergrowth."

The article went on to sum up the reasons for pruning as follows. (1) To thin out weak, overcrowded growths. (2) To direct the sap into those shoots which grew into the right direction, so that these should also receive the maximum of light and air and plant food. (3) To limit the size of a bush or tree where this is desirable. And (4) to make the tree or shrub grow properly balanced; a forked tree or one-sided specimen is more easily destroyed by gales than a normally well-balanced tree.

Surely there is an answer here to that vexed and trying question, so often raised "Why do trials come on the Christian; why is he not kept free from them?" This question is as old as mankind, but because of its intensely personal nature, is as much as ever before the minds of men.

The Lord Jesus, in His talk to His disciples on the last night before His crucifixion, told them, "I am the true vine and *my Father is the husbandman*. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, *that it may bring forth more fruit* . . . I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15).

If the branch could think, could speak, no doubt it would question the goodness of the gardener, or his skill, in cutting away so much of its substance. And Christians though we may be, this question of trial is apt to come up, and perhaps to be a very torment to the soul.

But our Father—the heavenly Gardener—knows so well what He is doing. It is for our best good, that we may be more fruitful to Him. The subject is dealt with very simply and helpfully in Hebrews 12. Here “the chastening of the LORD” is the subject, and three possible results are named.

Firstly, the soul may “despise” this chastening—may affect to take no notice of it, to treat it lightly. There is no good in that.

Or we may go to the opposite extreme and “faint” under it, that is sink in despair and despondency. Nor is there any good in that.

It then speaks of “them that are exercised thereby”; and of these it says that they “yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness,” thus connecting with John 15 in the most beautiful way.

As to what this “chastening,” this “purging” may be, of course none can say: it may take any of a thousand forms of trial. Sometimes we are allowed to prove the painful results of our own folly; or there may come across our path some totally unexpected (undeserved, Satan will tell us) trial. The important thing for us is to be “exercised thereby”—to say “Lord, what will Thou teach me by this?”

Now, just for a moment let us consider these ends of pruning.

1. To thin out overcrowded growth. Are we letting the cares, riches or pleasures of the world crowd out our spiritual life? If so, painful though pruning may be, we dare not say it is not needed.

2. To direct the sap into the shoots that grow in a right direction. It is never merely negative, but to strengthen what is of God in us.

**“Blest be the sorrow, kind the storm
That drives us nearer home.”**

These shoots of right growth are more likely to bear fruit, for the joy and delight of the Husbandman.

3. To limit the size of the tree, where desirable. Surely we may say to limit our size in our own estimation. How prone we are to think of our own importance "more highly than we ought to think." Here again, the pruning—the trial, the chastening—may be painful, but we must confess how necessary, if we are to be followers and learners of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart."

4. To make the tree grow strongly against the winter gales. That we may be able to stand against attacks from the world, from the Enemy, because we are not mere hot-house plants, ready to droop at the first blast of opposition, but sturdy, well weathered plants that will bear up against it.

Again, may we say, these results are worth while—they are essential to healthy growth. And without healthy growth there is no fruit—nothing in our lives for Him Who set His love upon us, and gave His Son to redeem us from all iniquity, to be zealous of good works. It is distasteful to us—of course it is, or it would miss its purpose. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous," and we would avoid it; but our heavenly Father (what a precious word) loves us too well for that, and will deal with us as He sees best, in perfect love, for our good, and for His glory.

H. W. M.

* * *

**Our times are in Thy hand
 Whatever they may be,
 Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,
 As best may seem to Thee.
 Our times are in Thy hand,
 Why should we doubt or fear ?
 A Father's hand will never cause
 His child a needless tear.**

BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE.

(Cut this page out and keep it in your Bible.)

RESURRECTION.

The Resurrection of Christ.

1.—The Fact of Resurrection.

