



Assembly Testimony



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"QUIT YOU LIKE MEN"

The time is short !
If thou would'st work for God, it must be now,—
If thou would'st win the garland for thy brow,—
Redeem the time.

Shake off earth's sloth !
Go forth with staff in hand while yet 'tis day,
Set out with girded loins upon thy way,—
Up, linger not !

Fold not thy hands !
What has the pilgrim of the cross and crown
To do with luxury or couch of down ?—
On, pilgrim, on !

Sheathe not the sword !
The battle lies before thee, and the prize,
Hangs yonder, far above these earthly skies;
Fight the good fight !

Life ebbs apace !
Fast crumbles down this house of mortal clay;
Fling not, like dust, thy precious hours away:
The end is near.

Faint not, O man !
Follow the Master through the noble strife,
Pursue His footsteps till they end in Life:
Be strong in Him.

With His reward
He comes, He tarries not; His day is near;
When men least look for Him will He be here:
Prepare for Him.

Fear not the flood.
Plant thy firm feet on the eternal Rock:
Face calmly, solemnly, the billow's shock;
Nor dread the storm.

Withstand the foe;
Die daily, since for ever thou shalt live:
Be faithful unto death; thy Lord will give
The crown of life.

Horatius Bonar.

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM

by the late JOHN RITCHIE

Read 2 Samuel 23. 8-21.

DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN

WE hear little of the history or exploits of David's followers during the period of their humiliation, but when the Kingdom was at last given into his hands and he seated on the throne of Israel, it was one of his earliest acts to call forth those who had shared his rejection, and publicly declare their faithfulness. They received no recompense—save the companionship of their master during the time of his rejection, but he whom they had served took note of all their deeds, and rewarded them by giving them places of honour in his kingdom. And thus it will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Suffering with, and service for the Lord, will have its reward then, and well it is for those who can afford to wait for that hour of recompense. Let us see who these servants were, and what their deeds and rewards.

Three of the chief of David's mighty men were with him in the cave of Adullam, in the time of harvest. They overheard him express the longing desire—"O that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate" (2 Sam. 23. 15), the well of which he had drunk when as a boy he kept his flock. There was no command or order to bring it, but the three who heard it rushed through the ranks of the Philistines and brought the longed-for cool refreshing draught. This was the highest proof of their love and devotedness to their master, and he rewarded it in the day of his glory. So will our Lord and Master do to those who fulfil the desire of His heart. He said before He went away, "This do in remembrance of Me," and those who keep that feast to give Him joy, will not be forgotten.

Another defended a piece of ground full of lentiles from the assaults of the Philistines. This seems an insignificant act. A patch of ground with a crop of so little value, need not have been the object of so great a battle! So men would say, but Shammah knew it was part of his master's inheritance, and he would not allow it to fall into the enemy's hand. And there are such patches of ground to defend still. There are truths such as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which many consider of so little importance that they do not contend for them; they allow the enemy to ruthlessly wrest them from their grasp, and plant his counterfeit on their ruins, on the plea that

they are unessential. The ambition of this type of warrior seems to be, that they will hold as much of the truth of God as secures their own salvation. All the rest may go to the enemy—it is unessential. It matters not about “Church truths” if “Gospel truths” remain. But Christ’s true-hearted followers will esteem such truths as part of that holy faith once delivered to the saints for which they are to “earnestly contend” and will “stand in the midst of the ground” with drawn sword defending it against the devil’s assaults. Let them be called “bigots” or any other contemptuous name, they hold it fast for Christ: and, praise His name, He will know how to reward such service in that day. We look in vain in the list of worthies for the name of Jonathan; one might say, we grieve to find it lacking there. And why? Dear and honoured lover of David as he was, he never severed his connection with Saul; he never cast in his lot with David in the cave. He spoke of being next him on the throne, but alas! when David reached that throne, he had fallen by the side of Saul at Gilboa, and David’s broken heart lamented his loss in mournful strains.

May we learn from this, beloved saints, that the royal road to the throne and the rewards of the kingdom, lie along the path of rejection with our rejected Lord, “who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” And there too with songs of triumph on every lip, and crowns of unfading glory on every brow, shall His feeble, faltering followers be brought, who, amid shame and reproach, have, through grace, been enabled to cleave to the despised Nazarene with purposed hearts, and to hold fast His faithful Word, amid the perils and seductions of these last days.

SPHERE AND SERVICE OF WOMEN

by A. G. CLARKE

MISUNDERSTOOD SCRIPTURES. It would appear well to consider some of the passages advanced in support of public ministry by Christian women, scriptures referred to by those who wish to introduce this mistaken practice into assemblies.

1. **1 Cor. 14. 34-35.** The prohibition found here is alleged to refer to chattering in assembly gatherings. The Greek verb used occurs frequently in the N.T. but never in the sense of “to chatter.” In this very chapter it appears twenty-four times, twenty-two times clearly relating to ministry. Let the reader attempt to substitute the word “chatter” in any of these occurrences and he will immed-

ately perceive the resulting absurdity. Take verse 29 for example! Besides, would not the chattering of men be equally reprehensible? Why place such a restriction upon the sisters only?

2. **Acts 21. 9-10.** This passage mentions, not without significance, that the four daughters of Philip the evangelist possessed the prophetic gift. There are no true prophets now so that in any case no example is afforded for the present day. In modern times the only women claiming the prophetic gift have been connected mostly with error cults, like Mrs. Baker Eddy of "Christian Science", Mrs. Ellen White of "Seventh Day Adventism" and not a few others. We are not told that Philip's daughters exercised the prophetic gift in public. Moreover, we cannot fail to observe that when a prophetic message concerning Paul was to be delivered, the Lord sends His servant Agabus all the way from Judæa instead of using Philip's daughters who were already on the spot. No support for the public ministry of women can be found here.

3. **Phil. 4. 3.** Euodia and Syntyche laboured with Paul in the gospel, but it is an unwarrantable assumption to suggest that they preached in public or even preached at all. As we have seen, there are many ways in which Christian sisters can co-operate in the Lord's work apart altogether from speaking.

4. **John 4. 28-30, 42.** In considering this scripture three things are to be noted. First, the Samaritan woman's audience was composed of "the men", that is, those with whom she was acquainted and had had unholy relations. Next, hers was a simple testimony not a public address, v. 39. Thirdly, she issued an invitation, no doubt individually, saying, "Come, see . . ." This work of inviting people is a suggestive form of service for Christian sisters.

5. **Acts 1. 14.** It is not to be inferred that the women prayed audibly. The order of the words both in the Greek and in the English indicates simply that the women were present. Had the statement been, "These all, with the women, continued steadfastly in prayer" there would be a measure of ambiguity. As it is, the meaning is clear.

6. **Judges 4. 4-9.** Advocates of women's public ministry must be hard put to it when they turn to such an O.T. passage. There is no inconsistency, however, even here, but rather a warning example. Rulers had ceased in Israel (5. 7), showing that all was in confusion in the nation instead of divine order. Deborah took over responsibilities for the civil rule for lack of a man able and willing to do it. Barak was a military leader but so weak and fearful that when an emergency arose he called upon

Deborah to share the post of danger with him despite her warning (4. 9). The incident shows utter weakness and failure among God's people at that time. There was certainly not "an accession of new power and spirituality", which is advanced as a plea by some who would permit Christian women to have full liberty for the exercise of a "speaking" ministry. Such brethren expose in themselves Barak-like defects and augment sad failure so manifest in the churches today. Heb. 11. 32 mentions Barak's name but omits Deborah's, thus upholding the divine principle that where men and women are in association even in weakness, leadership properly belongs to the men.

(Concluded)

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (Chapter 12)

by R. WOODHOUSE BEALES, Ipswich.

THERE is therefore in this Epistle and running through it a double line, one of which is the soul's salvation depending upon the blood of the sacrifice alone, and the other is the life of faith which should flow from it, the life of the believer's sacrifice and witness, and while these two themes are related we must not confuse them. We are now arriving at a section of warning again, commencing with the fire accompanying God's presence at Sinai (12. 18, taken from Exodus 19. 16-25) and the reference to God as a consuming fire in v. 29 (taken from Moses' words to the second generation just before they were to enter the land some 40 years later (Deut. 4. 24), and also the voice of words (v. 19 and vv. 25-27) i.e. the shaking of Sinai at the giving of the law and the shaking of all things in the end time of judgment. Let us keep these separate in our thoughts. The voice from the mount and the voice from heaven. (Moses himself did not enter the land of inheritance through unbelief but he was in it on the mount of transfiguration in Matt. 17) "Let us," therefore, "hold fast grace" (v. 28).

These fearful sights and sounds at the giving of the law were to impress the people with the intrinsic holiness and power of God, that they might fear Him (see Exodus 19. 12, 13, 16-25; and also 20 18, 19) but in spite of which the dreadful scenes of idolatry forty days after took place, bringing judgment upon them and almost wiping them out. The danger to these Hebrews was in now turning away from Him who was speaking to them from heaven, and speaking to them of the Great High Priest and the end of the old order and the permanence of the new.

In between we have a list of the majesty and glory of what God calls us to approach unto. They are in pairs, and must be divided correctly by the repeated "and". The **first** pair are Mount Zion and the city, New Jerusalem; the **second** the innumerable company of angels the general assembly, and the church of the firstborn ones, written in heaven; the **third** God the judge of all and the spirits of just men, perfected; the **fourth** Jesus the mediator of the new covenant and the blood of sprinkling speaking better things than Abel. These spiritual realities which are permanent are no less majestic than Sinai and the giving of the law, but are secured to us by "the blood of Jesus".

This paragraph brings us then to the final end of all things, the shaking through the same voice of judgment, of ALL THINGS that CAN be shaken, the temporal things, in contrast to the things that CANNOT, the eternal things, the kingdom which cannot be moved which we "receive" from the eternal God. There must therefore continue to be reverence and godly fear to enable us to serve Him acceptably, and again the word "serve" is worshipful service in the sanctuary.

PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS

(Chapter 13)

Love (v. 1) has already been inculcated (10. 24). It is to continue. Verse 2 refers to Genesis 18 where Abram receives the heavenly messengers, one of which turns out to be Jehovah Himself and Abram so recognises Him and delicately preserves the incognito. Note, the first prayer in the Bible, a model for us all, and Abram's promise of a morsel of bread, becomes a calf tender and good, cakes, butter and milk, and himself standing by in attendance, what immeasurable reward followed that indeed! A model of the way to entertain strangers. See also 3 John 5-8.

We are not only to pray for, but identify ourselves with, sufferers for we ourselves may need their ministry one day. The home life, where hospitality is given, must be one of holiness. In these days of laxity invading the home life, again and again the home of Abraham is brought before us in scripture.

Covetousness is invading every sphere, personal, home and business ; it is the one objective of the worldling. In this respect there seemed little difference between Jacob and Esau, indeed only God it seems could discern it. "Be content". These are the teachings of the Lord Jesus and the manner of His life who when down here had nothing. Paul also had "learned in whatever state he was to be content". Godliness with contentment is great gain.

The reason here given is emphasised with five negatives, could it be made plainer. For HE hath said (and this promise is scattered about the Bible), "I will not, not leave thee, neither will I not, not forsake thee". The hymnwriter has hit this off well. "I'll never, no never, no never forsake"; one of the few times when a hymnwriter is entirely scriptural, we think. Because of this we may SAY and say boldly, "The Lord is my Helper, etc.". This is taken from Psalm 56. 11 and 118. 6; one where David was in the hands of the Philistines his enemies, and the other when the Lord Jesus was about to be in the hands of His. Persecution was awaiting them, as it may have overtaken their guides who had passed on and are to be remembered and the whole course of their faith-life and especially the issue of it, was to be followed, and possibly the same "issue". Between the faithfulness of those who had passed on and the unfaithful ones who were troubling them with strange doctrines and meats (Judaistic?) there was one stable never-changing Person, the Same yesterday (in the past) today (in the present) and for ever.

(To be continued)

WAS THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST REAL ?

by W. F. NAISMITH, Kilmarnock.

THERE are many insinuations made relative to the temptation of our glorious Lord, and two are outstanding. They are—

1. If Christ could not sin, then temptation meant nothing to Him.
2. If our Lord had any advantage over us in meeting temptation by reason of His Deity He would not have experienced temptation in such a way as to enable Him to succour us when we are tempted.

With reference to the first observation it seems unnecessary to affirm the impeccability of our Lord, for the Holy Scriptures are replete with such attestations—

"He knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5. 21).

"In Him is no sin" (1 John 3. 5).

"He did no sin" (1 Peter 1. 22).

In view of the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ in manhood, the heavenly messenger stated: "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Holiness characterised Him in birth, and throughout His pathway of obedience in this scene, and this is emphasised in

Christ's own challenging statements, viz., "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8. 44), and "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14. 30). He was that holy sacrifice who "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9. 14). This sacrifice alone could meet the requirements of a holy God, and satisfy the demands of that righteous throne which sin had insulted; thus enabling God in righteousness and true holiness to justify the sinner who believes in Jesus. God's character must abide inviolate, for He never compromises it to accommodate anyone, and the sacrifice which He has accepted must be flawless. The years of public ministry of our Lord attest His holiness. In resurrection and exaltation He is our great High Priest, with emphasis on "holiness", for we read, "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7. 26). Holiness and sin are the absolute antithesis of each other. The Holy Scriptures carefully safeguard the character of our Lord giving us overwhelming evidence of His holiness. Being satisfied that He is sinless, let us now proceed to examine the two observations at the introduction of this thesis.

The first statement is "If Christ could not sin, then temptation meant nothing to Him". We, who are the children of a fallen parentage, do sin. Why do we sin? It is because we have inherited a sinful nature which is ever prone to do that which is contrary to the mind of God. We have already referred to Scriptures which declare His sinlessness. If He could sin, then He did sin, for sin is the product of an evil nature, and practising sin is its characteristic, but we have the Holy Spirit's record that "He did no sin." We sin because we cannot help sinning. Here is One who is holy in birth, in life, in death, in resurrection and ascension to Glory. There were no evil desires fostered in His bosom for He claimed, "I do always those things that please Him (the Father)." The Holy Scriptures establish the impeccability of our Lord; and, satisfied with what God has declared, we proceed to examine the first statement.

One further point may be emphasised before we consider the first insinuation "If Christ could not sin, then temptation meant nothing to Him." The Word of God presents Christ in Hebrews 1 (10-12) as the Great Creator; and the verses alluded to are a citation from Psalm 102 (25-27). Note the three observations divinely made! "Thou remainest". "Thou art the same". "Thy years shall not fail". This One who is God blessed forever changeth not; and this quotation refers to Him in the past, and the present, and the future—the unchanging God. In Hebrews 13. 8 the

writer, guided by the Holy Spirit, affirms that He is the unchanging Man—stating “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” If this blessed One could sin in His pathway of subjection and obedience in this scene; then, since He changeth not He could sin now, and could persist in doing so forever, for He is ever “the same”. Perfection is stamped on all He said and did, and He is sinless!

DID TEMPTATION MEAN NOTHING TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ?

Did the temptation mean nothing to our Lord? It is a known fact that the holier a person is the more tremendous temptation appears. To those who live lives which, alas are so indifferent to the claims of Christ, and by no means commend the Gospel, then temptation is something to which they readily succumb, for temptation really means nothing to them.

The Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is God and Man in perfect unison. In coming into manhood he brought Godhood and Manhood in one comingled essence, manifested without any Adamic or racial constituent whatsoever, so that when men saw Jesus, they saw the Father (John 14. 9). Had He remained in the realm of eternal and divine glory then He could not have been tried and tested at all: the testing came when He became Man; when He accepted the body prepared for Him (Heb. 10 5). While He is Man in absolute perfection there is no constituent in that vast polygonal ensemble of divine glory absent. So if human nature could never provide a suitable body for that Eternal One, so God did what nature could not do. While bearing in mind that He is a Person with a dual nature—that which is Divine and that which is human—never seek to dissect by separating between His Godhood and His Manhood. Some have gone the length of insinuating, if not blatantly declaring, that Christ was not in the enjoyment of His Divine foreknowledge and power when here on earth, otherwise there would have been no reality about His temptation. Is such an assertion true? Take the power—He is capable of turning stones into bread, as Satan suggested He should do if He were the Son of God. Turning stones into bread would have been as easy for the Son of God as the raining of bread from heaven to the host of the Israelites throughout their wilderness journeyings. The turning stones into bread was a divine capability: it was peculiar to Himself, and could never be accomplished by any fallen son of Adam. Had the requisite power not been inherent in the Lord Jesus Christ where would the temptation have come in? Satan is actively engaged to-day in an all out endeavour to get men to deny

the Deity of our Lord—His Omnipotence, His Omniscience and His Omnipresence.

