



Assembly Testimony



Never Lonely

*You'll never be lonely while Jesus is near,
His comforting presence casts out every fear;
And all through life's journey, whate'er may betide,
You'll never be lonely with Him by your side.*

*You'll never be lonely when you realise
That the King of all Glory, who built earth and skies,
Is your constant companion, so loving, so true,
You'll never be lonely while He walks with you.*

*You'll never be lonely though sorrows oppress,
You'll never be lonely in pain or distress;
If Jesus is with you, your Saviour and Friend,
You'll never be lonely right on to the end.*

*You'll never be lonely because Jesus cares,
In mansions of Glory a home He prepares,
And there, re-united with loved ones above,
You'll never be lonely, redeemed by His love.*

F. E. Lewis.

BRIEF MEDITATIONS ON THE OFFERINGS

by JOHN M. COWAN, Motherwell.

THE BURNT OFFERING (Continued)

(We regret that the following article was inadvertently omitted in the last issue.)

THE first altar that is mentioned in the Word of God is Noah's altar, erected upon a purged earth, and from the ascending offerings placed thereon God smelled a sweet savour of rest. This provides a wondrous contrast from the old earth, unpurged and unjudged, with its violence and corruption, from which there was constantly rising the awful stench of the corruptness of their sins, but now, the judgment being past, the earth having been purged and renewed, there rises that, which in all its acceptability, fills the nostrils of God with its fragrance and rest. In all the expressions of the altar in the Book of Genesis, there is presented a worshipper in the good of access and approach to God, placing upon the altar that which speaks so expressively of the work and worth of our Lord Jesus Christ on resurrection ground; Him who was delivered for our offences and was raised for our justification. Having therefore been "justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the Glory of God".

If his approach offering be an ascending offering of the herd, let him *bring a male* without blemish. He shall bring it for *his acceptance* to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting before Jehovah. *He shall lean* his hand upon the head of the ascending offering and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement with. *And he shall kill* the son of the herd before the Lord—*and he shall flay* the ascending offering, *and cut it into his pieces*, and his inwards and his legs shall he *wash in the waters*.

We have here enumerated the exercise of the offerer in its progressive steps and, if his offering was an offering of the herd, quite a degree of intelligence would be required, which would express a very matured conception of all that was entailed in his offering. Here then are the stages: **Bringing, Leaning, Killing, Flaying, Cutting into his pieces and Washing the inwards and legs.**

We should like now to try and enter into an intelligent conception of all that could be spiritually understood in these exercises that the offerer had to engage himself upon.

Firstly, the bullock had to be **brought**, brought from its own sphere, where, as the son of the herd, it had the pre-eminent place; any bullock would not do, it had to be without blemish. This then would be suggestive of the place the Lord Jesus occupied in all the pre-eminence and perfection of His Person; coming from thence, to be scrutinised, so that His fitness without flaw or fault might be established beyond the possibility of doubt. Oh how one's heart could be ravished in a contemplation of all that this entailed. His sufficiency and supremacy, His stateliness and strength, these qualities that fitted Him so fully for service and sacrifice. Meditating upon these things would produce the warmth and worship in our hearts so essential to that condition of spirit that was necessary in our approach to God. Then, in the deep consciousness of our own unworthiness and unfitness to approach, yet with the knowledge also of Him who was willing to stand in our stead, we gratefully lean heavily upon Him, His fitness for our unfitness, accepted in the perfection and worth of Him, we stand upon His merit, partaking by imputation the excellency and acceptance that is His.

Ah, but the offering must be killed. His perfect life is not enough. This only manifested His unblemished character and fitness to take our place; "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain"—not worthy because He had been slain, but because He was worthy He could be slain. How soul searching, as in the awfulness of our agonising exercise we learn the tremendous truth, that I must slay Him. It was my sinfulness and lack of devotedness; there were others, no doubt, but, had there been no other but myself, the Lord must die. All that was lacking and unrepresentable in me must be covered with that which alone could meet the requirement of a Holy God. Precious blood must flow, atonement must be made, and in the excellence of the coverage that this provides, my approach and standing in the presence of a God of Holiness is maintained. With worshipping heart I can now uncover those inward preciousnesses that life alone could not make manifest. The offering must be flayed. The skin, the outward excellency of the animal must not touch the altar; it is an expression of the unblemished character of its life and became the perquisite of the priest who offered the blood. Having flayed the offering, there is brought to light the abiding efficacy and the hidden excellence of His Death, that upon which the altar flame can abidingly feast.