One of the best attested facts of history. Note especially I Corinthians 15. 4-8, the living witness in Paul's day. A sevenfold witness comprising the scriptures, Peter, "the twelve," 500 believers at once, James, all the apostles, and finally Paul.

All these eye witnesses have now passed away, but we have in addition to the "scriptures" (i.e. of Old Testament) the fourfold account of the resurrection in the gospels. The Holy Spirit witnesses of the resurrection (Acts 5. 32).

The attempts of the religious leaders to prevent Christ's resurrection (Matt. 27. 62-66) make the witness of the empty tomb even more pointed.

Christ's resurrection was of a kind different from the Jews' idea of resurrection. His was resurrection "from among the dead"; they thought of a general resurrection of all the dead. See e.g. Mark 10. 9-10, where, as in many places, the reading should be "from among the dead."

2.—The Glory of Resurrection.

The Spirit of God delights to draw our attention to the exaltation of Christ—"far above all heavens" (Ephesians 4; see also the fine passage in Ephesians 1. 20-23).

- (a) The vindication of His Deity. He was the Resurrection and the Life (John 11. 25), and having laid down His life, He took it again of His own power (John 10. 17).
- (b) God's answer to the perfect life of His holy Servant, Who "set the Lord always before Him" and so His soul was not left in death (Psalm 16).
- (c) Men despised the Lord Jesus and crucified Him, but "God hath made this same Jesus Whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ"—He has been "by the right hand of God exalted" to His rightful place (Acts 2. 32-35).
- (d) The work of redemption is complete to God's satisfaction, believers are justified through the work He has done and His resurrection is the seal of this (Romans 4. 25).
- (e) God will judge the world in righteousness and Christ's resurrection is the pledge of it (Acts 17. 31).

3.—The Results of Resurrection.

- (a) Salvation is preached in the Name of "Jesus Christ of Nazareth Whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 4. 10-12). He is exalted "a Prince and a Saviour" (Acts 5. 31).
- (b) The Holy Spirit is given to indwell all believers (John 16. 7; Acts 2. 33—see also John 7. 37-39) and also to unite all believers in the "one Body" of Christ (I Corinthians 12. 12-26 and Eph. 4. 3).

- (c) To this "One Body," the true Church, the risen Christ gives gifts for its edification and growth (Eph. 4. 8-12).
- (d) He will come again (John 14. 3) to take all who believe on Him to His Father's house.
- (e) When this takes place, all believers who have died will themselves be raised from among the dead (I Corinthians 15. 21-23), and the living believers changed and taken (Philippians 3. 21).
- (f) While waiting for His coming we have a risen High Priest to keep us from sin (Hebrews 2. 17-18 and 4. 14-16), and, if we should fail and sin, we have an Advocate with the Father (I John 2. 1).
- (g) The judgment of those who reject Him is certain (Acts 17. 31).

Practical results affecting believers' lives also follows—we are "risen with Christ" in spirit and are to seek those things which are above (Colossians 3. 1). We are to "walk in newness of life" reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6. 1-14). We are to prove the "power of His resurrection" in our lives (Philippians 3. 10-11).

Note the terrible condition if Christ were not risen (I Cor. 15. 17).

4.—*The Witness of Resurrection.*

The resurrection of Christ is part of the Gospel (I Corinthians 15. 1-4). It was the keynote of Peter's address at Pentecost (Acts 2), the apostles' confession before the Sanhedrin (Acts 5. 29-32). Paul spoke of it at Antioch (Acts 13.20-39) and Athens (Acts 17. 29-31).

Any who deny this vital truth are preaching "another gospel"—a very serious matter (Galatians 1. 8).

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A STUDY IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity."