Our Lord was tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart (Heb. 4. 15, J.N.D's translation). Let us place all the emphasis possible upon the last two words of this statement, while appreciating the statement as a whole. There is no occasion on record in which the Lord was tempted by sin. He could never be tempted by sin, as we are. If a person is sinless then sin does not have any appeal. When we succumb to temptation it is because we have failed to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 6. 11). Consequently we are informed that "sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6. 14).

The synoptic writers each make mention of the temptation of our Lord, though Mark does not provide the details afforded by Luke and Matthew. There are two significant facts stated in Mark's Gospel, and these are exclusive to Mark. First, "The Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness" (Mark 1. 12). The second is found in the following verse, "He was with the wild beasts". The first man, Adam, was among the wild beasts when he was still in innocence. What a transformation sin wrought! "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8. 22). The Lord was with the wild beasts without fear: the Creator had around Him some of His creatures, and all were subordinate to His good pleasure. He had power over an unbroken colt (Luke 19. 30). The perfect Servant of Jehovah was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness; such a statement would prove the fact that He was willing to execute the desires of the One who sent Him into this scene. The wilderness is a place of 'no supply': it is a comfortless scene, yet to this place did the submissive Servant move in keeping with the mind of God, His Father. It was in such a scene as this that Satan commenced His attack on the Lord. If we take the temptation as recorded by Luke, we shall find that the threefold principle defined in 1 John 2. 16 is clearly envisaged. John states, by the Holy Spirit, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world".

(To be continued)

SIX DAYS BEFORE THE PASSOVER

by BRIAN SMITH, Edinburgh.

THE sixth day begins with the Lord in an upper room in Jerusalem, made ready for Him and His disciples. To

keep the Passover with them was His desire. Of His desires for them He also spoke. Taking a loaf, giving thanks, and breaking it He spoke of how that represented His body given for them. He counted on their desire to call Him to mind in the observance of that simple feast during the time of His absence on high, "This do in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22. 19). Further, the old covenant was based on the shedding of blood, the new would be established in His own, as He took a cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is poured out for you" (Luke 22. 20). He communicates teaching to them in relation to His departure to His Father and of His continued care for them while they were left in the world without His visible presence. (John 13 to 17). He loved His own through and through.

Leaving the upper room, they make their way to a garden where the Lord withdraws from His disciples and, alone, prays to His Father. The coming trial He anticipates in the presence of His Father and, having measured it with God, He is found, all through, calm before men. Apprehended by those sent from the chief priests and elders of the people, the Lord is interrogated in the house of the high priest with the whole council present. It was a dark, cold night. To deal gently with the ignorant and erring was expected of the high priest (Heb. 5. 2). Not so did Caiaphas act. Indeed it was the high priest who erred but not in ignorance. The Lord owns to being the Christ and Son of God, howbeit His Messianic rights in abeyance, as He cites from Daniel 7. "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26. 64). "And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death" (Mark 14. 64).

Early in the morning of the sixth day, they led Him to Pilate, and accused Him before the representative of Gentile authority. Pilate sends Him to Herod, the Edomite, who, with his men of war, set at nought the One who had a Divine title to reign in Israel. Like the ark among the Philistines, the Saviour is again led to Pilate. The Roman governor fails to uphold righteousness. As with the high priest he errs but not in ignorance. Fearing a riot he succumbs to the crowd. He takes the course suggested by the Jews. "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend" (John 19 12). He declares Christ innocent and then scourges and delivers Him to be crucified. Like the first man he was not deceived but openly transgresses. Harken to the voice of his wife: "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him" (Matt. 26. 19).

The Roman soldiers gather around Jesus and add affliction to the afflicted, forsaking the fear of the Almighty. They have no respect for His person. The crown of thorns, the reed in His right hand, the mockery.

They led Him away to be crucified. "It was the third hour and they crucified Him" (Mark 15. 25). They would not rend His garment yet thought little of rending His body. The nation of Israel unite to deride His Messianic glory, as Son of God and King of Israel. The Roman soldiers, who did not appreciate the import of such words as "the Christ", "the chosen of God", mock Him saying, "If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself" (Luke 23. 37). Three hours passed, full of pain under the increasing heat of the sun upon an uncovered body torn and bleeding. For the last three hours, darkness shrouded the scene. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (Matt. 27. 45). "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21). He gave Himself. He died on the cross after six hours of suffering, bearing sin's judgment and exhausting Divine wrath in His person.

The first man, Adam, fell into a deep sleep and, painlessly, God builded from his side a woman suited to him in every way and brought her to the man. At great cost—the blood of His own—has God brought the Church to Christ. "We are members of His body" (Eph. 5. 30). On the sixth day in Genesis 1 the first man is formed in a scene ready to receive him. He is placed as head in the creation of God. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1. 26). Writes the apostle Paul, "So if any one be in Christ, there is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5. 17, J.N.D.). Rejected by man, the paradise of God receives Him. The entrance of sin had marred man as to his original estate, created in the likeness of God and, consequently, he had failed to represent God as made in His image. Christ perfectly expressed true manhood and, as the second man, is the head of a new race.

Only a few hours before the Passover sabbath began: "And now, when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath" (Mark 15. 42). His body is hastily, yet carefully, taken down from the cross by Joseph and, wrapped in fine linen, laid in his

own new tomb. Only two men and a few women attended the burial of God's beloved Son.

"Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, after three days I will rise again" (Matt. 27. 62, 63). Even after His death and on the sabbath they are found relentlessly active against Christ. "So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch" (Matt. 27. 66). We say again that God invites us to rest, where He rests, in the finished work of Christ.

"And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made" (Gen. 1. 31—2. 3).

The sabbath ended, a new day dawned, and with it the announcement that the Lord was risen indeed. "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28. 6). "He was received up in glory" (1 Tim. 3. 16). May we learn to glorify Him. He will be the centre of glory in the new heavens and the new earth which God will yet bring into being. (Rev. 21. 1).

THE PERSON AND PROGRAMME OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

by SAMUEL JARDINE, Belfast.

THERE is such a real and vital connection between the sending of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to redeem mankind and the sending of the Holy Spirit to implement and perpetuate that mission that to accept the importance of the one is to require the importance of the other. The correspondence between the two can easily be traced and it suggests the underlying reason, that in the two missions we have the activities on earth of two of the Persons of the Godhead.

Now, how do you think of the Holy Spirit of God? As an attribute of God? A holy and divine influence emanating from God? Or do you believe Him to be as really a person as the Eternal Father or the Eternal Son? To clarify our thinking we must consider the fact of Godhead as presented in the Holy Scriptures. In the Old Testament God re-

eals Himself in the unity of His being although not without reference to the plurality of persons in the Godhead. The unity of Jehovah as Israel's God is set over against the multiplicity of false gods in the surrounding nations. If Deuteronomy 6. 4 is read in context this will be clear. "Hear O Israel. Jehovah our God (Elohim, plural of Eloah, the supreme) is ONE JEHOVAH." Nevertheless we hear the same God say, "Let US make man in OUR image" (Gen. 1. 26), "Let US go down" (Gen. 11. 7), "Whom shall I send and who will go for us", (Isaiah 6. 8), this latter containing a remarkable combination of the singular "I" and the plural "WE".

These indirect references to the blessed Trinity take on clarity and meaning in the New Testament, when at the outset of Christ's mission on earth all three Persons are brought together and are seen working in unison for the Salvation of men. The Son of God in humble guise accepts the Father's programme and is immersed by John the Baptist before the multitudes at Jordan. The Holy Spirit descends in a bodily form like a dove, endues Him for the programme He had just publicly accepted while the Father speaks from Heaven His words of identification and satisfaction with the One who has been baptized and anointed. (Matthew 3. 13-17).

Our first deduction, therefore, concerning the Holy Spirit must be that He is a PERSON and just as truly a person as the Father and the Son, despite the fact that our acquaintance with human personality clothed in a tangible and physical frame tends to modify our true appreciation of the divine Spirit who can exist with or without any such concrete form.

The Holy Spirit through the sacred writings is credited with all the powers and activities of intelligent personality. For example the Lord Jesus in promising that the Comforter would be sent to His disciples, declared that He would instruct them, refresh their memories, unfold the secrets of God and show them things to come—none of which could be said of a mere influence, or attribute. It is noticeable in all these pronouncements our Lord refers to the Comforter as "He", "Him", "Himself", and places Him on equality with Himself (John 14. 16-17; 15. 26; 16. 7-14). When He says "another Comforter" He intends another of the same sort; that is, One who would fill all those needful offices and perform all those gracious ministries that the personal Presence of the Lord Jesus had meant to the disciples. The Spirit of God is rightly said to be Christ's only "Vicar" on earth for He alone can do those things which Christ would do if physically present

and He alone can make the absent Lord real and precious to present faith.

It is to be regretted that the Authorized Version on several occasions have connected the name of the Holy Spirit with the pronoun "Itself", "It", as though He were inanimate. This of course, was a strict adherence to the laws of grammar but not to simple reasoning. The word "spirit" is a neuter noun and normally requires the neuter pronoun (It etc.); but since the name "Spirit" is applied to a living Person the neuter significance is nullified and a masculine pronoun (Himself) is required. The devout and intelligent reader of the Word will want to honour this blessed Person in both thought and speech.

The Word of God, moreover teaches that not only is the Holy Spirit an intelligent Person but He is a DIVINE PERSON having equality as well as union with the Father and the Son. His name is used on equal terms with that of the other members of the Godhead in the baptismal formula of Matthew 28. 19, "baptising in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". Similarly His Name appears in the Apostle's benediction in 2 Cor. 13. 24, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all". The outstanding characteristic of each Person is thus beautifully expressed. The grace of condescension and sacrifice in our Lord Jesus Christ that interpreted the love of God's heart can only be shared by us in the communion or partnership of the Holy Spirit. The divine inter-relation and inter-dependence of the offices of all three must be apparent even to the youngest Christian. Whatever you may have thought of these passages the title given to the Spirit in 2 Cor. 3. 17 should be conclusive: "Now the Lord is that Spirit", and in verse 18, "The Lord the Spirit" (New Translation). It is not surprising therefore, to find this Divine Person associated with the carrying out of God's manifold purposes. As the Executive of the Godhead He must needs be eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, and all these attributes of Deity are traceable to Him in the Scriptures. He who acted in the vast work of Creation, brooded over earth's primal desolation and garnished the deep spaces of the Heavens could He be other than God? (Gen. 1. 2; Job 26. 13; Psalm 139. 7).

Project this thought into the realm of Salvation and you will be more firmly convinced of His Deity. Who can convey the life of God, eternal life to souls dead in sins? Who can regenerate and place them in the family of God? Who can give them the Spirit of Sonship and create filial

longings for the Father? Indeed in each distinct phase of His ministry which we hope to investigate we shall find the truth of Zech. 4. 6 increasingly manifest: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts". The re-establishment of divine order and testimony in those days as now excludes all fleshly expedients and necessitates the Person and power by which the impossible can be gloriously achieved.

It is high time for assemblies and believers of these decadent days to think reverently and practically about this holy, gracious and almighty Person to whom alone we are committed for success and blessing. This will mean that we shall cultivate His acquaintance in every personal spiritual exercise, in the teachings of the sanctifying Word and in the impulses and opportunities He provides in service for our Lord Jesus Christ.

(To be continued)

A REVIEW BY THE EDITOR

The brethren

See also "Women's Place in the Assembly" by Andrew Borland.

THE Author of the article we are reviewing, "The Brethren" by John L. Fear ("The Christian and Christianity Today", August 23rd 1968) had apparently put a series of written questions to these supposed leaders. The first question was: "Do you feel that the present day Brethren movement remains true to the original vision of the early leaders?" H.E.L. in the latter half of his answer says: "There are crypto exclusives among the open Brethren. In so far as they are not influenced by 'exclusivism', 'open' leaders are true to the original vision." This needs no more comment.

H.H.R. says: "The 'world-renunciation' that was so marked a feature of the early days has few practitioners today. Yet the impetus to evangelism and foreign missionary work continues almost unabated." Is this right? Have we not folks among us today who are truly pilgrims and strangers; are there no folks among us who have abandoned the world, or who live frugally in order to support the Lord's Work? I have been moving in assembly circles for almost 40 years—I would have said that I had met many saintly folk of this type. Of course I may be wrong—but I am convinced that I am not! To say anything different would not only be uncharitable, but an absolutely wrong assessment of the exercise of godly saints.

I note, too, and endorse what C.J.P. says re another question: "Each local assembly is autonomous—is this

strict independency advantageous or otherwise?" He answers: "It is relatively so, but not absolute. They must conform to the principles and practices of the whole or leave them and become a truly independent church". The expression does occur "as in all the churches" (see 1 Cor. 14. 33; 7. 17; 11. 16) and denotes a similarity of belief and practice in the various autonomous churches. Surely this is the trouble today—"Brethren Assemblies" that are not "Brethren Assemblies". We have all kinds of terms in our day, such as Plymouth Brethren, Christian Brethren, Open Brethren, Closed Brethren, Crypto Exclusive Brethren—but there are also "Non-Brethren Brethren", who, though they are in fellowship in Brethren assemblies, do not really believe what members of the movement as a whole believe. Honesty would demand that they do as C.J.P. suggests.

Another question that was put to these brethren was: "Many Assemblies now have full-time Pastors, Family Services on Sunday Mornings and have changed the names of their Gospel Halls. Is there a danger that Brethren will become indistinguishable in their witness and worship from other Evangelical Free Churches?" The question is of course incorrect. It is not right to say that many assemblies in Britain have full-time Pastors and Family Services on Sunday morning. (Two ideas imported from certain sections of America). The author's knowledge seems to be confined to a very small area. It is also true of a few that they have changed the names of their Gospel Halls. All these are a grieving element. An attempt to make themselves more like the denominations around and remove the reproach of gathering only to the Name of the Lord Jesus and carrying out His Word. Perhaps they wish to "become indistinguishable from other Evangelical Free Churches".

On this question the brethren who replied are not in agreement. D.C.R. says: "The Brethren movement has always had full-time Pastors or perhaps more accurately described Bible-teachers. In bygone days men of ability could support themselves in the economic conditions existing in their day. Many Assemblies are recognising that our economic way of life is changing and so therefore we must have men who are "set apart" to be teachers. The fact that full-time Pastorship has been going on for more than 100 years in Brethren missions would indicate that there is nothing really new in this", whereas A.W.R.A. says: "I think this is untrue. I do not know of a single local church which would be generally regarded as Brethren which has a Pastor. It might be a good thing if

there were, but I do not know of any. However, even if it gradually becomes the practice to adopt the features of church life mentioned in the questions, I would not regard this as a 'danger'. The object of any body of the evangelical Christians should not be to create a distinctive sect, but to work out the will of God as nearly as possible in church life. If this leads us into becoming indistinguishable from other evangelical churches, it seems an admirable thing". It is news to me that in Brethren missions a full-time pastorship has been going on for more than 100 years. I hardly think that our missionary brethren would appreciate this allegation. I thought they made disciples, baptised them, taught them, gathered them together in local assembly fellowship, and as soon as possible handed over assembly responsibility and guidance to native elders. It may take longer to do this where first of all new converts have to be taught to read, before they can learn for themselves, but nevertheless this is the object of our brethren to establish autonomous assemblies, not depending on the missionary at all.

The vast majority of Christians gathered amongst the "brethren" do not believe in full-time paid local pastors (some of the contributors apparently do). We consider that Pauline instruction was correct when he exhorted the Ephesian elders "to labour to support the weak", and cited himself as an example, "these hands have ministered to my necessities and to them that were with me". This is not the poor of the flock supporting a full-time pastor, but local pastors working to support the weak of the flock! It is the Ephesian elders who are reminded in this connection to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20). Whatever interpretation one might put on 1 Timothy 5. 17 cannot possibly contradict what Paul says here.

The Spirit of Babylon

by the late WILLIAM KELLY.