The burnt offering with its ascending fragrance is all for God and presents, not merely His Death, but all that is

the outflow of His death, providing in its ascending fragrance, as the fire of divine holiness causes it to rise, the sweet savour of rest, which to perpetuity provides that upon which the Holiness of God will eternally feast. This then is the essence of our worship, not only allowed of God to bring our offering, but to be able to present it in an intelligent way in all the variegated excellence of its parts: The Head, the Fat, the Inwards and the Legs. The **Head**, knowing all things that should befall Him, yet determinedly devoted to the will of God. The **Fat**, the inward energy, which unflinchingly drove Him in the pathway of that which was pleasing to God. The **Inwards**, the deep affection that burned constantly within Him, delighting only to do the Father's will. The **Legs**, His undeviating walk along the pathway of the Father's will, turning neither to the right hand or to the left, but unflinchingly pressing onward even though the pathway held a cross, with all the agony and shame, beyond all human comprehension. Thus, He endured the cross, He despised the shame, and He finished the work which the Father had given Him to do. The **Head**—His Will; the **Fat**—His Worth; the **Inwards**—His Ways; the **Legs**—His Walk. This then is the expression of our Worship, the presentation of the preciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, all to rise in fragrance for God, wholly acceptable to Him; all for God, yet the joy of intelligently presenting it is ours.

The Washing of the Legs and Inwards—the sanctifying effect of the Word of Truth; not that there was any possibility of defilement in Him, but that His life and lip would be in strict conformity to the Word of God. These predictions that had to have their fulfilment in Him. "Thus it must be". It must be, but it must be thus. The work had to be finished, but it was to be finished in exact fulfilment of the Word of God.

This then was the presentation of the **Bullock**, the Son of the Herd. The **Sheep**, the **Goat**, the **Turtle Dove** or **Pigeon**, present also their own peculiar excellencies and in their combined expression set forth in its variegated fulness that which might be known in **Burnt Offering** character of the Devotedness of our Lord Jesus Christ. The **Sheep** or **Goat**—His Submission and Subjection; The **Turtle Dove** or **Young Pigeon**—His Sincerity and Singleness of Eye. All had their differing expressions of the preciousness of Christ, yet all had the same pleasing effect upon God. Concerning each it has been recorded, "It is a **Burnt Sacrifice**, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord". We have only looked at the exercise of the

offerer, but to consummate the offering, there had to be the exercise of the Priest, Bringing and Sprinkling of the Blood; Placing the Fire and the Wood upon the Altar; Laying the parts in order; and Burning all upon the Altar—to make it a Burnt Sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.

(To be continued)

STUDY FOR BIBLE STUDENTS

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

by R. WOODHOUSE BEALES, Ipswich

THE SON OF MAN

This brings us to chapter 2 where He is seen as **Son of Man**, Superior to Adam, vv. 6-8, where we have His death brought in. This is spoken of six times in this Epistle and the results flowing out therefrom, a greater number than elsewhere in any other N.T. book.

The subject is the subjection of the world to come under Man, no doubt a reference to the coming kingdom on earth. These verses may refer first of all to the position that Adam enjoyed in his innocency. He was given dominion over everything, all creation, but this passes swiftly in verses 8 and 9 to the Son of Man, Christ, for Adam lost his dominion through sin though that is not mentioned here, but it is intended by God that man shall yet have dominion over creation and in order to bring this about, death which was pronounced upon Adam must be borne not only to pay man's penalty and rescue him from death, but also to overcome the tyrant and deceiver who brought it about. Was man a little lower than angels in the first place? Then Christ will take that place **in order that He may die** for man and in rising again become the Head of a new race of men, **with whom** He will have dominion and reign and bring everything into subjection and submission to the will of God.