1 Cor. 16. 13, 14.

IN these verses we get a beautiful example of the balance of the Word of God, and hence of that character which becomes our Christian walk. We are so inclined to see only one side of a truth—to have a pet hobby-horse which we ride without regard to other considerations. But such is not the way God would have for us. He has given us His Word that "the man of God may be perfect (or complete) throughly furnished unto all good works."¹ So in the verses at the head of this paper we see this truth exemplified. "Watch ye"; this may be a warning or an invitation. As we think of the words as relating to our Lord's return, they are a comfort, to occupy our souls with that which is so dear to us. But such is not the import of the words here. It is a warning note that is sounded; it is similar to the words in 1 Peter 5, "Be sober, be *vigilant*; because your adversary the devil . . . walketh about, seeking whom he may devour". Here is

the reason for watchfulness. As long as the Christian is left in this world he is in an enemy's territory. That enemy is always trying to turn the Christian from his faith and duty, so that he may be brought to dishonour his Lord, and lose his own joy. And that enemy never rests; if then our guard is down, if we are not on the watch, we shall surely be caught one day, to our sorrow.

We can never afford to think we are safe from his attacks. In prosperous circumstances we must watch, or we shall find our prosperity is hindering our communion: in sorrow or distress that same enemy will whisper to us distrust of our Father's love. "WATCH YE". The rest of the verse gives a portrait of a sturdy character, holding fast that which we have learned; very different this from the weak and timid character that the world would like to put upon us. "The faith"—all that precious truth revealed to us by God in His word, and founded for us upon the work of the Lord Jesus. Here is a heritage worth standing for; it is the special object of the devil's attack—to "make shipwreck concerning faith". But stand fast in it, do not give it up. "Quit you like men, be strong" It sounds, as it is, like the cry of a commander in time of battle. The whole passage is a warning—an encouraging warning—to those who are facing a challenge.

But is that to make us hard, unfeeling, callous? No indeed! And hence the next verse so wonderfully keeps that perfect balance that is found throughout scripture. "Let all your things be done with charity (love)". It will be well known that desperate combat in human battles tends to make men hard—careless of scenes of sorrow and death. But our warfare against "spiritual wickedness in high places" is not to have that effect. Our ways in this world must be marked by love—that most lovely of words—the summary of all the fruits of the Spirit. Our thoughts to those still in their sins should be (in their measure of course) like those of God Himself Who "so loved the world". Even if we have to remonstrate with them, to condemn their ways, it must

be in love ! And too, our ways with our fellow Christians must be marked with love. The first Epistle of John in particular is full of this—and in this it but follows and enlarges upon the words of the Lord Himself, Who said, “A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another.” It may be that there are those who are truly the Lord’s people with whom we cannot walk, because of their ways ; still we must speak to them or of them in love. That this does not entail weakness, the former verse makes plain. Lovely combination ; strength and gentleness—truth and love. How completely this was seen in the walk and ways of Jesus—how perfect an Example, that we should “ follow His steps.” H.W.M.

¹ 2 Tim. 3. 17.

¹ 1 Tim. 1. 19.

He is not a disappointment !

**He has saved my soul from sin ;
All the guilt, and all the anguish
Which oppressed my heart within,
He has banished by His presence ;
And His blessed kiss of peace
Has assured my heart for ever
That His love will never cease.**

He is not a disappointment !

**He is all in all to me—
Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer,
The unchanging Christ is He.
He has won my heart’s affection,
And He meets my every need ;
He is not a disappointment
For He satisfies indeed.**

He is not a disappointment !

**He is coming by and by ;
In my heart I have the witness
That His coming draweth nigh.
All the mockers may despise me,
And around no change may see,
But He tells me He is coming
And that’s quite enough for me.**

THE PERFECT SERVANT.

(*Read Mark 10, vv. 32-45.*)

THIS passage of Scripture very strikingly illustrates the saying that is often heard "Love delights to serve; self wants to be served". Indeed, service is the keynote of this Gospel, which presents to us the Lord as Servant-Prophet. For instance there is no genealogy—one does not ask for such from a servant—so we have the Lord introduced at once to that life of devoted service to God and man.