YOU will observe the voice from heaven here: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18. 4). The receiving of her plagues is not the divine motive for separation. Men would be anxious enough about that. But the great thing that God looks for from His people is this—that they should not be partakers of her sins. I would put it to every Christian, **how far is he in sympathy with God's mind touching Babylon and her sins? How far does he feel the evil of it and judge it?**

Babylon does not seek heaven, but the earth—not the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow, but to sit as a queen and to see no sorrow. Babylon is content with worldly exaltation. If you steer clear of this, Babylon has no attraction for you; and the present danger of every soul from Babylon is the gradual caring for and allowance in Christians of what man values on the earth. Of late years there has been no little change in the thoughts of Christians as to the present enjoyment of prosperity and pleasure in the world. There is amazing danger in it. For what is the great thought of it all? Man rising, progressing, exalting himself—man showing what he can do, and how improved, and this is sought to be connected with the Name and sanction of Christ! **Alas! it is Babylon the Great** (Rev. 18. 9, 19). In her we see the end of the heart's desire, to enjoy all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. I do not wonder at an unconverted man seeking to make the world pleasant. Cain did it, and there is such a thing now as going in the way of Cain. These are the people that handle all sorts of musical instruments, and the artificers in brass and iron. It is true that these things sprang up in the very early hour of the world, but still the Spirit of God does not tell us for nothing that they were in the family of Cain, NOT in the family of Seth.

Every child of man stands responsible to God, whether converted or not, to own his outcast state as a sinner: he has no right to drown his conscience in the pleasures and the glory of the world. But bad as this may be, the thing that God hates most, and that He will judge in an awful and public manner, even in this world, is the tacking on the Name of Christ to the indulgence of worldly lusts. Is it not the desire, even of many Christians, to have the grandeur and riches of the world at their back? I do not doubt that they heartily wish to have people converted, but they would like them to bring their earthly influence along with them. This is the **Spirit of Babylon**. What the Lord looks for from us is doing the will of God, suffering for it, and taking it patiently. Any of these things which the heart covets will be found to involve the will of man. **There is not a single position of distinction or of glory in the world but what requires a man to give up a good conscience towards God.** In other words, you cannot be a member of the world and act faithfully as a member of Christ. If you value and wish to follow the world, you will make all sorts of excuses, and argue for a compromise; but this only shows how far the leaven of Babylon has affected your soul.

(To be continued)

NOTES BY THE COMMITTEE

From the world and its confusions.

Here we turn and find our rest,

From its cares and its delusions,

Turn to Thee, and we are blest. J. F. Thrupp.

UPON entering another year in the history of our magazine we are constrained to express our thanks to the Lord for His faithfulness in giving strength to continue. He has exercised those gifted to use their pens for the profit of His people. He has blessed the paper to His own in many lands. He has graciously provided for our continuing need, thus, we have proved His faithfulness and in our experiences we rejoice that our God not only hears prayer, but is able to answer for His own glory, and in turning to Him "we are blest".

We greatly appreciate the help we have received from the Lord's beloved people. We thank those who have contributed so freely in the variety of papers submitted. We thank the many saints who so kindly helped in distribution. We gratefully acknowledge the service of prayer that many have maintained on our behalf. Our sincere thanks are also extended to those whose practical fellowship has made it possible to continue. The freewill offerings of the Lord's redeemed ones, individually, and through the assemblies moves our hearts in gratitude to our faithful God. So many write us whom we have never met, from so many lands we shall never see, yet there develops an intimacy over the years for which we thank God. With joy we anticipate the great gathering before us, when,

We look to meet our brethren

From every distant shore;

Not one will seem a stranger,

Though never seen before.

Then with and like our blessed Lord forever ! Forever !

Now, notes for our NEW READERS. The magazine is sent post-free on request. If possible, try and obtain it through the assembly parcel. This bulk dispatch saves costs. When ordering, please submit name and address in BLOCK LETTERS. Quantity required can be amended at any time of the year. Kindly endeavour to avoid waste. Advise us promptly of change of address. Back numbers, if not out of print, can be obtained on request. Please do continue to pray for us, that the Lord shall guide us and bless the magazine to His precious saints in the increasing darkness, confusion and lawlessness of 1969.

MANY readers speak of their warm appreciation of the Articles in **Assembly Testimony**. We have been able to increase the size by an extra four pages and have a selection of ministry from present and past writers in hand for the coming year. Please do all in your power to introduce the magazine to your local assembly and to all the people of God.

HOW I WAS CALLED TO SERVE THE LORD IN

ZAMBIA

by Dr. S. EMERSON

“TO know God’s will and to do it”. Surely this is the highest ambition of a child of God. To know it, requires the enlightenment of the Spirit. To do it requires the enabling of the Spirit. To me, it did not come as a sudden, startling revelation, but due to constant and consistent exercise during my early Christian years.

My early life was lived much as every other boy’s was lived but I had the priceless privilege of having Christian parents. Being one of a family of six prevented me from being “spoiled”! The salvation of the children was the highest desire of my parents. This they had the joy of seeing accomplished, and it was a special joy, when on one Lord’s Day morning, all six of us, together with our parents, sat down together to remember the Lord, in the Ormeau Gospel Hall, Belfast.

Early in my Christian experience I had the desire to serve the Lord as a missionary. I thought, that if I could become a doctor, it would be an additional help to see this accomplished. However the way did not open immediately for me to study medicine, and I entered business in clerical work. But still down deep in my heart remained the desire to serve the Lord.

Needing an operation, I entered hospital, and whilst here, again the desire increased in my heart to study medicine, and give myself to the service of the Lord on the mission field. Coming out of hospital, and convalescing, one day I mentioned to mother my desire. She had known of this before but, putting spiritual things first, she had advised me to take a commercial course rather than a university course. (A friend of the family had just then finished university and his time there had resulted in spiritual disaster). After prayer, and her blessing, it was decided that I should attempt to enter university and study medicine. This meant 15 months of hard study to reach university matriculation standard. But again, humbly seeking to put God first, the promise was fulfilled, “Them that honour Me I will honour”. Throughout these studies, and my subsequent years in university, I resolved to attend the assembly meetings, as well as engage in the proclamation of the good news to young and old. Well do I remember as final medical examinations drew near! The Prayer Meeting and the Young People’s Meeting I had resolved to continue to attend right up to these final weeks. Some books still remained to be studied. I resolved, fur-

ther, never to study on the Lords Day. I felt that this day should be wholly given to the Master. Had He not given precious years for me, and then yielded up a precious life for me! Surely I could make some "sacrifice" for Him! The week of the final examinations was a week of prayer. Again I renewed my vows before the Lord. "If the Lord enables me to obtain my degree in medicine, then it will be used in His service". The temptation to study on the Lord's Days just prior to the finals was great. But again help was sought of the Lord. A fellow student, a Christian, and a good friend mentioned to me the "folly of going to meetings and not doing some study on Lord's Days". He was one of the bright students of the year. I was not! But I told him of my resolve to put the Lord first. The finals were over! The results announced! My name appeared on the pass list. My friend's did not! God was teaching me the lesson that "time given to Him was never lost time".

After graduating, I again re-dedicated my life to the Lord and awaited His guidance. There were the failures and frustrations—all mine. There were times when the flesh became restless. Soon after qualification, I felt the opportune time to go forth as a missionary had come. But the Lord had further lessons to teach me and a greater blessing in store for me. Some years passed before my desire was realised. Again and again my vow was renewed in the presence of the Lord. "Not my will, but Thine". Often the temptation to "settle down" in a comfortable practice was strong, but waiting upon the Lord gave patience to await His time. During this time of waiting, God brought a real blessing into my life. I met my partner in life. Unknown to me at the time of our first meeting, she too had, in a missionary meeting, dedicated her life to the Lord for service in Central Africa, especially amongst lepers. (Mr. Tom Rea of Central Africa was the speaker at that meeting). My own exercise too had been leading towards Central Africa. How gently the Lord leads us on. Despite our strivings and failures! As one looks back, one can see a loving heart planning, and a loving hand leading in each circumstance that came our way.

The Will of God demands sacrifice and obedience whatever the cost. For my wife this meant much. And the time of parting was not easy for her or her loved one. For myself, I little dreamed that my first term in Central Africa would mean the parting too, "until the day dawn", from a dear young brother and a dear, dear mother, whose

ambition in life was, that her family would live for God. Her prayers thrust us forth, and for two years sustained us through many trials. And yet, as one looks back on these partings, and "counts the cost", one can still see a loving heart planning so tenderly in love, and a loving hand leading to more trust in our faithful God. During the years many, many faithful prayer partners have entered into their rest and reward. God has raised up others. Discouragements there have been; but encouragements have been greater. Failure in us has been so evident; but the faithfulness of our God has been over abounding. To see lives transformed, saints restored, bodies healed and then sent back again into villages to live for Christ—nothing can bring so great joy and recompense. And His mighty power, working in us, is the reason for it all. His is all the glory!

What the future holds we cannot know. But we know who holds the future. Our prayer and desire is that "we may know His will and do it."

SPIRITUAL BALANCE

OR THE PERILS OF UNSCRIPTURAL EXTREMES

by WILLIAM BUNTING

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ONE DAY AT A TIME

One day at a time, with its failures and fears,
With its hurts and mistakes, with its weakness
and tears,
With its portion of pain and its burden of care;
One day at a time we must meet and must bear.

One day at a time to be patient and strong;
To be calm under trial and sweet under wrong;
Then its toiling shall pass and its sorrow shall
cease;
It shall darken and die, and the night shall
bring peace.

One day at a time—but the day is so long,
And the heart is not brave, and the soul is not
strong,
O Thou pitiful Christ, be Thou near all the way;
Give courage and patience and strength for
the day.

Swift cometh His answer, so clear and so
sweet;
“Yea, I will be with Thee, thy troubles to meet;
I will not forget thee, nor fail thee, nor grieve;
I will not forsake thee; I never will leave.”

Not yesterday's load we are called on to bear,
Nor the morrow's uncertain and shadowy care;
Why should we look forward or back with
dismay?
Our needs, as our mercies, are but for the day.

One day at a time, and the day is His day;
He hath numbered its hours, though they haste
or delay.
His grace is sufficient; we walk not alone;
As the day, so the strength that He giveth His
own.

Annie Johnson Flint.

THE PERSON AND PROGRAMME OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

by SAMUEL JARDINE, Belfast. (Continued).

THE INCARNATION

THREE distinct movements are discernible in the Spirit's operation in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first at His birth in Bethlehem, the second at His baptism in Jordan, and the third at His return to earth in power and glory.

The first stage:

CHRIST'S BIRTH

As the Israelite of old opened his tent in the early morning, he saw the Manna, the promised bread from Heaven lying on the ground. "When the dew was gone up behold upon the face of the wilderness . . . a small round thing as small as the hoar frost on the ground" (Exodus 16. 13-14). The dew was thus the medium by which the Manna was conveyed to earth and preserved from immediate contact with it. When the dew was gone the Manna was seen. So in bringing the Bread of life to a heart-hungry world the Holy Spirit was the sole agency in conveying the great Gift and in preserving Him from any defiling contacts with the human instrument which He, the Holy Spirit used.

While needful details of Christ's wondrous birth are recorded yet one is impressed by the dignity of Divine reticence. The event is traced to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit both for the reassurance of Joseph and for the instruction of Mary. The natural conclusions of Joseph are not ignored but we see the Angel of the Lord appearing opportunely to withhold him from his design of putting away Mary his espoused wife. With what relief and satisfaction he heard the Angel's message, "Joseph . . . fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit". Then follows the inspired explanation of this unprecedented conception. "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, "Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Angelic and prophetic testimony thus combine to declare Mary's

child is "God manifested in the flesh" (Matt. 1. 20-25; 1 Tim. 3. 16).

The visit of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary was, of necessity, one of explanation and cheer. Her problem, too, was solved and her heart gladdened as the wonder and character of the predicted birth was disclosed. The record equally emphasises her virginity and the uniqueness of her privilege as the only earthly parent of the Christ-child. To her Gabriel makes known His Name, "Jesus", His greatness, His Deity, "Son of the Highest" and His Kingship. "Fear not, Mary: . . . thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1. 27-35). The Saviourhood, Majesty, Godhood, and place as the Sovereign of the house of Jacob, the eternal King, of this virgin-born child, all demanded a supernatural entrance into this world.

As these facts were unfolded and the portrait of the coming One enlarged, it still remained to trace the origin of this amazing event. Mary herself was swift to sense this and her modest but honest enquiry elicited Gabriel's revealing message: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: **therefore also that holy thing** which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 33-35). This was unmistakably supernatural having no parallel in the multitudinous births of the human family. Mary was God's chosen vessel for the bringing of His Son into union with humanity. "That holy thing" indicates the perfect sinlessness of His nature, while, "He shall be called the Son of God", marks Him out as the eternal and only begotten of the Father. The inescapable logic of this passage is that the sovereign Spirit in the power (dunamis) of the Highest preserved the Holy Child from all taint of Mary's sin. Had this been a completely natural birth Jesus would have been born out of wedlock: born in sin. He would have possessed a nature like Mary's capable of sin and incapable of being our Saviour: needing Salvation Himself. How vitally important then is the information which Gabriel brought concerning this momentous happening, the alternative to which is too blasphemous to be entertained for a moment by any true lover of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The implications of this event are most important and heart-stirring. Here was love's only plan. To reach its

objective it must come where we were, broken and dying in sin. So, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman to redeem . . . that we might receive sonship" (Gal. 4. 4-5). The words that Christ used as He entered this world, "A body thou hast prepared Me" connect with the ultimate purpose of His incarnation, "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10. 5; 10. 10).

Here, too, was love's revealing plan. "The Word", co-eternal, co-existent, co-equal with God "was made flesh", that is, united Himself with perfect humanity "and dwelt among us" so as to reveal all that may be known of God and to lift human nature to the highest level. All the qualities demanded in absolute Deity are expressly seen in the Lord Jesus as the interpreter of the Father. (John 1. 14, 18; 14. 9). Later revelation categorically declared that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9). But these attributes of Deity consist harmoniously with the whole range of virtues that constitute perfect manhood. What a glorious Personality is this 'God-Man'!

The incarnation was also love's inclusive plan. Via Bethlehem and Calvary it reaches the very throne of God. It includes not only the miracle of His presence on earth as the Son of Man, and the infinite value of the presentation of His body as a sacrifice for sin but also the abiding benefits of His session at the right hand of God. In the same body in which He sojourned and was sacrificed "He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1. 3). "Handle Me and see," He said, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have" (Luke 24. 39). In that body He returned to Heaven to be for them and for us all that saved sinners need before God and men. The offices He now fulfils are essentially by virtue of the humanity He assumed when by the power of the Spirit He entered into union with the human race. It is this that makes His mediation powerful; His representation valid; His High Priestly work intimate and sympathetic, and His advocacy effectual and real. (1 Tim. 2. 5; Heb. 6. 20; Heb 4. 14-15; 1 John 2. 1).

Tests of Christian belief and reality come into view in this connection. In the foggy religious climate of our day, Christ-dishonouring rationalism boldly rears its ugly head and with blasphemous effrontery scorns the miraculous in the birth of Christ. There is a crying-out need for the restatement of this and kindred fundamental truths. No one can be a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ who has erroneous views about His tabernacling

in the flesh. John's first epistle unChristianizes all the unitarian cults of his day and ours that deny Christ's supernatural assumption of humanity. How emphatic He is! "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that (spirit) of ANTI-CHRIST, whereof ye have heard that it should come and even now it is in the world". The preface to this paragraph is a solemn warning not to believe every spirit but to try the spirits whether they be of God. (1 John 4. 1-4). The acid test in every case is the denial or acknowledgement of the incarnation of the Son of God.

YE SERVE THE LORD CHRIST

A word to all who serve the Lord

by **ROBERT McCLURKIN**

(Continued)

THE SERVANTS SUBJECTION

The principles by which assemblies function can only operate aright when there is spirituality among the Lord's people. It is possible, and indeed it happens, that because we have no board of directors or centralized body of men to control, those out in full time work have opportunity to become a law unto themselves. Therefore in the absence of a tender conscience and personal devotedness to the Lord, one may make the preaching or missionary profession an excuse for a lazy, aimless existence. He can use the assemblies as tramping grounds for touring the world, with the Lord's people paying the expenses, or he may settle on a mission station to do nothing except to hinder the native believers from assuming their proper responsibilities in the local assemblies, or he may become a week-end preacher with neither a burden for the lost nor a care for the weary and poor of the flock. Mr. Harold St. John once said that when one is working for an earthly master he will give him at least eight hours a day and when one is working for our heavenly Master he should give Him no less. This Christian gentleman divided his own day into three parts: the morning for prayer, study and writing, the afternoon for visiting and the evening for preaching.

It is because New Testament principles, which guide the work of God as carried on by the assemblies, can only work where there is godliness and Spiritual intelligence that assemblies should be doubly careful to see that only godly, devoted and indispensable servants should be released for full-time work.

Trace the path of godly servants in the Book of Acts. It is indispensable men that are released in ch. 13. 1-3. They did not make a tour to tell what they were going to do but plunged right into the work of preaching the gospel and planting assemblies. Then after a while they returned to their home assembly to declare what the Lord had wrought (14. 26-27).