There seems a strange introversion in v. 9, "crowned with glory and honour" looks as if it should have been at the end of the verse. The suffering of death means His act of giving up His own life upon the cross (not "sufferings" in the plural but "suffering of death" in the singular).

This links us with Him for His death was for us. God is bringing many sons to glory and making them "one" with Him. He will not be "Heir" of a world of death but of life,

and a new order of men must come into being to be associated with Him in His dominion over the new creation. This is the theme of many other scriptures, e.g., Romans 8 etc.

Several times over in this epistle Christ is spoken of as "being made perfect" this is not of course, suggesting that He is imperfect in His Person, but becoming fitted for a new position and relationship. He came here for us, He died for us, because death had dominion over us, He rose again for us, to be Head of a new creation of those who should rise also and reign with Him.

Here again there is introversion in vv. 12, 13. "the brethren" and "the children" in the outer two and His trust in God and ultimate song of praise in the inner. "I will put My trust in Him" is hardly, it is suggested, an actual quotation but rather taken from His experiences upon the cross where He committed His spirit to Jehovah as He went down voluntarily into death. This is the scoffing reproach hurled at Him by His enemies in Psalm 22 which is what they said at the cross, (vv. 4,8). He was going down into death trusting in Jehovah to raise Him up again from death and in Psalm 22 the theme changes at v. 22 with these very words of resurrection, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren" and we recall His words to Mary, "Go to My brethren," the first time He had called them by that precious name. That trust was well placed and now He leads the song of praise in the midst of His brethren.

REDEMPTION

We have here then Israel's Kinsman Redeemer. Just as Moses went down into Egypt to deliver Israel from bondage and the tyrant's power and redeem them therefrom, and also at the same time destroy that power, afterwards bringing them out and welding them into the Household of God and making them into a sanctuary for Him to dwell among them, so Christ has done this on a larger scale and brought about eternal redemption.

On the larger canvas we can see a worldwide redemption. Just as man had been robbed of life by Satan, the great adversary, and could by no means deliver himself, so Christ by His death and resurrection has destroyed (or disannulled or rendered powerless) the adversary, him that had acquired the power of death, under which all men laboured, and has delivered his victims and made them into the House of God spiritually.

The reader is urged to study the whole doctrine of this aspect of redemption bearing in mind that the word "re-

deemer" and "avenger" are one and the same, in Numbers 35. 10-27 and Deuteronomy 25. 5-10, the revenger and deliverer had an obligation because related to the victim to avenge the death but his duty was not finished, he must keep alive his name and inheritance by marrying the bereaved widow and raise up seed to the woman and "build up the house and name". We suggest that this is implicit in the teaching of this passage.

The writer then finalises this passage by switching suddenly to a new theme and changes the metaphor (as the Holy Spirit so often does) to bring in the teaching concerning the Priesthood of Christ and thus introduce the dual thought of Propitiation (for sins) on the one hand, and succour for the tested and tried, from the Throne itself on the other. The word "tempted" in the last verse does not of itself suggest temptation to sin but the testing He underwent as a Man in order to qualify Him to send help under similar circumstances to the tried saint. His testings brought out His true character and likewise fitted Him for His new office, i.e. the High Priest of His people.

Verse 16 should be read as in R.V. He did not take hold of angels (i.e. by the hand to deliver them, having in view the fallen angels), but He took hold of, by the hand to deliver them, the seed of Abraham, the children of faith. For this He was willing to suffer and to die. Praise His Name.
(to be continued)

HE ROSE UP

by W. HARRISON, East Kilbride.

THE last room the Lord Jesus used in Jerusalem was His own choice. (Luke 22. 10-12). The company who would occupy that room with Him were His own choice too. (Mark 14. 15, 16). Those who prepared for their brethren in the upper room did not volunteer to do it; they were His own choice. He did not choose the lesser known of the company but the better known. He sent Peter and John. (Luke 22. 8). Those who served by His choice in the upper room accomplished their service and the chosen ones for whom they served having arrived, they reclined together.

There was another service yet to be performed in the upper room: a personal service. It was indicated to all by the presence in the room of a bason, a towel, and a vessel containing water. The goodman of the house who had provided so much could have provided a little more. He

did not, however. He took no part in preparing the table nor did he provide a servant to wash their feet. This service could only be rendered by the Teacher or the taught. There were no volunteers among the taught and the Teacher who chose who should prepare the table made no choice among them as to who should deal with soiled feet.