How great the contrast to the self-seeking that is in all our hearts, which comes out in the desire of the two disciples for a special place, and, too, in the jealousy which this aroused in the hearts of the others. Then notice the gentle rebuke of our Lord; how graciously He speaks to them all, and then that verse which so wonderfully condenses that perfect life completes the paragraph. "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many".

He loved to call Himself "the Son of man". In the Old Testament where the prophets are addressed by that name, it was as those rejected by the people; is it not the same here? He had spoken of going to Jerusalem, there to be crucified. He had not come to be served, but to serve, and truly this characterised all the days of His flesh. Speaking of His Father, He could say "I do alway those things that please Him". In the 6th chapter of this Gospel we read how He called His disciples apart "to rest awhile", but the people pressed upon Him; He continues to them the loving service. There was no rest for Him: on the sabbath day it was He said "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work". How could He rest where sin was?

In all this, and indeed in much more—ininitely more—we see that which we are called to follow as in 1 Peter 2. "Leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps". Paul too, the inspired apostle, could not say

more than that they should follow him as he followed Christ.

In the latter part of verse 45, our Lord speaks of a work in which He must be alone "To give His life a ransom for many". We read in Hebrews "When He had *by Himself* purged our sins". None could share this work; it was between Himself and a God Who is holy and hates sin. He was the ransom of whom we read in Job 33, typified in the "half shekel of the sanctuary"¹ than which the rich could not bring more, and the poor must have no less. He gave Himself willingly, a life yielded up in death, the supreme act of obedience to God, all that was against us met and atoned for by Him Who was our Substitute—a "Ransom for many".

As we have said, we cannot follow Him in the work of the cross—that was His alone, and He has completed it once for all; but we are told "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus",² a mind of lowliness, obedience and self sacrifice. God give us grace then, "to follow His steps".

¹ Ex. 30. 15.

² Phil. 2. 5.

EXTRACTS :

"The One Who suffered on Calvary is the true God and eternal life. He is the only foundation of hope for an awakened conscience; He is the only Standard by which we can properly estimate the evil of sin, the worth of a soul or the love of God."

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"It is in the world that we have to fulfil our mission; that we have to glorify God; that we have to let our light shine; that we have to find precious souls to bring to the feet of Jesus. God has not purposed to take us out of it. We shall be exposed to its appeals, its fascinations, to its temptations, but we need not be overcome. We may be kept in the midst of all these, and the life that is kept is the victorious life."

“REDEMPTION . . . THROUGH HIS BLOOD.”

THERE are two thoughts included in the word “redemption” as used in the New Testament, the payment of a ransom, and the subsequent deliverance. Before we can consider the fact of our redemption, we must think of the state in which we were, which necessitated the advent of the Lord Jesus to redeem us. Not only were we sinners, but through the fall and the sin of man, Satan had acquired rights over the race and held the power of death, wielding it indeed as the just judgment of God. He thus became (because all had sinned) the god of this world, holding all men captive under his power and thrall. And we were helpless; we were shut up for ever, unless Someone from without, able and willing, should intervene to set us free from this captivity.

Let us consider then how the glorious fact of our redemption has been accomplished. As stated above, there are two parts—the price paid, and the deliverance effected; the claims of God met, and our being set free from the power of Satan.

The Price Paid.

Speaking to His disciples, our Lord said “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many”¹ and we read elsewhere He “gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time”. That is, He gave Himself in death. It is therefore the blood of Christ (for the life is in the blood) that was the price paid for our redemption. Hence St. Paul says “In whom we have redemption through His blood”² and St. Peter, in a well known passage, that we are “redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ.”³ No wonder he terms it precious, since it availed to meet all the claims of a holy God upon us, so that on such a foundation He could proclaim salvation available for all. It has truly met all the demands of divine justice—and not only so, but by its infinite value, the precious blood of Christ shed on Calvary has glorified God in all that He is.

The Consequent Deliverance.