Follow their path and see how they were completely under the Spirit's control. They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia (16. 6). This teaches us that the need of any country does not constitute a call to go. Then, "the Spirit suffered them not" (v. 7). Then, "A vision appeared unto Paul in the night" (v. 9). Here doors close and open to them as they move in the path of the will of God. There are three conversions in our chapter that laid the foundation for the first assembly in Europe. Each soul needed a different approach. But men trained in soul-winning will find the approach to broken hearts. The first is the picture of a seeking soul (v. 14). the second is a deceived soul (vv. 16-18) and the third is the out and out sinner (vv. 30-31). Notice the equipment that was used in these conversations. In the first, the emphasis is on the Word of God, in the second, it is on the Name of Christ and in the third it is on the power of the Holy Spirit. Such equipment is better than Saul's armour to meet the giant that holds souls in bondage. We must let this emphasis remain on God's equipment for His servants. There can be no substitute for the Word of God, the authority of Christ, enshrined in His lovely Name, and the power of the Holy Ghost.

I shall close with these words of a devoted servant of Christ: "The want of the age is men. Men of thought. Men of action. Men who are not for sale. Men who are honest to the heart's core. Men who will condemn wrong, whether it be in friend or foe, in themselves or in another.

"Men whose consciences are as true as the needle of the compass is to the pole. Men who will stand for right though they stand alone. Men who can tell the truth and can look the world right in the eye."

"Men whose courage comes from within and whose joy springs from the soul's deep fountain. Men through whom the current of everlasting life runs still and deep and strong. Men too large for certain limits and too strong for the bondage of men. Men who know their message and tell it. Men who know their place and fill it. Men who are not too lazy to work nor too proud to be poor. Men—real men—Men of God."

SUPERFICIALITY AND INCONSISTENCY

by the late JAMES PENDER, Bo'ness.

IN these days of highly organized and systematic distribution of collected Christian ministry available to any one at little cost, the Pearls of Divine Truth are being cast before all and sundry contrary to Divine teaching, (Matt. 7. 6). There is no discrimination in the giving out of Divine things, hence the intellectual instead of the spiritual are becoming the custodians of Divine truths and God's things are approached and handled in a cold, critical and self-sufficient spirit by those who have neither moral substance nor spiritual constitution. Such, in many cases, have an antipathy to certain Divine Truths, being unlearned and unstable men who wrest the Scriptures, giving undue prominence to certain truths and excluding others equally as true as those they contend for, forgetting that all Scripture is equally inspired and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3. 16-17). Such men may hold proper doctrine and use correct terms but have no spiritual understanding of what they set forth or affirm. They have the light of the things spoken of but not the things themselves nor yet the joy that comes from having them. They are merely superficial, having no spiritual depth and speak light and flippantly of things they may have right and title to but have never touched experimentally, having never learned the truth as it is in Jesus (Eph. 4. 21).

Because of such handling of Divine Truths, there is much failure in practical response to them so that exercise and movements are governed by the friendships, associations and teachings of others rather than by the Scriptures of truth and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of the Corinthians being at work, that is, "I am of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, of Christ" (1 Cor. 1. 12). In this way the Scriptures themselves are belittled in favour of the conceptions of men, and, it may be, men of note among the brethren. How true it is that at our best we only see through a glass darkly, but how much more so when we only view things through the glasses of others. Thus our spiritual vision is obscured and our appreciation of Divine things is hampered and we become unserviceable to the Lord. What is looked upon as service is mere religious zeal and what is regarded as spiritual movement is only the effect of religious propaganda in which we use worldly methods to make capital out of the failure of other saints who are not of our particular

company in order that we may swell the ranks of those with whom we associate. Thus we move politically in support of our party or policy like the Herodians, belittling any effort that others may make and magnifying our own achievements like the Pharisees, upholding in doctrine the truth of the oneness of the Body but in practice denying it by our preferential treatment of those who happen to be of our own persuasion. Doctrinally we may be holding all saints in our affections but in practice we hold them at arm's length, teaching the truths that underlie the eating of the sin offering and the covering up of our brethren's nakedness but in practice exposing their failures by preaching and publishing their faults, using the same methods as the nations, namely, leaflet propaganda, to hold them up to ridicule; holding tenaciously to one aspect of truth and very lax as to another; pressing the ecclesiastical side of separation out of all due proportion, while the unequal yoke of commercialism is fully indulged in; withholding the right hand of fellowship from those who are in eternal bonds and extending it to those in the temporal bonds of worldly associations, co-operation and amalgamation, whose motto is "Unity is Strength", while in doctrine we set forth that the believer's strength lies in his separation from all such systems.

Such glaring inconsistencies between doctrine and practice are calculated to humble Christian men and teach them that they are poor exponents of what they so glibly expound. That they require moral ballast and spiritual balance to keep them from being so lopsided in Divine things is evident, so that in their doctrine and practice there may be moral correspondence. Only thus shall they show forth the virtues of Him who has called His people out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2. 9), who embraces all His saints in His affections and is not ashamed to call them brethren, leaving us an example that we might follow His steps (1 Peter 2. 21). He first began to do and then to teach that of which He was the living embodiment—the Truth (Acts 1. 1; John 14. 6). He had moral discrimination in the giving out of Divine things, teaching the people as they were able to bear (Mark 4. 33). There was no superficiality with His doctrine. It was profound, having the stamp of Deity upon it and not mere externalism like the Scribes. He taught as One having authority (Matt. 7. 29).

In concluding then, let us all see to it that we approach and handle Divine things with reverence and godly fear, like Mary, sitting at His feet and hearing His word, may we walk worthy of our high and heavenly calling.

THE UNITIES OF JOHN 17

by Dr. R. C. EDWARDS, Australia.

THE foot that touches John 17 should be unshod. It is holy ground. Divine Persons are here. The Son is addressing the Father.

John's Gospel was written after the others. Its five chapters, 13 to 17, are special to John. They show the Lord Jesus at the end of His earthly sojourn. He is about to depart out of the world unto the Father. The apostles are to be left in the world. They will need special instruction for the new circumstances. Teaching, correcting, encouraging them, His love has ever been practical. It will continue to be so, for He is loving them "unto the end". This is not merely the termination of a period of time. There is more in it than that. The end is an end in view, an achievement to be attained. He would have them fitted for their heavy responsibilities because in His bodily absence they would be the representatives of God in this dark world. With this in mind He gives them the special instruction they needed. His love for them had before it this end, this outcome, this issue, namely, preparedness for their witness. The teaching He gave them is in the chapters mentioned. Chapter 17 shows Him strengthening the apostles by praying for them. This gives the clue to the appreciation of John 17. Primarily it has in view the unity of the apostles as a strengthening factor in their forthcoming witness.

Any reader to whom this is new should find it helpful to read the first nineteen verses, skip the next four, resume at verse 24 and read to the end. The references to what "they" did and to what "I" did after the four parenthetical verses will reveal continuity with the nineteen verses before them. Both tell of what happened in the past, when the Lord was with the apostles. After doing so, let the reader turn to verses 20 and 21 beginning, "Neither pray I for these alone", noting the wider scope of the two verses. They have to do with unity in the testimony of believers both apostolic and post-apostolic, including ourselves. Then verses 22 and 23 bring before us another phase, yet future, namely, final perfection in respect of Christian unity. **It is essential to distinguish these three unities.**

Setting aside for the present the four parenthetical verses, let us look at the main part of the chapter, in so far as it deals with unity. This comes to a head in verse 11, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those

whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as we are". He is praying for unity among the apostles after the pattern of that between the Father and the Son. This calls to mind the Lord's words, of John 10. 30, "I and the Father are one". In what sense are they one?

As a matter of grammar Greek has a special ending for "one" in the masculine gender and another for the neuter gender. The masculine form occurs in Gal. 3. 28 and Eph. 2. 15, "one man". In both the unity is an accomplished fact. It relates to the believer's standing in Christ, not to his walk. The neuter form occurs in John 10. 30; 17. 11, 21, 23 (twice); 1 Cor. 3. 8; 11. 5; Ephesians 2. 14, and 1 John 5. 8. This oneness is not that of one person or one man, but it is to be regarded, in some sense which is determined by the context, as one thing. The Father and the Son are not one person; their oneness is of nature and essence. That of 1 Cor. 3. 8, in which Paul and Apollos each with his own personality and gifts were nevertheless one, is of attitude and witness. Eph. 2. 14 tells of one position made of two by the demolition of their dividing wall, and 1 John 5. 8 of three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood agreeing in one thing, namely, that Jesus is the Son of God. In John 17. 11 each of the apostles was to preserve his own gifts and personality, all to be co-ordinated so as to be able to act as one.

Can we see any fulfilment of this the Lord's prayer for the apostles? We have no further to look than Acts 2. Peter is the spokesman, but the teaching is not called Peter's, it is "the apostles' doctrine". These disciples of Acts 2. 42 persevered in "the apostles' doctrine and fellowship". That is, they heard and heeded the apostles' teaching which they got from the Lord Jesus and also shared in or with, the witness of the apostles. Peter and the others were one in outlook, attitude and action, with all the variety of their gifts and capacities. This is what the Lord prayed for in John 17. 11, "that they may be one as We are".

Two cautions may not be out of place here. The first is that it is anachronistic and quite misleading to identify this fellowship with what has come to be called "Holy Communion". Secondly, it is well to recognise that, in the New Testament, fellowship is never a company of people.

We are next to look at the unity mentioned in verses 20 and 21 of John 17.

(To be continued).

The Baptism of Believers

by HAROLD BUTCHER

We regret that, owing to an overlook, this part of the article did not follow in sequence.

(2) The UNDERlying meaning of baptism.

In our consideration of the meaning of baptism let us refer to three Scripture portions in which baptism is linked with the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Acts 10. 48* we may read, "And he (Peter) commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord"; in Acts 2. 38, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ"; and in Acts 19. 5, "They were baptised in (or, to) the name of the Lord Jesus." The different ways of referring to the Saviour, namely "the Lord", "Jesus Christ", and "the Lord Jesus", are very significant, and something of the significance we may observe in our meditation upon these portions.

In the first of these portions the Name is the AUTHORITY, for the baptising commandment is given by the AUTHORITY of THE LORD. The One who is Master, who is Sovereign, the One who has all power in heaven and upon earth, the One who is THE LORD has given commandment. In its simplest aspect the baptism of the believer is an act of obedience. The Lord commands. The believer should obey. Has the saved reader obeyed this command of his Lord? "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14. 21).

In the second of the three portions now under consideration, namely, Acts 2. 38, the Name is the BASIS of baptism. The One who became Man, Jesus (Jehovah-Saviour) and accomplished the work for which He was anointed, this One, Jesus Christ, died and rose again. These facts are essential to baptism. Baptism is in the Name of Jesus Christ. In Romans 6 (the baptism chapter), the references to the Saviour's death and resurrection are most marked. We read in verse 3 of His death, in verse 4 of His resurrection, in verse 5 of both, in verse 9 of both, and in verse 10 of both. (The life in verse 10 is His resurrection life). All true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ who have been baptised, have been baptised unto HIS death. Had the Lord Jesus not died and risen again,

*The remarks on Acts 10. 48 must be a little qualified if the R.V. of the verse is accepted in preference to the A.V. and Darby's translation.

baptism would be a meaningless ceremony. The believer goes down into the water and comes up out of it. The Lord Jesus Christ went down into death and rose again.

In the third portion, namely, Acts 19. 5, baptism is to, or into, the Name of the Lord Jesus. Here we may see **CONFESSION** and **CONSECRATION**. In the baptism of John the Baptist there was a confession of sins (Matt. 3. 6); in the baptism into the Name of the Lord Jesus there is a confession of **faith** and **ownership**. By the act of being baptised in obedience to **HIM**, the believer confesses faith in Jesus as Lord, that is, as the Lord and as his Lord. The believer confesses His ownership, that is to say, the believer confesses that he belongs to **HIM**. In baptism there is a pointing back to what happened when the person baptised obeyed the gospel. As a poor sinner who deserved eternal death he came to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for sinners, and was accepted in **Christ**.

Baptism is **unto** the Name of the Lord Jesus. As they followed the pillar of cloud and passed through the Red Sea, all the children of Israel confessed the leadership of Moses. They were all baptised **unto** Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10. 2). At times there were those of them who questioned the place of Moses as leader, but in following the pillar of cloud and in passing through the sea they acknowledged God's appointed leader.

In 1 Cor. 1. 13, 15, it is made clear that no one was baptised **unto** the name of Paul. Baptism is **unto** the Name of the Lord Jesus.

Closely linked with this thought of **CONFESSION** is the thought of **CONSECRATION**. The believer is baptised **UNTO** his **LORD**. Baptism should be a step of consecration. The sixth chapter of Romans would teach us that the believer is not to be the subject of sin (as king—v. 12), or the slave of sin (as master—v. 16). Christ died unto sin (v. 10). We died with Christ (v. 8). "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" (v. 2, R.V.). We must reckon ourselves dead to sin (v. 11). We must be slaves to righteousness unto holiness (v. 19). We should have this in mind when we are baptised **unto** the Name of the Lord Jesus.

(3) The **UNDERstanding** of the Meaning.

In this subject, as in many another, there are dangers in opposite directions. There is the danger of setting no value upon a candidate's understanding of baptism's meaning. There is the danger of raising an unwarranted barrier by an improper insistence upon a certain degree of understanding on the part of the candidate for baptism.

Let no obstacle be placed before the true believer who seeks baptism out of a sincere desire to please his Lord.

At the same time let there be loving and wholehearted exhortation respecting the acquisition of the greatest possible understanding of baptism's meaning. Let wise instruction be given. May those who take the step of baptism do so intelligently.

FINALLY, let us consider verses 41 and 42 of Acts ch. 2, "Then they that gladly received His word were baptised And they continued stedfastly (persevered) in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers". How happy it is when this order and example is followed. Is the reader a true believer in our Lord Jesus Christ? If so, have you been obedient to your Lord's commandment in the matter of baptism? Are you by God's help persevering in the teaching of the Scriptures, in assembly fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers?

DIVINE POWER

by J. H. STEWART, Gateshead.

"God speaketh once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God" (Psalm 62. 11).

THERE can be no doubt that the great need of the Church today is for the manifestation of Divine power. While there is much light and gospel truth, there is comparatively little spiritual power. It should be the desire of every child of God to "know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe" (Ephesians 1. 19).

We may have certain ideas as to what Divine power is, without those thoughts necessarily being according to Divine truth. We may even be mistaken in our thinking as to how this power is obtained. Perhaps it may be well to consider first of all, what it is not, that we may clarify our thinking concerning its true manifestation.

(a) **It is not Excitement.** Some seem to think that without great emotion or excitement there can be no power; but spiritual power may be quite apart from any great manifestation of these elements. It may be seen in a calm yet irresistible influence, as when the Master stilled the storm at sea and brought His disciples peace of heart amid the ensuing great calm (Mark 4. 39).

(b) **It is not Self-energy.** The Lord's words to His own were: "Apart from Me ye can do nothing" (John 15. 5). While His words primarily referred to fruit-bearing the

principle also applies to our Christian activities. The consequence will be similar also; herein is My Father glorified (v. 8). So many associate Divine power with so much self-effort, so that great effort is regarded as a sure sign of great power. Not that we should be slothful, however, but rather vigilant.

(c) **It is not Self-sufficiency.** The apostle wrote: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves! but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3. 5). Our salvation by grace alone has not made us self-sufficient. Belief that we are strong and able to overcome our difficulties ourselves would produce confidence in self rather than confidence in God. We can see this characteristic of self-confidence in Peter in his readiness to affirm that he would go with the Lord to prison and to death. (Luke 22. 23, 34). He was yet to learn His weakness, when he denied his Lord.

When we turn to consider what Divine power is, we recognise at once that it is not something of our own, but the power of God; this will keep us humble before Him.

It is the Power of Christ's Resurrection (Phil. 3. 10). Paul knew the reality of this fact, for he had personally seen the risen Lord. "And last of all He was seen of me also as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15. 8). He desired to know more of this power in his life. There was Divine power seen in the death of Christ, whereby a full deliverance has been secured for us; but the Lord lives after the power of an endless life. "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward 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" (Eph. 1. 19, 20). He is ever "Christ, the Power of God" (1 Cor. 1. 24).

It is the Power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1. 8). To be filled with the Spirit is to be endowed with power. To walk in the Spirit is to live in the power of God. To possess the Holy Spirit is a great privilege, but to be possessed by Him is quite another matter. It is one thing for the Spirit to be resident and quite another to be president; if He truly possesses us, we shall live in the holy atmosphere of Divine power.