This service was one that each could do for the other or one could do for all. Those who had been taught knew what they should do. He who taught them knew too, for He it was who taught them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark 9. 35). "Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10. 43, 44). He who was willing to be servant of all would not need to say it. All that was required was that he should rise up. He who first rose to act would in that act proclaim himself the servant of all. If the taught would not act on the teaching they had been given then One would Himself act on the teaching He gave. "He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded" (John 13. 4, 5). All the time that the towel, the water, and the bason were utilised by Him, His own feet must remain unwashed. "After He had washed their feet and had taken His garments He sat down again" (John 13. 12).

No one disturbed the service of Peter and John in the upper room. But Peter was ready to disturb the service of his Master. First he wanted less service than the others. "Thou shalt never wash my feet" (v. 8). If it is wrong not to be the servant of all, how wrong it must be to hinder one who wishes to be that. When that attitude was corrected Peter went to the other extreme and desired more service than the rest. "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (v. 9). Peter may not have less than the others but he could not have more.

We are far removed in time and place from the upper room. All the actors in that scene are gone. The Teacher has by right the highest place in heaven. One has gone to his own place. Acts 1. 25. The rest are with Christ. The word of the great Teacher leaves out not one of those who would learn of Him. Matthew 11. 29. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13. 16, 17).

THE "MAN OF SORROWS"

O ever homeless Stranger,
Thus, dearest Friend to me;
An outcast in the manger
That Thou might'st with us be.

How rightly rose the praises
Of heaven that wondrous night,
When shepherds hid their faces
In brightest angel-light!

More just those acclamations,
Than when the glorious band
Chanted earth's deep founda-
tions,
Just laid by God's right hand.

Come now, and view that
manger:
The Lord of glory see,
A houseless, homeless Stranger
In this poor world for thee.

"To God, in the highest, glory,
And peace on earth" to find;
And learn that wondrous story,
"Good pleasure in mankind".

How blest those heavenly spir-
its,
Who joy increasing find,
That, spite of our demerits,
God's pleasure's in mankind!

O strange, yet fit, beginning
Of all that life of woe,
In which Thy grace was win-
ning

Poor man his God to know.

Blest Babe! who lowly liest
In manger cradle there;
Descended from the highest,
Our sorrows all to share.

Oh, suited now in nature
For love's divinest ways,
And make the fallen creature
The vessel of Thy praise!

Oh! love all thought surpassing,
That Thou should'st with us be;
Nor yet in triumph passing,
But human infancy.

We cling to Thee in weakness,
The manger and the cross;
We gaze upon Thy meekness,
Through suffering, pain, and
loss.

There see the Godhead glory
Shine through that human vail,
And, willing, hear the story
Of Love that's come to heal.

My soul in secret follows
The footsteps of His love;
I trace the "Man of Sorrows",
His boundless grace to prove.

A Child in growth and stature,
Yet full of wisdom rare:
Sonship, in conscious nature,
His words and ways declare.

Yet still, in meek submission,
His patient path He trod,
To wait His heavenly mission,
Unknown to all but God.

But who Thy path of service,
Thy steps removed from ill,
Thy patient love to serve us,
With human tongue can tell?

Midst sin, and all corruption,
Where hatred did abound,
Thy path of true perfection
Was light to all around.

In scorn, neglect, reviling,
Thy patient grace stood fast,
Man's malice unavailing
To move Thy heart to haste.

O'er all, Thy perfect goodness
Rose blessedly divine:
Poor hearts, oppressed with
sadness,
Found ever rest in Thine.

The strong man in his armour
Thou mettest in Thy grace,
Didst spoil the mighty charmer
Of our unhappy race.

The chains of man, his victim,
Were loosened by Thy hand;
No evils that afflict him
Before Thy power could stand.

Disease, and death, and demon,
All flee before Thy word,
As darkness the dominion
Of day's returning lord.

The love that bore the burden
On the accursed tree,
Would give the heart its pardon,
And set the sinner free.