If the first part of redemption was the payment of the ransom—and that as we have seen was done by the blood of Christ, the second truth is that believers are set free. None can be said to be redeemed unless and until they know not only that they are sheltered by the blood, but also that they are brought entirely out of Satan's realm, through death and judgment, by the death and resurrection of Christ. These two things—the shelter of the blood, and the deliverance—are often successive in our experience of them, though there is no reason why the whole fulness of redemption should not be received and enjoyed at the same time.

It may be well to explain a little more fully how our deliverance is effected in Christ. It is, then, of the first importance to know that not only has God dealt with the question of our sins—our guilt—but that He has also dealt with the sin itself—our evil nature—in the death of Christ. "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh". He has therefore judged sin in its root and branch, and hence Christ has met and broken the whole power of Satan in His death. The consequence is that, believing in Christ, I am brought through His death out of the old condition in which I lay, and by His resurrection brought into a new place, not only where there is no condemnation, but where the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Our redemption therefore is complete ; God has acted for us ; all His claims have been met by the blood of Christ, and He has brought us out of our old condition unto Himself.

The Redemption of the Body.

We must however note another point. While we are redeemed—as to our souls completely—we have to wait for the consummation of our redemption as to the body. Delivered from Satan's power, and from the wrath of God, and receiving the Holy Spirit as the earnest of our inheritance, we wait "for the adoption, to wit, the

redemption of our body".⁴ For in truth we are still in the world, and through our bodies linked with a groaning creation. We wait for the time when even our bodies will be redeemed, and for this we wait for our Lord's return. Then shall we see the glorious completeness of His redemption, that nothing shall be left in the hands of the enemy, but that spirit, soul and body alike are rescued and made His own.

Let us never forget at what a cost He has redeemed us. It is familiar to us to say it is with His blood ; but how little do we realise the meaning of the words. How little do we really understand that He gave Himself to die, that He was made sin for us. As we think of these things, surely it will lead us to join the song " Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever ".⁵

Abridged from "Christ our Redeemer" by E. Dennett.

¹ Mark 10. 45. ² Ep. 1. 7. ³ 1 Pet. 1. 18. ⁴ Rom. 8. 23. ⁵ Rev. 1. 5.

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**No blood, no altar now
The sacrifice is o'er ;
No flame, no smoke ascends on high,
The Lamb is slain no more :
But richer blood has flowed from nobler veins
To purge the soul from guilt, and cleanse the reddest stains.**

**We thank Thee for the blood
The blood of Christ, Thy Son :
The blood by which our peace is made,
Our victory is won ;
Great victory o'er hell, and sin, and woe
That needs no second fight and leaves no second foe.**

— — — — —
H. BONAR.

" The rule that governs my life is this ; anything that dims my vision of Christ, that takes away my taste for Bible study, cramps my prayer life or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it."

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

(Read Genesis 14).

The Rescue of Lot.

THERE may be dispensational teaching underlying the record of the war between the kings of Canaan, for all the details are very suggestive—rebellion and war, the deliverance of God's people (represented by Lot)—and the final appearing of the King-Priest bringing with him blessing and peace. But as our thought is to see the practical application of Abraham's life-story to our path today, it is to be noted that a lesson emphasised here is, that the man of faith not only keeps clear of the world's tumults, but that he has power to help others who may be ensnared in them.

Lot's peaceful and easy dwelling in Sodom was soon disturbed ; he did not seek the war, nor (we may assume) wish to be engaged in it. But the man who has chosen the world as his dwelling must perforce bear its trials, just as he had wished to share its benefits. As Sodom was destined to come into trouble, so this world is soon to be disturbed ; but in the revelation of " things that must shortly come to pass," the Lord's servants are warned that *now* they must come out of Babylon before her judgment falls : " Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."¹

Lot suffered loss in the war, and was taken captive with all his goods. It is significant that the record reads, " and they took Lot, *Abram's brother's son* ". How Abraham must have felt the shame of it all—his own " brother's son ", his own kindred taken captive by heathen kings !