The ministry of the apostle Paul is full of indications of the power of God at work through him. He speaks of "striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1. 29); and reminds the Philippian believers of the fact that "it is God that worketh in you,

both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2. 13); while the very frailty of the human instrument magnifies "the excellency of the power as being of God and not of men" (2 Cor. 4. 7). When the Christian lives by this Divine power he will be marked by strong faith (1 Cor. 2. 5), for his faith will stand in that power. He will abound in hope (Rom. 15. 13) by the Holy Spirit and the "greatest of these", love, will characterise him, for it is a product of the Spirit's work in the life (Gal. 5. 22). All power and really effective service will be found to spring from entire submission to the will of God (Rom. 12. 1, 2). From the yielded personality will come the opening of the path of that will which is good, acceptable and perfect.

A REVIEW BY THE EDITOR

The brethren

See also "Women's Place in the Assembly" by Andrew Borland.

ANOTHER question to be answered was—

"What do you conceive to be the main purpose of the Christian Brethren Research Fellowship?"

F.R.C. says: "Essentially, to create awareness—of ourselves, of others, of the Christian Faith in its total implications. Moreover, "Brethren" in this context includes all "brethren" in Christ, and C.B.R.F. has a not insignificant number of members from other traditions."

He should know! It is an interdenominational fellowship and has nothing officially to do with the Brethren. Many of the so-called "Brethren" are members because they support its objects. Many more are not members, some because they do not support its objects, others because they are indifferent to it. I am not a member. I have copies of the C.B.R.F. Journal (first three issues) before me, sent to me by the secretary. I recognise in some of the articles, an urge, for better things, for a fuller Christian life, for more expansive witness. I recognise, too, however, (1) an ecclesiastical latitudinarianism more pronounced than in normal brethren circles (almost bordering on Ecumenism). (2) A frowning on typical teaching, which teaching was one of the things in which the early brethren indulged, and they have left us a rich mine of devotional, heart-warming ministry, based on such an approach to the Old Testament particularly. There is also an advocacy of a very liberal view on prophecy. One is reminded that before the "High

Leigh" and "Swanwick" Conferences there was a Conference at "Cora" on "The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus", at which various notions were aired. It would be true to say that many of the group I have already mentioned hold unorthodox views on prophecy. It could not be denied, however, that the vast majority of the members of the Brethren believe in the Pre-Tribulation Coming of the Lord Jesus to rapture His saints to meet Him in the air. They believe that the Seventieth Week of Daniel's Prophecy is still future. They believe that when our Lord Jesus appears and His feet rest upon the Mount of Olives His enemies will be overthrown, He will set up His Kingdom and Israel will be gathered to their own land again. They believe there will be a Millennial Kingdom. Many Brethren assemblies would not accept ministry from men who held either the "Tribulation" or "Partial Rapture" or "A-Millennialist" theories; and some others would allow them to minister but not on subjects relative to prophecy.

I do not like the closing paragraph under A.W.R.A.

"I see its main purpose as the provision of a forum for those Brethren who take the view that intellectual activity is permissible in spiritual matters and can even be beneficial. This view is not widespread in the Brethren and I think the C.B.R.F. helps to keep up the morale of many Brethren who find themselves virtually without intellectual fellowship."

This savours of intellectual snobbery. There is many a miner in Lanarkshire, or a fisherman on the Moray Firth, or a steel worker in the valleys of South Wales, many an ordinary working man who, though self-taught, would be a giant in divine things as compared with many a more intellectual Christian.

We believe that there is plenty of room in a New Testament assembly for discussion, that will edify the Lord's people, whether they be extremely intelligent or even illiterate. Are we not members one of another!

(Concluded)

Ministry

THE FALSE AND THE TRUE

by the late JOHN RITCHIE

THE popular idea of a Christian Minister is, that he is a man whose office and calling is to preach to, and pray for, the congregation of people over whom he has

been chosen to preside. That he and he only is capable of "administering the Sacraments", and that in virtue of his ordination he is empowered in some extraordinary manner to look after the souls of men, and in some not very clearly defined way, to make their salvation sure. That he is not to be regarded as any ordinary mortal, but distinctly marked off from the "laity" by wearing a clerical dress and having the title "Reverend" prefixed to his name. In return for all this, he is paid a salary—in many cases a large one, incongruous to the work done for it—and being the servant of the people whose purse supply his salary, they of course have a right to choose the man they desire to perform all these spiritual functions for them. This is oftentimes no easy job, as there is usually a superabundance of candidates for the vacant church—more especially if the opening is a good one, with a tempting salary.

Need it be wondered that an ever-increasing number of ungodly and unregenerate men are being drafted into "the ministry"—men who do not hesitate to deny every bulwark of the faith, and fritter away every doctrine of the Book of God, to make room for that which will please the people and keep them comfortable in their sins, on the way to perdition. But the marvel is this, that many of God's true people are found supporting such a state of things. We do not wonder at the unconverted doing so, it is just what we might expect from them. But men and women who have their eyes open, who know the difference between light and darkness, to be found "sitting under" the teaching and preaching of a man whom they know to be unconverted to God, and whose life in many instances proved him to be so, is a marvel to men and angels. But apart from the condition of the "minister", the whole system of his creation, his ordination, his priestly position and clerical functions, his title, attire, and salary, in short the whole matter of "the ministry" according to the popular meaning of that phrase, is opposed from stem to stern, and from bottom to top, to the Word of the eternal God.

Where do we read in that ever blessed Book—the only authority on things spiritual—of "The Reverend Mr. this or that?" Where? And where do we read of his salary, or his clerical garb? And which of the churches chose their own minister? The testimony that Scripture bears, presents a different picture. The "minister" according to the pattern there given, is a man whom the risen Christ has gifted, either as an evangelist, a pastor, or a teacher" (see Eph. 4. 11). If the former, his sphere is the world

(Mark 16. 15) and to the world he goes with the Gospel message, not waiting for man's appointment (Gal. 1. 1, 16) or to be hired by men (1 Thess. 2. 4 with Gal. 1. 10). The Lord looks after His servant's needs and supplies them through His stewards (Phil. 4. 15, 18) but from the world he takes nothing (3 John 7). If a pastor shepherding the flock, or a teacher instructing the saints in God's Word, he is not chosen by the people, nor is he the minister of any stated congregation. His gift is for "the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4. 12). This leaves no place for "one man" ministry. God's ministers need neither title or attire to mark them: their labours point them out (2 Cor. 11. 23, 28; 1 Thess. 5. 12).

"The Beauty of the Lord"

by H. C. SPENCE

BEAUTY always appeals to the human heart. The Lord has given us marvellous visions of beauty in Nature and all around we see the perfection of His creatorial powers. The beauty of the fragrant rose, the loveliness of the violets, and the purity of the lily is ever a source of delight to gaze upon.

However the beauty of Nature is fading and subject to decay. So is human loveliness and will sooner or later pass away. Alas, no beauty is permanent in this changing scene among the sons of men. But the beauty which surpasses all others is the excelling beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Psalmist expresses ardently in Psalm 27. 4: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, **to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.**"

The Holy Spirit delights to bring before our spiritual gaze glimpses of the beauty of the Lord Jesus. There is **the beauty of His character.** The Lord of glory is the **only One who ever possessed a character unstained by sin.** His moral beauty could not be hid and shines out so brightly in His Humanity and His Deity and in His written Word. How rich the character He bears exalted on the throne in whom all glories shine.

There is the **beauty of His walk**. The pathway of our blessed Lord we would retrace with adoring hearts. Truly, it was one of unsullied holiness a perfect path of purest grace unblemished and complete. His perfect obedience to accomplish the Father's will was displayed throughout His pathway to the cross. And the **beauty of His love** was displayed in His holy walk and seen in all its fulness in His sacrifice on the cross. His pathway gloriously ended with His resurrection and ascension.

There is the **beauty of His words**. The Psalmist exclaims, "Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into Thy lips; therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever" (Psalm 45. 2). Truly words of secret power in hours of grief, in loneliness to kindle thoughts of praise! The two disciples at the end of the Emmaus journey said one to another: "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24. 32). Even His enemies had to confess: "Never man spake like this Man" (John 7. 46).

What a joy it is to be occupied with the **beauty** of the Lord. We remember well the time in our life when the Lord of glory was nothing to us, and we were like the people described in Isaiah 53. 2 who saw "No beauty in Him that they should desire Him". But He is now the "chiefest among ten thousand" (S. of Sol. 5. 10). We are reminded in the Song of Solomon of the supreme beauty of the Lord, and again in chapter 5 the daughters of Jerusalem challenge the Bride concerning her Beloved. "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?" And the Bride enumerates the loveliness of her Beloved and exclaims, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand . . . yea, He is altogether lovely" (vv. 10, 16). Surely this is the language of every lover of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lastly, there is the **transforming beauty** of the Lord. As we contemplate His beauty we shall be transformed into His likeness in some measure as we behold Him. "But we all, with unveiled 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" (2 Cor. 3. 18). What will it be to be completely transformed into the image of the Lord of glory when "we shall see Him as He is".

May we appreciate more the beauty of our Lord as we are occupied with Him until "faith shall give place to sight and we shall see His face".

The Evangelist and the Church

THE evangelist is not the servant of the church, nor does he look to it for his support, or receive from it his marching orders. He is the Lord's servant alone, and to Him he must give account. Yet the evangelist is not a "free lance", a man under no obligation to any one, going where and doing what he thinks fit without consideration of others. The evangelist, like all other ministers of Christ, is in and of the church of God, subject to its rule, and if need be to its discipline. If his service is conducted according to God, he will go forth from its bosom with its hearty fellowship (Acts 13. 4), followed by its prayers, and return to it when his labours are for a season over, to share with it his joys, by telling what the Lord has done by his ministry (Acts 14. 27). If these simple lines are followed—and they have been left for our guidance—there will be no great danger of isolation, or lack of fellowship with the evangelist in his work, no lack of interest in his converts, and less liability of the Gospeller himself drifting into modes of work and associations which are not according to the Word of God.

The evangelist, when he assembles with the church, is on a level with all his brethren as a worshipper, and has a common share in the privileges and responsibilities of the assembly of which he locally forms a part, but he should take no part in "church affairs", or matters of discipline and such like, in places where he for a time labours. If this were more carefully observed by brethren moving from place to place in Gospel service and teaching, there would be fewer broils and party feuds, and possibly more real power with the Word to saint and sinner. Nor should the evangelist be too eager to have those who profess conversion baptized, brought into the fellowship of the assembly, and reported as "fruit" of his work. Those who have shepherd care and guide the flock locally, may be safely trusted to do that with more discernment and less danger, than the man who sees them only for a few weeks, and knows little of their lives at home or in the world. The baptizing and receiving of young converts is a work in which much spiritual discernment is required, and it ought to be done cautiously, prayerfully, and in fellowship with saints.

From "The Believer's Magazine", Volume 9. Page 79.

THE THINGS THAT DIFFER

by JOHN M. COWAN, Motherwell.

THE Corinthians, as such, from an intellectual standpoint, were highly intelligent, but from a moral standpoint iniquitously licentious and depraved, yet, out from this learned and licentious mass, God has rescued for Himself, by the power of the Gospel, that which it has pleased Him to designate as the Church of God in Corinth.

Their history, as such, has been a varied one, yet one of profound interest to the people of God to-day, for, crowded into their short experience, there has occurred to them most of the difficulties and disorders which could be experienced by any company of God's people during the whole course of the Church period.

Herein then lies the value of Paul's first letter to them; not only has it met the need of the Corinthian saints, but in the wisdom of God it has been recorded and preserved to provide the standard of adjustment in these matters for the whole of the Church age. Possibly, much of the failure which was manifested by this company was the lack of spiritual perception and the constant tendency towards the carnal rather than the spiritual.

As a church of God in local exercise, they had been greatly blessed of God, being gifted above many, with a full revelation of the requirements of God and His expectation from them, yet, in their apprehension of imparted truth, much had been imperfectly grasped; much more had been positively perverted, while much had been practically misapplied. Truth which is Mixed or Mutilated or Misapplied has the tendency to produce serious forms of error, consequently one is not surprised at the condition of things that prevailed at Corinth.

In order, then that these tendencies should be checked and corrected, the letter has been written; no attempt has been made to condone their shortcomings; everything must be brought into the light and adjusted according to Divine requirements. Much failure had been evidenced, yet, with all their failures and shortcomings, they were still the church of God at Corinth.

Might we say at this point that, that which has been Divinely constituted can only be Divinely disannulled. A local church is the workmanship of God, and is expected to be a display of His handiwork. Spirituality and knowledge does not make a church, neither does Carnality or Ignorance unmake one. This only proves the rule that, whatsoever cometh from the hand of God is perfect, but

the moment it is placed into the hands of men, failure and imperfection begin to manifest themselves. Although Paul had been absent from the company, yet there had been communicated to him reports of disorders which had occurred, with requests concerning difficulties which had also arisen.

These reports and requests had come from the spiritual element in the company—those that were interested and exercised concerning the purity and spiritual progress of the church, in order that the evils might be removed, the erring ones recovered and, in relation to their difficulties, that they might receive a further enlightenment from God.

Such was the state of things that was now existing in the church of God in Corinth; surely the Gates of Hell were prevailing here.

When Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians, he reminded them that the evidence of progress in Divine things was the ability to distinguish the things that differ. This is a spiritual quality which should be in constant evidence amongst the people of God; much of the difficulties that have arisen could have been avoided had this quality been more constantly seen in exercise. We oft-times make differences where none exist, and where the Spirit of God so clearly marks them out we seldom see them. Possibly the church local and the Church according to Divine purpose could be a glaring example of the difficulties which could arise in failing to distinguish the things that differ. Failing to do so has led to much confusion and has produced quite a variety of distorted thought. Where the definite article does not occur, it is not the thing itself that is being suggested, but rather the character of the thing.

The church local has body features, but could never claim to be **the Body**; it also has house character, but never claims to be **the House**; it should experience temple conditions but would never claim to be **the Temple**. These are a few of the occasions when discernment is necessary and the ability to distinguish the things that differ is a must.

The church of God in Corinth is the description that has been divinely given to all in that place who have accepted Christ as Saviour and have been separated from the world and gathered unto His Name. **The church: its Designation:** Called out and called together by Divine invitation. **The church of God: its Dignity and Distinctiveness** unequalled and unique, the only place on earth where God expects to find pleasure and see His Will

expressed. The church of God in Corinth: its Defined locality, marking out its bounds as the sphere in which it functions for the Glory of God and for the good of men.

The church of God, as a term used in the New Testament scriptures, occurs some eight times and always in connection with privilege and responsibility down here.

The Church which is His Body, the completion of Him who filleth the all in all, is purpose truth; that which has been determined in the council chambers of eternity, which will require the entirety of the present age to develop and in its completeness display: When, to the admiration of all the Principalities and Powers in the Heavens, there will be displayed the multi-coloured Wisdom of God, in the Church which is His Body, the completion of Him who filleth all in all, the consummation of the Purpose of the ages.

In distinguishing the Practical from the Purpose, one could become a good workman who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

SPIRITUAL BALANCE

OR THE PERILS OF UNSCRIPTURAL EXTREMES

by WILLIAM BUNTING

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HOLY GROUND

HOREB

Not consumed, The bush that burned,
Wondrous sight to one who turned,
With a purpose to draw near,
Knowing not the Lord was there.
What a word his ear did greet
"Take thy shoes from off thy feet".
Deity must set its bound,
Where God is—'tis Holy Ground.

SINAI

Sinai with its Holy Law,
Who would dare in nearness draw,
Fire and Tempest there proclaim
Great Jehovah's mighty name.
E'en the mediator quakes
As the mountain moves and shakes,
Oh how dreadful was the sound,
Wher God is—'tis Holy Ground.

CALVARY

Calvary with its streams of grace
Bids us now draw near to trace
All God's just and Holy claims
Met with all devouring flames
That consumed the offering
Only Christ to God could bring,
Love and justice there abound
Truly this is Holy Ground.

ZION

Boldly, yet in reverent fear
We to God would now draw near,
On the first day of the week,
Blessed in soul, in spirit meek,
Cleansed in body, feet unshod,
Joying in the Son of God,
In our hearts the Lord is crowned
Occupying Holy Ground.

F. Hedges.

THE PERSON AND PROGRAMME OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

by SAMUEL JARDINE, Belfast. (Continued).