Love that made Thee a mourner
In this sad world of woe
Made wretched man a scorner
Of grace that brought thee low.

Still in Thee love's sweet sav-
our
Shone forth in every deed,
And showed God's loving favour
To every soul in need.

I pause: for in Thy vision
The day is hastening now,
When for our lost condition
Thy holy head shall bow;

When, deep to deep still call-
ing,
The waters reach Thy soul,
And death and wrath appalling
Their waves shall o'er Thee
roll.

O day of mightiest sorrow,
Day of unfathomed grief,
When Thou should'st taste the
horror
Of wrath, without relief!

O day of man's dishonour,
When, for Thy love supreme,
He sought to mar Thine honour,
Thy glory turn to shame!

O day of our confusion,
When Satan's darkness lay,
In hatred and delusion,
On ruined nature's way!

Thou soughtest for compassion,
Some heart Thy grief to know,
To watch Thine hour of passion;
For comforters in woe.

No eye was found to pity,
No heart to bear Thy woe;
But shame, and scorn, and spit-
ting:
None cared Thy name to know.

The pride of careless greatness
Could wash its hands of Thee:
Priests, that should plead for
weakness,
Must Thine accusers be.

Man's boasting love disowns
Thee;
Thine own Thy danger flee:
A Judas only owns Thee,
That thou may'st captive be.

O man, how hast thou provéd
What in thy heart is found;
By grace divine unmoved,
By self in fetters bound!

Yet, with all grief acquainted,
The "Man of Sorrows" view,
Unmoved, by ill untainted,
The path of grace pursue.

In death obedience yielding
To God His Father's will:
Love still its power is wielding
To meet all human ill.

On him who had disowned Thee
Thine eye could look in love,
Midst threats and taunts around
Thee,
To tears of grace to move.

What words of love and mercy
Flow from those lips of grace,
For followers that desert Thee,
For sinners in disgrace!

The robber learned beside Thee,
Upon the cross of shame,
While taunts and jeers deride
Thee,
The savour of Thy name.

Then, finished all, in meekness,
Thou to Thy Father's hand
(Perfect Thy strength in weak-
ness),
Thy spirit dost commend.

O Lord, Thy wondrous story,
My inmost soul doth move;
I ponder o'er Thy glory,
Thy lonely path of love.

But, O divine Sojourner
Midst man's unfathomed ill,
Love that made Thee a mourner
It is not man's to tell.

We worship when we see Thee
In all Thy sorrowing path;
We long soon to be with Thee
Who bore for us the wrath.

Come, then, expected Saviour,
Thou, "Man of Sorrows" come,
Almighty, blest Deliverer,
And take us to Thee, home!

From "Words of Truth" (1909).

'KEPT'

by H. C. SPENCE, London.

The Lord will keep the feet of His saints" 1 Samuel 2. 9. KEEP! What a lovely word is recorded for us so many times in the scripture, and how much it means to the Lord's people. As we journey along our earthly pilgrimage, the difficulties to be encountered are too great, the burdens too heavy, the snares too powerful, and yet the evil in this present world of corruption too overwhelming—yet what strong consolation is ours by grace. Our Lord Jesus Christ not only saves, but He KEEPS, even the feeblest of his saints.

Let us remind ourselves of the promises concerning the Lord's KEEPING power. He guarantees to meet every need, and His presence is our unfailing comfort. How beautiful is the promise in Genesis 28. 15. "Behold I am with thee and will KEEP thee in all places whither thou goest". The Psalmist gives us a blessed prayer: "KEEP me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings" (Psa. 17. 8). Again in Psalm 121 (R.V.) we have assurance that, "He that KEEPETH thee will not slumber . . . the Lord is thy KEEPER . . . He shall KEEP thee from evil: He shall KEEP thy soul. The Lord shall KEEP thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore".

In Proverbs 6. 22 we read that, "When thou goest it (the Word of God) shall lead thee, and when thou sleepest, it shall KEEP thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee". Another jewel we find in Isaiah 26. 3: "Thou wilt KEEP him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee".