But there was only one person who could really help Lot in his sad plight, and the poor fugitive, escaping from his guard had that person in mind. He did not run to seek the help of kings and captains, but, recognising the moral worth of the man of God whose testimony was by this time undoubtedly known throughout Canaan, he came and " told Abram the

Hebrew". In times of extremity the true Christian is often appealed to as one known to be in some way in touch with God. And it is of interest too, to note this first reference to Abraham as "the Hebrew". If "Hebrew" means "the man from the other side" (that is of the river Euphrates), it proves he still maintained his pilgrim character in the eyes of the Canaanites—he still was not of them, his walk was still a separate path although he had been in the land for a considerable time now; the practical inference of this is very suggestive for the believer of today.

If Abraham felt the shame of his relative's position, he none the less had affection for him, for when he heard that "his brother" was taken captive, he armed his servants for the rescue. Strong in faith, with only three hundred and eighteen men, Abraham overcomes kings and their hosts. The Lord can "save by many or by few" if those few seek their strength from the Lord. These helpers too, would seem to be of Abraham's spirit for they are described as "trained servants, born in his own house". And so, when these of the world were sleeping and unwatchful, Abraham smites them and conquers.

It is suggested in the Scriptures that a time of victory can also be a time of danger. Israel in Canaan, returning from victories, were always made to return to Gilgal, the place of felt weakness, just as they had to set out from the same place. And now, unknown to Abraham, forces were working which might bring him into a snare.

The king of Sodom set out to meet him with his offers and blandishments of gifts; this is the world, thus seeking to claim the conqueror as hers, and so benefit by his victory; whereas really she had been powerless and even degraded till he, without her help, had effected the rescue.

But God was also working for the protection of His servant, and stirred another king, Melchizedec, to go and meet Abraham. In the all-wise, all-powerful ordering of God, Melchizedec met Abraham first. How true in all

ages, that "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform", for when the king of Sodom arrived with his temptations, Abraham's heart had already been fortified by God's promises through the lips of Melchizedec, and Sodom's offers of goods had no effect on the man who had been nourished and refreshed by bread and wine sent by God. Abraham knew that the God Whom he trusted was the "most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth".

And not only had Abraham been blessed in this formula, but the very words of the blessing taught him how to answer the wiles of the king of Sodom. From Abraham's heart the echo of the same words comes "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take . . . anything that is thine, lest thou shouldst say I have made Abram rich". Truly he was answering in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth"!

Abraham was truly independent of man because he was in such beautiful simplicity wholly dependent upon God. Perhaps in our days we shall be tried as to whether we shall depend on the world and its combines for our sustenance, or on God alone. The day seems to be approaching when none shall be able to buy or sell unless the mark of the Beast is displayed; faith only can guide us aright and strengthen us to continue in the path chosen. But there has been One in this world Who in His trials found consolation and rest in leaving everything with His God and Father, Whom He also knew to have absolute control as "Lord of Heaven and earth".

¹ Rev. 18. 4.

¹ 1 Sam. 14. 6.

J.R.G.

FRAGMENT.

There is only one course open to the Christian who desires to walk as Christ walked—he is to love his enemies. But this is really not by a show of smooth ways or words for he might well know that to go and speak to an angry person would only draw out bitterness and wrath; the right course might be to keep away, but under all circumstances there should be all readiness to seek the blessing of our adversary.

W. KELLY.

THE STORY OF THE CROSS.

(As seen in the four Gospels.)

WHEN reading the four Gospel accounts of the Cross, much enlightenment may be obtained by carefully noting and prayerfully considering the various points noted by some and omitted by others.

For example : (1) Matthew, Mark and Luke record the agony and prayers of our Lord in the garden. John does not. Matthew and Mark name the place as Gethsemane ; Luke mentions simply the Mount of Olives. This however is no discrepancy, as both Matthew and Mark record that “ when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives . . . and they came to a place which was named Gethsemane ”. Neither of these writes of the place as the *Garden* of Gethsemane ; but John, who does not state the name tells us “ He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples ”. Matthew alone gives the words of the second prayer of Jesus to His Father in the garden “ O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done ”.