The second stage:

CHRIST'S ENDUEMENT AT JORDAN

As the Lord Jesus emerged from the baptismal plunge at Jordan the Heavens were opened to Him and the Spirit of God descended and abode upon Him. This was the predicted enduement of God's Messiah—that is "His Anointed" (Psalm 2. 2). Immediate accompaniments of the anointing became apparent. Objectively, John the Baptist had indisputable proof of His identity. He declared, "I saw and bare witness that this is the Son of God" (John 1. 31-34). Subjectively, the Saviour abandoned Himself to the sway and power of the Spirit. It was in this way and at this time that the Lord Jesus Christ took His place publicly as Jehovah's Servant (Isaiah 42. 1-4, Behold My Servant whom I uphold, Mine Elect in whom My soul delighteth, I have put My Spirit upon Him, etc.). From Jordan He set out to fulfil that programme which will culminate in the complete glorification of God upon this world scene. In every phase of His ministry the unction of the Spirit can be traced. He was "filled by the Spirit" and "led by the Spirit" to be tempted by Satan (Luke 4. 1-2). He met the arch-enemy of mankind having no armoury but what is available, Christian, to you and me—faith in God, the Word of God and the power of the Spirit of God. He returned from the temptations "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4. 14) and thus victorious as the Spirit filled Man, the Lord Jesus entered the Synagogue in Capernaum and publicly appropriated the language and programme of the Christ, i.e. The Anointed. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach the good news to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord". Then having concluded at the point relevant to His first advent He closed the scroll, gave it to the servant of the Synagogue and added, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears". They were listening to God's anointed Prophet, Priest and King. All through that career of amazing signs,

of remarkable sayings and lovely submission we can sense the fragrant, holy oil that was poured upon Him at Jordan. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10. 38). Asher-like the Son of man dipped His foot in oil and every step of the pathway was marked by the gracious words and deeds that placed Him on a level far above His fellows (Psalm 45. 7). This attitude of dependance upon and co-operation with the Spirit is discernible in Christ's great act of mediation for sinful man, for we read that He "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God" (Hebrews 9. 14). In some undefined mystical way the Holy Spirit associates with the presentation to God of that eternally efficacious and acceptable sacrifice.

The third stage:

IN THE KINGDOM OF THE CHRIST ON EARTH

The citation of a few of many pertinent passages of the Word will suffice to show that when our blessed Lord has concluded His present session at the right hand of God and received His own to the rallying point in the air He will return to earth to resume the programme interrupted by His rejection as Israel's Messiah (1 Thess. 4. 16; Matt. 24. 30). Those who do not indulge in spiritualizing jugglery will agree that the Son of Man will again operate in the mighty power of the Spirit. The partial fulfilment of Isaiah 61. 1-6 will now be fully implemented by "the day of vengeance of our God" and the promised comfort, healing and spiritual and material enrichment of the Lord's national people—"the desolations of many generations" giving place to harmony and joy. How could a fair-minded reader of Isaiah Ch. 11 deny that God's anointed King is there specifically described and that the blessings naturally belonging to His Presence and government on earth will be made good in the power of the sevenfold spirit? "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch out of His roots, and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah, and His delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah! and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod

of His mouth . . . they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, standing as a banner, of the peoples: the nations shall seek to it, and His resting place shall be glory". The inspired forecast of "the Root and Offspring of David" reigning personally and literally over the whole earth admits of no tampering by biased interpreters. It requires the Lord's Anointed present on earth in all the fulness of His spirit-enduement bringing felicity and harmony into every sphere of this sin-marred and battle-scarred scene. Jew and Gentile will be irresistibly drawn to one unifying centre. The King Himself, our glorious Lord Jesus Christ will be "the Banner of the peoples"; the rallying point when "the nations shall seek to it and His rest shall be glory". Today, in the bitterness of national and international disruptions and disunity men have no such magnetic and mighty Personality to solve their problems or heal their dissensions. In the prophetic music of this inspired writer the sweetest note to our hearts is the fact that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11. 9).

Psalm 45 presents in the language of an overflowing heart a lively and lovely portrait of the King as He will be seen in the day of His glory and power. It details His personal and surpassing moral beauty; His solemn mission with sword and arrow, with glory and majesty. It tells His holy motivation; He is impelled by truth and meekness and righteousness. It recalls His rights to reign as God and as wielding the sceptre of righteousness, because of which the holy and fragrant oil had been poured upon Him. How appropriate the language "the oil of gladness" to that great "crowning day" and to the peace and felicity which will flow from the world rule of God's appointed and spirit-anointed King. (compare Psalm 45. 18 with Revelation 5. 6).

THE UNITIES OF JOHN 17

by Dr. R. C. EDWARDS, Australia.

I N John 17. 20, 21 the Lord is praying not for the apostles only, but for a far more numerous post-apostolic aggregate of believers. His language varies accordingly. "That they may be one" of verse 11 becomes, in verse 20, "that they may all be one". "As we are" of verse 11

is elaborated in verse 21 to read, "as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they may also be in Us". (Our A.V. has "one in us" but is acknowledged that here "one" is not genuine).

"That they all may be one" speaks of unity. But "in Us" is more than this. It is the language of identification, of the Father with the Son, of the Son with the Father, and of believers with both. Think of the identification denoted in Eph. 1 by "in Christ", "in Christ Jesus", "in Him", "in the Beloved", and similar examples elsewhere. Thus, from John 17. 20, 21, it is to be realised that we of this present time should be **in unity** ("that they all may be one") **in identification with the Father and the Son** ("in Us"). Is this identification to be in respect of our standing or does it pertain to our walk and practice? For the sake of our testimony we should face this question.

It can be answered from an appreciation of what the identification is meant to effect, namely, "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me". Will the Christian's standing in Christ cause the world to believe something or is it his walk which can do this? The answer is, the latter. The Christian's standing is known only to faith, trust, belief. His walk can be seen, and more or less evaluated by the world, as evidence of something unworldly and desirable. Thus, it is to be recognised that in John 17. 20, 21 the Lord is praying that believers of our day should show such unity in a walk of identification with the Father and the Son that the world, looking on, might be led to believe that the Father really did send the Son into the world.

Verses 22 and 23 are now to be studied. They speak of a **perfection in unity**, in terms which show an advance on what is in either verse 11 or 21. For v. 11 has, "that they may be one", and v. 21 has, "that they all may be one", but v. 23 has, "that they may be made **perfect in one**". And the following details show another gradation, namely, v. 11 has nothing to correspond with "that the world may believe" of v. 21, but this gives place, in v. 23, to "that the world may know". Knowing is an advance on believing

Again, gradation shows itself in what the world is to **know**, in v. 23, as compared with what it is to believe, in v. 21. That the Father sent the Son, and that He loves the sons as He had loved the Son, is more than what is said in v. 21. It is indeed a perfection in unity. It looks not to the present, intermediate testimony which is the subject of v. 21, but to the ultimate result, a condition of finality,

“a state of completeness with respect to oneness”, as K. S. Wuest’s Expanded Translation gives it. It envisages the completion of the Church the body of Christ, the final gathering together of the sheep from Israel and from the nations too into the one Shepherd’s one flock. It is impressively described in Eph. 4. 12, translated by H. C. G. Moule, “till we all attain, the whole number of us . . . to a full-grown man, even to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”. The whole number of us consists of all believers of this Church interval and the full-grown man is the completed Church. As yet it is not complete. The Lord Jesus is still building it, though the process is not perceptible to the senses of man, as in Solomon’s day neither hammer nor axe nor tool of iron was heard while his temple was in building (1 Kings 6. 7). When complete it will be raptured, as 1 Thess. 4. 13 to 17 says. Thus is ushered in the Parousia of Christ, His presence with His people. We shall be manifested at His judgment seat, the “bema” of God. (Romans 14. 10; 2 Cor. 5. 10). The sons of God will be manifested to the world. For this the whole creation waits (Romans 8. 19). Then, not only will the whole number of us be complete as to aggregate but there will be perfection in unity as to character so that the world will have the knowledge of which John 17. 23 speaks, that the Father sent the Son, and that He loves the sons as He loves the Son.

THE SAVIOUR’S SEVEN SAYINGS

by RAY L. DAWES.

THAT there is a total of seven sayings spoken from the Cross by the Lord Jesus Christ, scattered in the four Gospels is a matter that arrests the attention of the believer. That the number seven has spiritual significance in scripture every student will agree. It denotes completeness, or divine perfection. Perfection is seen in every aspect of the Lord Jesus’ life and character: It is seen too in His death. The last words of men (especially in the scriptures), sum up their whole life, and inner character. The longer we linger over the last words of the Lord, the more beauty and perfection is discovered.

Each saying seems to highlight a characteristic, revealing its utter perfection in the extremity of suffering and death. Each is a gem proving its value in the fiercest tests.

1. Father, forgive them

His mercy to the rebellious (Luke 23. 34).

2. To-day shalt thou
His grace to the repentant (Luke 23. 43).
3. Woman, behold thy son
His love to the saints (John 19. 26, 27).
4. My God, My God
His holiness in the presence of Sin (Matt. 27. 46);
Mark 15. 34).
5. I thirst
His obedience to the Word of God (John 19. 28).
6. It is finished
His supremacy over every force (John 19. 30).
7. Father, into Thy hands
His communion with the Father (Luke 23. 46).

That this is the order of the sayings is generally acknowledged, from the context of the Gospels. Certainly Luke gives us the first and the last. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them . . ." (Luke 23. 34); and after the seventh saying, adds "and having said thus, He gave up the ghost" (v. 46). Observe that the first three concerns others, just as we would expect in the Lord, the central one only concerns Himself, and the last three are concluding statements regarding the work and will of God.

The last four sayings have connections with the Psalms. The orphan cry is a direct quotation from Psalm 22. 1; the cry of thirst is to fulfil Psalm 69. 21; some see in the words "It is finished", a close resemblance to Psalm 22. 31, "He hath done this"; and the final phrase is taken from Psalm 31. 5. All this indicates that during these hours of suffering, the Lord's thoughts dwelt deeply on the Psalms. In His wilderness temptations, it is evident from His replies to Satan that the book of Deuteronomy was His meditation. What lessons for us. May we be men and women of the Word, meditating in its pages that we may face Satan and sufferings if necessary with strength and serenity.

Another interesting point to notice is that the central and the sixth sayings are said to be shouts (Luke 23. 46; Mark 15. 34). This indicates that the Lord's physical strength was still intact, and proves that He did not die from exhaustion. The reference to the Lord knowing all things in John 19. 28, indicates further He still possessed His mental powers. Physically, mentally and spiritually, humanly speaking, the Lord was strong and sound to the end.

ONE

Then said Jesus, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23. 34). After the betrayal, the trial, the rejection, the cruelty, the taunts, which occasioned physical, mental and spiritual suffering, the Saviour pleads forgiveness for His enemies. He was not provoked into self-vindication or retaliation but was moved with compassion for His persecutors. Concerned more for their sins than for Himself, for their pardon than for His own pains. Remarkable! This is divine. This prayer was speedily answered. The words fell upon the ears of the thief beside Him, whose heart was soon melted into deep contrition and whose lips were moved into decided confession. The Centurion too who had supervised the crucifixion later acknowledged His divine character (Luke 23. 47; Matt. 27. 54). On the day of Pentecost, and subsequently many who had raised voices to condemn Him were converted (Acts 2. 41), even a great company of priests themselves (Acts 6. 7). Paul, too, was an example (1 Timothy 1).

Of course, here was laid the foundation of forgiveness for us all. What assurance the memory of this gives us. However, we had offended God, despised or denied His Son, no matter the number or weight of our sins, these words of the Saviour in His hour of suffering, breathe peace into our souls. No wonder we read in later writings, "your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake" (1 John 2. 12), "in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1. 7). His Name, His blood are prominent thoughts in connection with forgiveness, both take us back to the scene of Calvary where the first saying stands recorded. Someone has said that "forgiveness is like the fragrance a flower gives when trodden upon". Men did their worst to Christ seeking to tread Him down at the Cross; their cruelty but yielded the perfume of compassion. What immeasurable mercy!

The first word of the prayer commands attention. "Father . . ." Every man's hand and voice was against Him. He was being cut off in the midst of His years. The hopes some had set on Him seemed to be dashed. Yet confidence and communing with the Father still characterised Him. He was conscious of accomplishing the Father's will, notwithstanding the circumstances. "I am not alone, the Father is with Me . . ."

What an example is He to us. He who said, "Love your enemies, pray for them who spitefully use you . . ."

and "I am meek and lowly in heart . . ." now exemplifies His own teaching in the hour of extreme testing. Are we in any way like Him in times of adversity? This spirit of the Master had captured Stephen's heart when in his last moments too he prayed forgiveness for his persecutors (Acts 7. 60). This should inspire our zeal in Gospel service too. If forgiveness is offered to such as those who crucified the Son of God, the vilest of sinners can be saved. Let us tell it then to earth's remotest bound that "through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins". Moreover it is presented in the epistles as a powerful appeal to believers to preserve harmony in relationships with one another in assembly fellowship, to forgive one another, as Christ also hath forgiven us (Col. 3. 13). Let us linger near the Cross to absorb this sweet spirit of the Saviour.

(To be continued)

THE RED HEIFER

THE WORK OF CHRIST FOR HIS OWN

by the late W. J. McClure

Read Numbers 19.

IN the ordinance of the Red Heifer we get an aspect of the work of Christ which is especially toward the believer, and which it is most important he should understand. Did you ever consider what it would mean, were there no such aspect of the work of Christ found in the New Testament as is typified in Numbers 19? We will just suppose a case to illustrate this. Here is a believer, one lately born again. He is full of joy, and gratitude to Christ fills his heart, for having died in his room and stead. As yet no cloud has come in between his soul and Christ, nor can he understand how he could ever backslide from One who loves him so well. The one aspect of the work of Christ which occupies his mind is, His death to bring him as a lost sinner to God. But time passes on, and he has had an awakening to the fact that there is something still within him which responds to temptation from without, and ere he is scarcely aware of it, his joy has fled, and a cloud has settled down upon his soul. What is he to do now? Must he go all the rest of his life like this?

If no such provision were available for him, as is foreshadowed in the Red Heifer of Numbers 19, how unspeak-

ably wretched he would be! The link of union between him and Christ still holds, but the link of communion has been broken. And but for this precious aspect of Christ's work, it could never be re-knit. What an exceedingly solemn thought! But, thank God, the believer can never be in this state for the death of Christ, which met all the sin and guilt of his unconverted state and delivered him from hell and the judgment of sin, now as perfectly meets his need as a failing child of God.

In taking up this subject our desire is to help young believers. Much in this chapter we shall not deal with.

First of all, it is suggestive, that we do not get this type of the Red Heifer in the opening chapters of Leviticus, where naturally we would have expected to find it. For there we get a full account of the various offerings. It is one of the perfections of God's Word that it is found in Numbers and not in Leviticus. Numbers gives us the wilderness, with its dangers of defilement, so we have this ordinance in the wilderness book. It is God's provision to remove defilement from His people there. The wilderness for the believer is this present evil world, with its abounding evil, and the Red Heifer, that aspect of the Lord Jesus and His work for His people passing through the world. He lives now to keep them clean.

First let us look at the animal, next at its burning, then at its ashes and their use, and lastly, at the consequences of neglecting these.

The Animal: It was to be a female; thus it suggests Christ as the One who was subject to the will of the Father. If the male speaks of strength and ability in dealing with sin, the female typifies subjection. That is the thought here. In John 6. 38 He could say, "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

It must be **Red**. No other colour would do. Red speaks here of blood, of death. It tells what doing the will of the Father meant for Christ. As we read in Phil. 2. 8: "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

"Without spot": The spot may speak of what may be easily seen, something in the daily life. All who came in contact with the Son of God had to bear testimony, willingly or unwillingly, that He was the Spotless One.

"Wherein is no blemish": This is something deeper than a "spot", and tells of what only the eye of God could see. But here also all was infinite perfection in Him. He was holy in His nature as well as spotless in His life.

“Upon which never came yoke”: Had the heifer but once been in plough or cart, even if the yoke had not worn a hair off its shoulders, it would have been unfit for this sacrifice. Christ alone of all who ever served on earth, never came under the bondage of sin. Satan sought by all his subtle wiles to bring Him under His yoke, but all was in vain.

The Burning: The heifer was killed and her blood sprinkled seven times before the Tabernacle (where Jehovah met with His people). Then the whole animal was carried outside the camp and wholly burnt to ashes. While the burning was in progress, something was done which at first sight seems foolish. A priest took some “scarlet” and a bough of “cedar wood” and a sprig of “hyssop” and cast them into the midst of the burning of the heifer. But however trivial the act might appear, a truth of tremendous importance to the child of God was being told out in type. And that truth is expressed in Galatians 6 .14: “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world”. Paul had stood by the burning of the heifer in antitype, and had seen the end of more than his sins. The Cross was for him the end of himself and of the world.