At all times and in all circumstances we are KEPT. In our Lord's great intercessory prayer, we have the promise of a two-fold KEEPING. "I come to Thee. Holy Father, KEEP through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as We are one" (John 17. 11). Here we have the Father KEEPING US. In verse 12 we have the Lord Jesus KEEPING us. "I KEPT them in Thy name: those Thou gavest Me have I KEPT, and none of them is lost". Our Lord also prays, "That Thou shouldest not take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest KEEP them from evil" (v. 15). What a comfort it is to know that our exalted Lord ever liveth to make intercession for us.

The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, assured him he had made a deposit, and had entrusted his present and eternal interests to the Lord, the KEEPING of his soul for time and eternity. With confidence he writes, "I am persuaded that He is able to KEEP that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Timothy 1. 12).

We cannot keep ourselves but truly, "We are KEPT by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter 1. 5).

Jude assures us in that lovely doxology in verse 24: "Now unto Him who is able to KEEP you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Amen". May we know more of the glorious reality of the saving and KEEPING power of our Lord Jesus Christ moment by moment till we are safe in the glory with Him.

THE LAST DAYS

by A. M. Salway Gooding

(Read 2 Timothy 3).

THE Last Days! We believe we are living in them and that the coming of the Lord is extremely near. The apostle Paul was guided by the Spirit of God to outline for us, in a most detailed way, the characteristic features that would be evident in the end of this present age. He speaks of "later times" (1 Timothy 4. 1) and "last days" (2 Timothy 3. 1). By the term "later times" he means "times later than his own." In addressing the elders from Ephesus he gives instructions and warnings for such days—"after my departing" (Acts 20. 29). He also has these days in view as he charges Timothy to "commit the things which he had heard from Paul, among many witnesses, to

faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." In these "later times" it should be noticed that "some shall depart from the faith" but of the "last days" we read that "men . . . noid a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. What is only true of certain individuals in the "later times" is true of the mass in the "last days".

It is of interest to note that the expression under consideration should be "last days" and not "the last days" seeing that the definite article is omitted. Therefore, Paul is outlining for us the features that characterize all "last days." Is it not true to say that the close of each dispensation has been marked by perilous times? The days just prior to the flood were days of violence, corruption and ungodliness in word and deed. Days in which Enoch, Methusaleh, Lamech and Noah must have found it very difficult to live for God.

The days that lead up to the call of Abraham and the bringing in of the age of promise were likewise difficult days. The whole world (with but a few notable exceptions) had departed from God and turned to idolatry with the resultant moral decay so evident in the behaviour of the Sodomites. Abraham found that power to overcome was in being separate from it, while Lot seeking to improve it succumbed to it. What shall we say of the end of the Old Testament history with the ominous last words of Malachi—"lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." There were even in such a day and in the four hundred silent years between the testaments "those that feared the Lord and thought upon His name." They found the days were those in which it was difficult to live for God.

As we turn, for a moment, from the past to the future, it is evident that the days just prior to the revelation of the Lord Jesus at His appearing will be days of great difficulty for the then people of God—Tribulation days! "Hungred . . . thirsty . . . a stranger . . . naked . . . sick" (Matthew 25. 42, 43). And again "they that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God" (Saints martyred during the first three and a half years of the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy), and "such as worshipped not the Beast, neither his image" (second three and a half years). Difficult days indeed, followed by days when the promise will be fulfilled "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun strike on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb . . . shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." Blessed recompense for those who will pass through those last days of the Great Tribulation.

But we must retrace our steps to consider the last days of which Paul is more directly speaking. They are undoubtedly the closing days of the day of Grace, the Church period in which we live, that day in which "God is calling out from among the nations a people for His name." These are the days just prior to the rapture of the Saints and the fulfilment of the blessed promise of the Saviour "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." How our hearts respond

Oh the blessed joy of meeting,
All the desert past;
Oh the wondrous words of greeting
He shall speak at last.

Paul calls us to "know", i.e. "to keep in recognition" the facts concerning these "last days". Perilous times, the A. V. calls them, while others translate "grievous" (R.V.) "hard to bear, difficult" (W.E.V.) "full of danger" (Philips) "terrible" (Way). This word is used elsewhere only in Matthew 8. 28. of the demoniac, and is translated "fierce." Epictetus describes those who forget God as their creator, as resembling lions, "wild, savage and fierce" (Moulton and Milligan). The evils that are here enumerated, about twenty of them, in the opening verses of our chapter, make it clear that the terms that the translators have used in no way over-emphasise the dark character of the days.