(2) Matthew and Mark record the three hours of darkness during the crucifixion, and Jesus crying with a loud voice, “ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? ” Luke records the darkness and Jesus crying with a loud voice ; but does not mention the words of that cry of abandonment ; we read “ and *when* Jesus *had cried* with a loud voice, *He said* ‘ Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit ’.” John, again, is silent as to the darkness and the loud cry of forsaking ; but he records what the others do not, namely three words from the lips of Jesus on the cross, sweet to His Father, sweet to believers too ; “ When Jesus . . . had received the vinegar, He said, ‘ It is finished ’ : and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost ”. John also records something else contained in none of the other records—“ One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water ”.

The writer has found it helpful, when considering these portions, to connect with them the Jewish offerings spoken of in Leviticus, which are, of course, typical of various aspects of the cross. There were the Burnt Offering, the Sin Offering and the Meal or Meat Offering.

John's Account.

In the presentation of the cross found in the Gospel of John, much is unfolded that is prefigured in the Burnt Offering. All was for God, ascending to God as a sweet savour. What Christ was to God is so often the theme of this Gospel. We read "That ye may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence". "When Jesus had spoken these words He *went forth* with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden . . . Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon Him, *went forth*, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?" "The cup that *My Father* hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" "Therefore doth *My Father* love Me, because I lay down my life . . . This commandment have I received of *My Father*."

The silence therefore in this Gospel as to the agony and prayers in the garden is understandable. One cardinal theme of this Gospel is the manifestation of the Father by the Son, and the delight of the Son in doing His Father's will. ("I do always those things that please Him.") Had the scene in Gethsemane been introduced at that point in John's writing, it would have broken the beautiful consonance of his theme. Rather are these things referred to in John 12, where, with the necessity of the cross looming before Him, we read the outpouring of the soul of Jesus "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father save Me from this hour. But on account of this have I come to this hour. *Father, glorify Thy name*". You will see even here the same theme is prominent.

The Burnt Offering was not only a sweet savour unto the Lord; it was accepted for, and made atonement for

the one who laid his hand upon it. And further, the blood of the burnt offering was sprinkled round about upon the altar. John, and John alone, of the Gospel writers records that "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side and forthwith came there out blood and water".

The Sin Offering. Matthew and Mark.

In the accounts of the cross in these two Gospels we have more the "Sin Offering" character. That is, it is the record of a holy God dealing in righteousness with One Who is the Sinbearer—though that Sinbearer in Himself was One Who knew no sin, did no sin and in Whom was no sin. Yet He was made sin for us, and our sins were laid upon His sacred head. These Gospels let us see how utterly abhorrent it was to Jesus thus to have to do with sin. Therefore we have the story of the Garden and its agony and prayer, the darkness and the abandonment with its terrible cry "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But the voice that raises the cry gives us the answer, "Thou art holy!" (Psalm 22. 3.)

The Gospel of Luke.

In this account we have the cross as the climax of that perfect life of obedience—of the One "Who being in the form of God . . . was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross". Luke does not speak of the sufferings of Jesus at the hand of God—though this is recognised by the loud cry and the darkness. He does tell us much of what men did to Him; but all this only brought out more of the sweet savour of Him Who was the perfect "meal offering", that obedience unto death. So we read the words of our Lord on the cross relative to His murderers, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do", and then, when all was done "Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit".

Surely this is a subject that claims our contemplation,

and will lead us to adore Him Who has done and suffered so much for us and to the glory of God. Of course, we must ever remember while we speak of these various aspects of the Cross, that it all refers to one and the same blessed Person, and to one and the same completed work.

H.S.

BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE.

(Cut this page out and keep it in your Bible.)