“Scarlet” is ever emblematic of worldly glory, the royal colour, so associated with military pomp. How it attracts the eye! Until that day on the Damascus road when Paul met Christ, he was under its spell. And how fitted he was to reach the goal of his ambition. Of the purest Hebrew stock, a free-born Roman citizen, having received a splendid education. To these advantages we must add an indomitable will and tireless energy. Here we see a man who could have reached the highest place of honour and fame his nation could bestow. But what a change the Cross wrought upon that proud, aristocratic young Jew. He had seen One whose glory cast all earthly glory into the shade. That word in Acts 22. 11, “And when I could not see for the glory of that light” (referring to the effect of the glory light upon his bodily eyesight), is the effect of the Cross on Paul’s after life, expressed in one brief sentence. He is now content to be to others what Christ had once been to himself, and glory in thus sharing his Lord’s rejection, being counted as “the filth of the world” and “the offscouring of all things”. If “scarlet” thus speaks of the pomp and glory of the world, “cedar wood and hyssop” brings before us what is more substantial and to men more profitable. Solomon “spake of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto

the hyssop that springeth out of the wall" (1 Kings 4. 33), the whole range of the vegetable kingdom. Doubtless Paul in his unconverted days, like most others, could appreciate the emoluments which as a rule go with places of honour. But all is changed now. He knows what it is to be "hungry", "thirsty", "naked", to have no "certain dwelling-place". Nor does he ask men's sympathy; rather does he glory that the world, once so living and attractive to him, has, through the Cross of Christ, become a dead thing. And he himself, once so attractive to the world, now by that Cross is a dead man to it. It is not only that he had seen all earthly pomp and glory to be stained with the blood of Christ (as in Lev. 14. 6), but he sees its end altogether for him in the Cross. It would be good to ask ourselves, how much do we in reality know of this aspect of the Cross? What practical power does it exercise over our lives? Is it not this, that is needed to deliver from the growing worldliness, alas! too manifest on all hands?

(To be continued)

The Two High Priests

by R. WOODHOUSE BEALES, Ipswich.

Matthew 26. 59-66

THE two High Priests faced one another in the Sanhedrin, one on his way out and the priesthood finishing; the Other on His way in, about to commence the new High Priesthood, for although earthly High Priests carried on after this, they were so in name only. The teaching of Hebrews makes it clear that the High Priesthood of Christ is based upon His One and Only sufficient sacrifice. It is not however, mainly as the High Priest that he stands before the Sanhedrin (nor does He make that claim) but as the Son of Man.

False witnesses rose up against Him (Psalm 35. 11) and the wording of verses 59 and 60 would appear strange, unless these mean that until the two last came they could not find two which agreed together. These misquoted the words of the Lord which He had spoken earlier. There was no treachery to which this evil man Caiaphas would not stoop to gain his ends, and to fulfil his own prophecy that one man should die for the nation (spoke doubtless under divine compulsion). He was, we are told, a Sadducee, and therefore believed neither in angel nor spirit, nor certainly in the resurrection, this

must be borne in mind in contemplating this scene. How he could profess to believe in God who is Spirit, it is difficult to conceive. He now brushes aside the witnesses and takes charge of the interrogation, stung to the quick by the fact that Jesus will not answer him. He has a method by which an answer can be forcibly extracted and this he now employs to gain his evil ends.

In Leviticus 5. 1 the Israelite is compelled to answer when he hears the voice of swearing or adjuration, placing him on oath, or else be considered as pleading guilty. Another has written that "the betrayal by Judas is rightly regarded as an awful thing, but in some ways, was not the 'delivering up' or 'betrayal', by the High Priest even worse? As evidence of the devil's malignity against God there will be nothing more convincing until the man of sin be revealed . . ." This word 'betrayal' or 'delivering up' can be traced also in Mark 10. 33 and 1 Cor. 11. 23, where it may well be, not Judas, but Caiaphas who is alluded to. See also John 19. 11.

Caiaphas demanded that the Lord should tell him whether He be the Christ, the Son of God, and the Lord placed upon oath confesses that He is, but He does more than that, He claims to be the Son of Man, who hereafter will be seen sitting on the right hand of power and also (later) coming in the clouds of heaven. Now this in the minds of Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin was blasphemy and would indeed be so if untrue, and made Him worthy of death under the law of Moses. There was no doubt about His claims, He was quoting a scripture which all would know applied only to Messiah and His kingdom, moreover it revealed the very unseen world which they completely denied.

It has been said that this scripture in Daniel 7. 9-14 is the most referred to passage from the Old Testament prophecies in the New Testament, and this we shall endeavour to point out, but it will be noted that the action occurs in the last days of the Roman Empire under which the Jews were now suffering. It shows us the Ancient of Days in all His dignity and magnificence in high heaven holding solemn court, and instituting judgment, and surrounded by the heavenly host. The previous world empires had been briefly described—the Babylonish, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian (yet future in Daniel's day) and the final un-named Empire. The first three are distinctly named in the other chapters in this book (viz., 8, 10 and 11), but the Roman Empire is described only, not named. We have but to turn the pages of our Bibles to the New Testament and there we see it, named and

described, and in full dominion and power. It is when that Empire and its head are described that the narrative is interrupted to give a view of the court of heaven and the Ancient of Days in verses 9 and 10, to be introduced again at verses 11 and 12 which deal with its destruction, so that we return after this interruption to the scene in heaven to behold yet another wonderful vision, none less than the Son of Man Himself coming with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days to receive dominion, glory and a kingdom which shall never be superseded nor destroyed, and this is at the time when the judgment is set (the same word in v. 9, not "cast down" but "set") and the books of final judgment are opened. To which scripture our Lord added the fact that the Son of Man would also have the right to SIT on the right hand of power and also to come in the clouds of heaven. This is precisely what He had said to the disciples. (See 24. 30).

So in this vision, we see God in bodily form, not here described but seen and worshipped even although God is Spirit, and also spirit beings, the angelic host, are seen likewise as well as the Son of Man. Such a claim enraged this court of earth, which should have been a representation of the court of heaven, such is the dignity of the people of God. This earthly court was about to fulfil the Lord's own parables and cast out the Son Himself and treat Him in the most cruel, vicious and evil manner which could be devised. The reader will have no difficulty in tracing the course of the Roman Empire, which was soon to destroy Judaism and which would in turn be destroyed by God Himself, but which was to arise again in the last days for the final judgment. This most certainly did not happen during the years following A.D. 70. It lies still in the future and is described for us in the succeeding chapters of Daniel.

This claim sealed the doom (speaking after the manner of men) of the Son of Man. There was no further need of witnesses. He had made His own stupendous claim, which was indeed blasphemy if untrue. But, blessed be God, we know that it abides true throughout the ages.

It is this scene which is described for us in Revelation 5, but there it has the added blessedness and glory of being associated with Redemption. There is seen a great redeemed host, glorified and actually singing the song of redemption unto the Lamb before the Son of Man opens the books of judgment which are to fall upon that revived empire of Rome, in order to subdue the whole earth and bring in the universal kingdom and glory of the Lord Jesus.

Preceding this wonderful vision we have a similar scene in chapter 4 but this time occupied with the glory of creation and the Creator, not indeed mentioning redemption but creation. There is the throne and the Sitter upon it and the four living creatures giving glory and honour unto the Sitter on the Throne and also, instead of angels, the twenty four elders, enthroned and crowned, and casting their crowns before the throne, as they worship Him that liveth for ever and ever. In the fifth chapter they worship (and they are the same company) on the ground of redemption, and sing the new song of redemption, but here (chapter 4) there is no song, and the theme is the glory of creation and the Creator. There is also a final scene of universal worship from heaven, earth and under the earth, which has certainly not taken place yet. It is a future scene. So we have Creation and Redemption eternally celebrated.

Travelling back into chapter 1 however, the Seer is given a preliminary Vision of this glorious Son of Man (v. 13) not yet glorified universally but coming in Judgment in the clouds of heaven, which scene we must place in between verses 10 and 13 of chapter 5 for in that chapter we do not have His actual coming described, but in chapter 1 we do have this sublime and awe inspiring event shewn to us, and with Him we have a sight of the redeemed who are also a kingdom of priests celebrating His eternal glory and dominion. This is the preliminary for the chapters which follow in which are added the details of His coming dominion, but here is described not only the redemption of the saints but the great love which accomplished it.

Going further back still, we must now draw attention to the vision and voice which struck to the ground the pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, following in the train of the evil Caiaphas and indeed with letters of authority from that very Sanhedrin to stamp out by every possible means the very Name of the Nazarene. A light which even at mid-day with the sun at meridian in the Eastern sky, outshone it and felled him to the ground and blinded him as he heard the voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" This was not a vision of the heavenly court certainly, but of the One who was and is the glory of it, the true shekinah outshining of glory, and this vision transformed this bigoted Jewish persecutor into the one who would serve, suffer and die for the Name which he once abhorred.

Further back still we have a scene upon which this persecutor had looked and which must have begun in him a work of conviction though not yet of conversion, but

which caused him to kick against the pricks and urged him on to still further acts of rebellion and hostility, until arrested on the road to Damascus. And what had he seen? A man taken up with the vision of the glorified Son of Man, and whose face shone as the face of an angel, as he cried, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God". He saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on that right hand, a view surely, in some respects at least, like that vouchsafed to Daniel. Stephen had stood before the very same council before which the Son of Man had stood (doubtless with Caiaphas conducting the proceedings, see 4. 6) charging them with the murder of the Son of God, and he himself being charged with the very same indictment which had been levelled at the Lord Jesus, the destruction of the temple (compare Acts 6. 13, 14 and Matthew 26. 61) which was so soon to take place, but which is to rise again in order that the last scenes may take place when the "times of the Gentiles" will have run their course. Their history commenced associated with an image which all must bow down to and worship and will conclude with something similar, the image of the beast, which brings us back to Daniel 7. 11 (with Revelation 13. 4-14).

The practical value of these visions of the glorified Son of Man to these three men is the fact that it enabled them to minister this glorified Christ to others and also to lay down their lives for Him as martyrs.

Meantime let us rejoice that we are through His wonderful redemption eternally related to the One who went to death and judgment, not only of men, but of God also, to bring us to His eternal glory and to share His eternal throne.

The Perfect Workman

HIS REBUFFS, HIS RESOURCES, HIS RETURNS

...

Matthew 11.

THIS chapter you will find most simple: it is divided into three distinct subjects or sections; the first extends to to the end of v. 24; the second from vv. 24 to 27; the third from v. 28 to the end.

In the first section you find the **rebuffs** that the Lord Jesus met with in His ministry. In the second, the **resources** He found in the living God. In the third, the **returns** made to us. A person may say, I don't understand what you mean by the Lord Jesus Christ meeting with rebuffs. Did you never read those words in Isaiah 49: "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for

nought and in vain?" These words applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the only perfect servant, the only perfect workman, the only perfect minister. He was a marvellous teacher and minister; but He met with rebuffs and disappointments. Did you never read those words in Psalm 69: "I looked for some to take pity but there was none, and for comforters but I found none?" He passed through every sorrow and pain possible for any perfect human heart to feel. Don't suppose that, because the Lord Jesus Christ was "over all, God blessed for ever" that He did not feel all these things as a perfect human heart would. We are apt sometimes to say, He was God, He did not feel things as I feel them. There is the mistake: He felt every single thing, not a single slight put on Him that He did not feel. What did He say to Simon the Pharisee? "Thou gavest me no water for my feet; thou gavest me no kiss; my head with oil thou didst not anoint". He felt every slight, and let me add, **He feels it still**: not only as to His person, but every slight we put on Him by indifference and coldness. His heart is jealous over our hearts; He wants our affections. He feels **everything**. He felt all the rebuffs; and what will you say when I tell you that the very first was administered to Him by no less a one than John the Baptist—think of John the Baptist administering the first rebuff to the heart of Christ. Look particularly at this question which John sends. I want you to lay hold of it; I say so because many say he sent the question for the sake of His disciples. No such thing: he sent the question because his own faith was wavering for a moment. That man that gave that brilliant, that magnificent, testimony to Christ, look at him! Now, in the darkness of Herod's prison realising death, he sends this message to the Lord, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" You may feel a difficulty in believing that John could waver like that; if you do, it is because you don't know enough of that heart that beats in your bosom. You say, how could John the Baptist waver—that giant-like man who bore such a testimony to Christ, who talked to the Pharisees as he did, said he was only "a voice"—not worthy to unloose His shoes; and again, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world": and again, "Behold the Lamb of God": and again, "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ". But here he is in the darkness of Herod's prison, and his faith wavers. It is one thing to start in the fervency and power of a new life, but quite another, when we meet with rebuffs, to hold fast. Let me tell you that there is not a

single one who has started in the path whose faith will not be tested—God loves us too well to leave us without trial. If you and I are going to follow Christ in the path of service, we must be prepared to go to the wall, to be put down in the gutter. Do you suppose I want to frighten you? God forbid. I want you to feel the foundation under your feet; I want you to have such a sense of the heart of Christ that you may stand firm, come what may, for we are not going to have a smooth path. What then does John's message remind you of? It reminds me of Elijah under the juniper tree. The man who had stood for God before all the prophets of Baal, the next moment under the juniper tree, fleeing from a woman. The most gigantic minister, the best servant, is like a falling leaf before the wind. What was the end of it? Elijah is taken to heaven in a chariot of fire. He says, I am no better than other men; it is better to die than to live. What does the Lord say? I'll take you to heaven in a chariot of fire. So here the Lord Jesus Christ sent back this message to John, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight . . . And blessed is he whosoever shall not be **offended in me**". Do mark this most exquisite touch; I speak to those who can appreciate it. Here is the most exquisite touch to be found in Scripture.

You find this is a general principle in Scripture—the Lord never exposes us to others. He will expose us to ourselves, never to others. He'll never expose us to a stranger. I want to dwell on this, it is a great practical truth; you see it all through Scripture. These disciples are going back; do you suppose the Lord Jesus Christ is going to expose their master to them? Not at all, that's not His heart at all. He wants to speak to John's conscience. How was it to be done? He wants to send an arrow that will reach John's heart, but He will enclose it in a case so delicate, that the disciples don't know what they are carrying: it illustrates the wonderful grace of the heart of the Lord. Whatever may be your infirmity He'll never expose you to another, and He won't allow another to deal with you; He'll deal with you Himself. He sends back this message to John, "Go, show John," etc. These signs ought to have been far more powerful than if He had put forth His power to deliver him. There is such a thing as **power** and **sympathy**. I suppose there is not one of us who has not some crook in his lot; it is a necessary ballast. we could not do without it. Perhaps you don't know where your breakfast is to come from tomorrow morning. You know the Lord **could** find you in all you want. Why does

He not do it? I ask you a question. Which would you rather have, the power of His hand, or the sympathy of His heart? You say, The sympathy of His heart. Well, you would not have that if you had the power of His hand. Like Paul, the Lord says, I can't take away the thorn, I'll do something better, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and My strength is made perfect in weakness." If I take away the thorn you will get something worse. Perhaps you are looking at the weak constitution of your family circle, or something in your business, some person you have to do with that is a constant grating, going on day after day. Perhaps you are disposed to think there could not be a more trying temper, that you could get on with anyone better than just that person, his or her temper is so dreadful. You would like to have a change. If you get from under that, you'll get something worse. Victory over yourself is what you want; a change won't do. The reason why you find that disposition so trying to you is because your own will has not been subdued. One once said, saints in domestic life were like bottles in a basket: if they had not plenty of hay round them they were always jarring together. They get on very well in meeting-rooms, and seem all that's nice there, but put them together in domestic life, and you find out what they are. They are like the cogs of a machine, grating together, they want a little more oil. I see it constantly in visiting, for people are ever ready to pour out their sad tales into your ear. I see constantly that saints, when they come together in domestic life, cannot get on at all, because there is not **self-subjugation, self-judgment**. People say charity must begin at home. I say, **self-judgment** must begin at home, too.

Mark this, the Lord Jesus Christ never exposes you to another, so he sends back this message to John. Don't you see that everything is being done, this work and that work, and **blessed is he** whosoever shall not be **offended in Me**". That is the very point of the arrow—that was for John's own heart. Don't you see he would not let anyone else do the work? Don't you remember the case of Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 20)? Abraham was quite wrong, but will God allow Abimelech to tell him? No, on the contrary, He says, take care what you do with that man, he is a servant of Mine; I won't let you touch him. God throws a mantle over him. If he were to fail ten thousand times over, He says, I would not let you touch him, but you must be a debtor to his prayers, for the restoration of your household.