It is instructive to compare the list given here with that which is found in Romans chapter one. There the apostle outlines the gradual degeneration of the heathen from the incoming of idolatry after the flood until his own day. (Was this the history of the descendants of Ham? or had the apostle particularly in view the Romans as a nation?). Here is traced the history of a people who had "known God" and in spite of that "they did not glorify Him, or thank Him" (v. 21), and "refused to have God in their knowledge" (v. 28). Those who would not have God in their knowledge experienced the awful tragedy of being "given up to uncleanness" (v. 24). "given up to vile affections" (v. 26) given up unto a reprobate mind" (v. 28) until the closing verses of the chapter declare of their ultimate condition "those that practice such things are worthy of death." Though this chapter makes very sad reading it is in measure understandable, for this is man without God, and without the glorious message of the Gospel with its soul saving and life ennobling results,

The list of evils in 2 Timothy 3. differs very little from the catalogue in Romans 1; and this is even more tragic for while the latter is the condition of the heathen having

never heard the Gospel, the former, with which we are at present concerned, is the present condition of Christendom in spite of nearly 2000 years of Gospel Preaching—"Holding a form of Godliness"—a form only; a mere outline; an outward semblance; an empty shell; forms, ceremonies, ritual, but a total abandonment of the doctrine which they are supposed to represent.—A form of Godliness having denied the power thereof.

Before closing this, our first meditation on this passage, shall we notice that the list commences with "lovers of self" and finishes with "not lovers of God." Thus self has been deified and God is dethroned. Dethroned in the world by the creature of His hand. Dethroned in Christendom by that vast system that dares to associate with all its empty show the name of God and His most worthy Son. Self has become the sole object of man's living and the supreme object of his affection. So far has Christendom departed from the right ways of the Lord who has a right to require of men: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

Next month "The list of Evils Examined."

CONFESSION OF SINS

by John Ritchie

IT'S a grand thing to keep short accounts with God—I mean in the confession of sin to Him as our Father. It is our privilege, sure enough, to walk in the light, in unbroken communion with Him, abiding in Christ; and, "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not" (1 John 3. 6). But we do not always so abide, "for in many things we offend all" (James 3. 2). What then is to be done when a child of God sins? Does he cease to be a child? or is he just to go on as if nothing had happened? **Neither.** The Father says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9). This is the remedy for a failing child—"confess your sins;" not merely say, "Father, forgive me," but **confess.** Drag the sin out into the light—lay your finger on the black spot, and tell your Father exactly what you've been doing. Don't muffle the confession. It's a humbling thing, no doubt, to go over the sad story to a Father, but that's what it is meant you should do; but, crying, "Father, forgive me," is a much easier way of disposing of the thing, but not God's way at all. Then another

important point is, **confess at once**. Whenever your sin comes to your knowledge, make a clean breast of it; but if you don't, the load will get heavier and the cloud darker, until at last you'll not know your whereabouts at all. Your conscience defiled and hardened, your communion with God broken, you will wander away from God, till either a fall into open sin, or the stroke of a Father's rod, wake you up to consciousness.

Many believers are like a clock that is "wound up" only once a day. They keep up all their sins till bed-time, and then in a general way bundle them all together, and tell God how bad they've been all day, and ask His forgiveness. The programme for next night is the same, and so on. It is needless to say that such people don't know communion with God. They live always in a hazy atmosphere; and their consciences not being very keen, no wonder that their lives are not very straight.

Young believer, wherever you are—in the shop, the factory, the kitchen, or on the street—the moment you fail, confess to your Father—keep a conscience tender as the apple of the eye: and thus walking in the light, you will easily see the shadow of a cloud, and you'll be in God's mind about what sin is. He is "Faithful" and "just" to forgive you. "Faithful," because He has said it; "just," for the blood has been shed; and you must believe it, as you did at first, without "feelings," or "waiting for a change."

EDITOR: A. M. S. Gooding.

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