THE WILL OF GOD.

God's will is for His creature's good (Jeremiah 29. 11), expressed for example in creation—He is a faithful Creator, and gives us "every good gift" (James 1. 17, 1 Timothy 6. 17) with the desire that these expressions of His good will might cause men to "seek the Lord" (Acts 17. 26-28), leading to repentance (Romans 2. 4).

The fall of man spoilt the perfection of God's creation (Romans 8. 12, Job 15. 15) but still sufficient testimony to render man inexcusable (Romans 1. 20). As a result of Christ's work, God's glory in creation will be restored (Romans 8. 21).

GOD'S WILL ; SALVATION.

God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18. 23). His desire that men should be saved is the reason why He does not immediately judge the world (2 Peter 3. 3-9).

We are to pray for those in authority with this desire of God in view (1 Timothy 2. 1-4).

God's thought is far above men's thoughts in every respect—

- (a) The cost of salvation : CHRIST suffered for sins to bring us to God (1 Peter 3. 18). None other could do such a work (Acts 4-12) as the various trials and testings from the creation till the Lord's advent prove.
- (b) The scope of salvation : " Whosoever " (John 3. 16). Men can only grasp the need of one particular small section of the community—God knows and can meet the need of everyone.
- (c) Certainty and assurance : " Shall receive remission " (Acts 10. 43).
" Hath everlasting life " (John 5. 24).
- (d) Endurance and finality : " Shall never perish " (John 10. 28) .

Men fail to enjoy the blessings of salvation, in spite of God's desire because of their own wilfulness (John 5. 40).

GOD'S WILL ; SEPARATION.

God desires that those who are saved should be delivered from " this present evil world " (Galatians 1. 4). This again has been made possible by the death of Christ.

We shall soon be delivered physically when Christ returns and we are

caught away (John 14. 3 Romans 8. 23) but while left here God desires that we should be separate from "this present evil world" (i.e. the system men have built up to run the world, leaving God out of their lives)—in Scriptural language, that we might be "sanctified," set apart for Him (I Thessalonians 4. 3-7). We are to have different thoughts, desires, standards, objects, hopes, from those of unbelievers.

This separateness is produced—

- (a) by our reading of the Scriptures (John 17. 17) ;
- (b) by the Lord Jesus—our "High Priest" (Hebrews 4. 14—5. 2) Who helps and encourages us, and has graciously set Himself to use the Scriptures to our sanctification (John 17. 19).

As far as our POSITION as believers is concerned, we ARE already sanctified in the Lord Jesus (Hebrews 10. 10, I Corinthians 1. 2). God sees a division between those who believe and unbelievers.

But God wants us to be separate in heart—not like those of old who "in their hearts turned back again to Egypt" (a type of "this present evil world" (Acts 7. 39).

GOD'S WILL ; WELL-DOING.

The Lord Jesus by His death made possible the desire of God to have a people "zealous of good works" (Titus 2. 11-14).

When believers show goodness, it

- (a) is the finest answer to "the ignorance of foolish men" (I Peter 2. 15).
- (b) "adorns the doctrine" (Titus 2. 10)—making Christianity look the beautiful thing it is. (How perfectly the Lord Jesus "adorned the doctrine" !)
- (c) leads people to glorify God (Matthew 5. 16).

GOD'S WILL ; THANKSGIVING.

Give thanks in everything (I Thessalonians 5. 18) because all that God allows is for our good (Romans 8. 28).

Give thanks (a) because of God's character (Psalm 107. 1 and 97. 12).

(b) for what He has done for us (Colossians 1. 12, 2 Cor. 9. 15).

(c) for temporal mercies (I Timothy 4. 3, Acts 27. 35)

(d) for fellow-Christians (Ephesians 1. 16).

We can only prove how good and perfect and acceptable God's will is if we are completely devoted to His service (Romans 12. 1). As this characterises us we shall "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Colossians 4. 12).

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