(To be continued)

THE CHRISTIAN SERVANT

Daniel 6.

by the late JOHN RITCHIE

DANIEL is a fine picture of what a Christian servant ought to be. There he was, away down in Babylon, far from the home of his boyhood, serving an ungodly master, and in the midst of ungodly fellow-servants. But Daniel shone as a light amid the darkness: he lived for God. Three times a day—and that was no doubt as often as he could leave his duties—he went away up to his chamber, and there dropped on his knees in prayer (Dan. 6. 10). Would to God that all Christian young men in situations were like him - How it would keep them fresh and bright for the Lord; and how it would strengthen and sustain their souls to live and work for Him! Do you make it a fixed thing in your every-day life, young believer, to get some part of every day alone with God? Do you seek, like this young man, during your dinner hour, or whenever you can get it, to get a little while on your knees speaking to your heavenly Father? I'm afraid some forget to do this. You see them too often idling away their time at the street corner. No wonder they get cold and become backsliders. **All backsliding begins by neglecting prayer, and meditation on the Word of God—the two grand sustainers of the life of God in the soul.**

Think, too, of Daniel's life and character among men. He got a better situation than any of his fellow-servants, because an "excellent spirit" was found in him. His godliness did not make him **cross** or **selfish**, but the contrary. Do you manifest an "excellent spirit", young believer, among your fellow-servants? Does your employer see by your subjection, and willingness to obey, that you are really what you profess to be—a Christian? This is what ought to be—what God commands (Eph. 6. 5, 8; 1 Peter 2. 18)—and what was seen in Daniel.

Look, too, at his walk and conduct. They tried to find occasion against him—to pick a flaw in his character. They watched him closely, to see if they could challenge him for inconsistent conduct. They kept their eyes open to see if he made any blunders in his work, or if he smuggled any of his master's money or time; and they watch you too, believer. Well, did they manage? Ah, no! Hear what the testimony is: "They could find none **occasion** nor **fault**, forasmuch as he was **faithful**, neither was there any **error** or **fault** found in him" (Daniel 6. 4).

Noble Daniel! truly he was a son of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. O that there were more like him: young men and women, whose employers and fellow-employees should have to say—"They are faithful—they are the best servants in the house—they are truly Christians". This is what is wanted—less of a loud profession, and more of the Daniel type of living and acting for God. This will commend the gospel, help on the Lord's work and gain the Master's smile at that day.

'NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN'

by R. L. WHEELER

Simple Thoughts Concerning The Deity of Christ

ONE thing is certain regarding the above subject, namely that if the Lord was not divine, in distinction from all others who have been born of women, He would have refused in no uncertain way the worship and adoration which men gave unto Him. Paul and Barnabas, when the men at Lystra would have given them divine honours, rent their clothes, and ran in among the people beseeching them to turn from such vanities, and they instructed the people that worship belonged to God only, the One who made the heavens and the earth, and all things therein. (Acts 14).

What shall we say then to Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God", or to Thomas's confession, "My Lord and my God", if He was not as the Scriptures affirm, "Emmanuel", "God with us". To Peter the Lord replied, "Blessed art thou Simon, son of Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven". And to Thomas the Lord said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (Matt. 16; John 20).

Job's confession, "Behold I am vile"; Isaiah's cry, "Woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips"; Peter's entreaty, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"; are but instances of the felt unworthiness of all holy men and women of God when in the presence of their Maker. (Job 40; Isa. 6; Luke 5).

The Lord's own references to Himself however stand in direct contrast to the above, "Which of you," said He to the Jews, "convicteth Me of sin?" His statement that He came "from above", that He had a glory with the

Father before the world was; that all judgment is committed to Him, are but examples. (John chs. 8 and 17). Such declarations as: "I am the Light of the world"; "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"; "I am the Resurrection and the Life" would be impiety or blasphemy on the lips of any created being however exalted. Truly, never man spake like this Man. Even angels refuse worship, yet of the Son of God it is written, "Let all the angels of God worship Him". Also that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. (John 5; 8; 11; 14; Heb. 1; Phil. 2; Rev. 22).

That the Lord was a good man none can doubt. His abundant works of healing and mercy, His wisdom and teaching, His exposure of hypocrisy show this to be so. The reason why men rejected His testimony was because they loved darkness rather than light. As the Lord said, "Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice" (John chapters 3 and 18).

John the Baptist, who in moral dignity and greatness exceeded all who were before him in the prophetic office, realised an essential difference between himself and the One whom he announced to Israel as "the Lamb of God bearing away the sin of the world". This One coming after him, was preferred before him, whose shoe latchet John confessed he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose. (Mark 1; John 1).

We must not think that the Deity of Christ is confined to the careful grammatical analysis of a few Scripture texts. The Deity of Christ is interwoven throughout the Scriptures, and those who deny this living truth or direct souls to other names than His for salvation deceive themselves and divest the gospel of its saving and life giving power.

Moses wrote of Me, said the Lord; David also in the Psalms, and the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets of old testifying beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow; and the apostle John reveals the culmination when in heaven angelic hosts join with the redeemed in ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. (Luke 24; 1 Peter 1; Rev. 4 and 5).

King Solomon in his prayer at the dedication of the temple said, "Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?" and as if in direct answer thereto the apostle when writing of the Lord Jesus says, "And the

Word became 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". (2 Chron. 6; John 1).

The Lord once asked His disciples when some were offended at His words and walked no more with Him, "Will ye also go away?" And Peter's earnest reply was: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art the Holy One of God". And blessed are those who likewise believe, and are assured by God's Spirit in their hearts that no one else could redeem them from their lost estate and bring them to His eternal kingdom and glory. (John 6).

Is it any wonder that Peter when proclaiming the gospel later said: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4).

SPIRITUAL BALANCE

OR THE PERILS OF UNSCRIPTURAL EXTREMES

by WILLIAM BUNTING

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Calvary

"The place which is called Calvary"—Luke 23. 33.

O Saviour, I shall never know
Until Eternity
All that was bought for me when Thou
Didst die on Calvary.

My pardon, freedom, all Thy grace,
Thy cleansing and Thy power,
Were purchased there at Calvary
For me, in that dread hour.

Thy heart was broken there for me,
Thy wondrous Life out-poured,
Let me not miss the gifts which cost
The Life-Blood of my Lord.

For surely now Thy Heart is grieved
If I am weak and sad,
When Thou hast paid the fullest price
To make me strong and glad.

My Saviour I can never know
What Calvary meant to **Thee**;
But teach me more and more, I pray,
Of what it means **for me**.

Then, rich in all Thou givest me,
Purchased at such a cost,
Use me to tell of Calvary
To sin-stained souls and lost.

Florence L. Bond.

The Perfect Workman

HIS REBUFFS, HIS RESOURCES, HIS RETURNS

Matthew 11.

(Continued)

TAKE the case of Israel, when Baalam was hired to curse them. This was at the close of their wilderness course, after all their murmurings and shortcomings; out comes Balak to hire Balaam to curse them. They were not now in the freshness of their early days, when they came victoriously out of Egypt, but at the close of their wilderness history. Out came Balaam—God says, I won't allow you to curse them, "I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither have I seen perverseness in Israel." Was it not there? "I have not beheld it." How was it? You know the ground of all this, that every single thing was charged on that blessed One, who hung on Calvary's tree. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"; who bore the wrath on your behalf, and brought you into a place where God does not see a spot on you, because Jesus had borne all that was against you. A person may say, does it not matter how we live, then, if it be so? What do we find in the javelin of Phinehas? The judgment of their state. In God's word to Balaam you find the judgment of their standing; in the javelin of Phineas you see the judgment of their state. You get the grace of God, viewing them from the top of the rocks. "From the hills I beheld him." That's the way to look at saints—that's God's vision of them, and He says, not a spot. Looked at from your point of view, you see this crookedness and that disagreeable disposition, etc. You say, there's a crooked, sour, temper: **can that be a saint of God**, with all that crookedness? Yes. I am not defending crooked tempers, for I don't know anything that brings such trouble as crooked tempers, or is such a stumbling-block. People say, **there are your saints!** God forbid that what I say should hinder self-judgment. I make no excuse for myself, I make every excuse for you. Look at that poor crooked cross-tempered person from the top of the rocks, she is as beautiful as possible. Look for Christ in people, not at their blots. Let us never be found opening our lips to speak against a saint of God. There are two classes of "biters", **back-biters** and **face-biters**—those who go behind your back and speak evil of you, or those that flatter you before your face. I say unhesitatingly **both are of the devil**. Don't be found doing the devil's work—he is the prince of backbiters. Never utter a word of evil about

others behind their backs, if you know anything against them, let the man or woman be the first and **only** one to hear it. I'll tell you what I find a capital plan, a sure cure for backbiters, and I have used it several times lately with great success; when people come to me to talk about others, I say, now I shall go at once to the person you speak of, and tell them all you have said, and give you as my authority, then, if you can't prove it, you must eat your own words. If you do this you will not be troubled with backbiters. Is it that I am not to be faithful to others? No, I go to them and say, I see this or that thing about you, you must get rid of it. Take the basin and the towel and wash their feet. Some dear saint once said, "I am determined never to speak of a saint's faults behind his back and never to speak of his virtues before his face." I find this to perfection in the Lord. He could not say too much about John, when He had sent this message to him. That man who said he was only a voice—the Lord says, he is more than a prophet; and he who said he was not worthy to unloose His shoes, the Lord says, there is not a greater born of women. I am persuaded that the heart of the Lord was wounded by that question, but there is not a single word about that behind his back; He sets him forth—garnishes him; that's just the way He deals with us. Lest some should raise the question, I don't understand how he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, I say, that refers to John's dispensational position. He further says, "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." The kingdom was put off for a time, and everyone who took the kingdom had to do violence to all his hopes as a Jew. He says the kingdom is not going to be set up in power now but in mystery, you must be willing to go down into the gutter with me.

I only say as to these cities, He has to say, "**Woe unto thee.**" Think of that voice of thunder, because they had not received His words:

Mark this 25th verse, He retires into His resources in the Father. "**At that time,**" when all seemed to be against Him, He says, "I thank Thee, O Father." Thank God for all these rebuffs? Can you thank God when things go against you? "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, . . . for so it seemed good in Thy sight". He takes refuge in the counsels of God. Though in that chapter in Isaiah, He could say, "I have laboured in vain," etc., what a response He gets from God, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles,

that thou mayest be my salvation to the end of the earth." Magnificent result! Though all may seem to fail, I'll give you to be my salvation to the end of the earth, wave after wave of blessing. So I say to every servant of Christ here; perhaps you are a Sunday School teacher, are you cast down about your work? You say, I don't see any results. It's very blessed to see results; but be sure you are in your right place, and then go right on; don't judge by results, the harvest time will come, the reaping time will come. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him". How beautiful: go, work on, this is the sowing time, the reaping time will come. "What are you to do now?" Go back into your resources in God: if not, what then? I can tell you that I have during the last thirty-two years come in contact with many who once stood on the platform with us, but they have gone off. I have known those who wielded their pen in the propagation of these truths. I have seen them with the same pen contradict what they once held. Has Christ failed? Has God failed? Has the ground moved? No; there is the ground in all its stability, God is the same, and Christ is the same. What is the secret of it all? They have not found what they expected, and they have gone off with chagrin and disappointment. What did you look for when you came amongst them? You say, they were not what I expected; I came looking for love and I was disappointed. **Serve you right.** If you had come to **show** love you would have had a different story to tell. They have retired—Where? into God? No; into themselves, and they have become like icicles hanging from the roof of a house. You never made a greater mistake than to come looking for love. I have been thirty-two years on the ground, and I have experienced a thousand times more love than I ever expected and ten thousand times more than I ever deserved. When people talk of want of love the fault is generally in their own hearts. Do you talk of deserving nothing but hell fire? Then what business have you looking for love? I have business to **show** love. There is not a single line from beginning to end of this Book to teach me to expect love, but plenty to teach me to show love. You are never taught to expect anything from man. They came expecting love and were disappointed. If you come expecting love, you will get disappointed, and go out abusing those you leave. Have you never heard the story of the dry pump? Throw a little water **in** and you will soon get some out. You come to saints and you find them dead, and dark, and cold; throw a little water **in**, and you will soon get a gushing stream. (To be continued).

THE SAVIOUR'S SEVEN SAYINGS

by RAY L. DAWES

SECOND

“**V**ERILY I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23. 43). The familiar phrase, “Verily I say unto thee . . .” often on the Lord’s lips, is now uttered again on the Cross. These are not the words of one going down in defeat, or overwhelmed by personal suffering, but words which express the majesty of a mighty Monarch conscious that victory is near. The whole weight of authority of His conquering Kingdom is behind this promise made to a captive soul in the enemy’s domain who calls for mercy. More than deliverance is given; a pledge of being in the King’s own company, “with Me . . .”, and that in the most blessed and delightful region of His Kingdom—“in Paradise”. Previous occasions of the use of this phrase “Verily I . . .” indicate that a most weighty matter carrying divine authority is about to be mentioned (John 3. 3; Matt. 5. 18), superceding in some cases what was divine in the Old Testament scriptures (Matt. 5. 22, etc.). The consciousness of His authority is in no way dimmed, even at death.

With what conviction then were these words carried to the dying thief’s heart. In his last agonising moments, peace filled his being. Just as the sun was setting on his life, its rays finally penetrated his long darkness and eternal night gave place to eternal day. Paradise, the presence of God (2 Cor. 12. 2-4) for an erstwhile hardened criminal? Yes, and it was to be an immediate translation, TODAY; no period of purgatory, no soul sleep, but a conscious experience of Christ’s presence, “with Me” cf. Phil. 1. 23.

The contemplation of this saying should fill the believer’s heart with the utmost confidence of being in the Saviour’s presence forever. The thief knew nothing of the powerful peace-giving and purifying effect of this hope in daily living. He passed into heaven with those blessed words ringing in his ears. Who can doubt the joy of this? But ours is a greater joy. Pause in the midst of life, ponder the prospect, and at last pass on to yonder Paradise in perfect peace.

The lasting lesson of the incident has often been pointed out. The infinite grace of the Saviour will pluck a truly repentant soul from the very brink of hell, but such brinkmanship is dangerous. One was saved that none need despair, but the other was lost, hence none should presume. It does of course show too, the futility

of human righteousness and religion. This man was promised heaven, yet he merited it not; he could not boast of works of righteousness, or religious ritualism, he possessed neither, and at that time could do neither. What brought him salvation then? Though hands and feet were transfixed, his heart and tongue were free. With the heart he believed, with the tongue he confessed (Romans 10. 9). This was true faith which Christ immediately responded to in His grace, forever illustrating the principle of salvation, "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2.8-9).

THIRD

"Woman, behold thy son . . . behold thy mother" (John 19. 26-27). The eyes of the Saviour surveyed the thronging mob about the Cross. All were united in their hatred and opposition. Then His eyes lighted upon a sympathetic, loving group. Not that He looked for sympathy, indeed it was their welfare that filled His heart, not His own. What an example of complete self-effacement! The Lord feels the sword of anguish, spoken by Simeon earlier (Luke 2. 35) now piercing Mary's heart as she gazed upon, what seemed to her, a tragic scene. For there hanging on the tree was the One to whom she had learned to look in times of need; cf. John 2. 3-5. Her husband, doubtless long since dead, the rest of the family at this time unsympathetic to her beliefs and hopes in Christ. He was her all. In her heart she pondered the divine manner of His birth, the angelic announcements, the Hand of providence upon her path. Over the years she had been treasuring up within His words and His ways, hoping against hope that this One was indeed the Messiah. As she gazed upon that loved form now, her dreams and hopes were failing. Hence the Lord "having loved His own that were in the world, loved them unto the end" (John 13. 1), He committed her into the care of John the beloved apostle. Yes, Christ who cared for the widow of Nain (Luke 7), the God of the fatherless, the judge of the widow, remembers Mary's need in her hour of distress. The fifth commandment He perfectly fulfils.

"Woman" . . . again that form of address to Mary, endearing and courteous, yet somewhat distant. How this would have reminded her of many other times when the same word was used, especially the occasion at Cana recorded in John 2. Then His hour had not come, yet He did not fail her in providing for the needs that had suddenly arisen, but now His hour had arrived and still

He failed her not. The Lord never addressed Mary as His mother. The Spirit of God in the scriptures jealously guards the truth of the Virgin Birth. It would remind Mary that, although her natural loss was great, she was only the chosen vessel, not the Mother in the normal sense. A tender relationship existed but not a natural one—an immeasurable distance separated the two of them really, as far as the divine is from the human, the spiritual from the natural, the eternal from the temporal. Spiritual relationships transcend natural ones, a fact we still need to remember constantly, cf. Mark 3. 31-35.

Turning to John, the Lord now says, "Behold thy mother . . ." He needed not to attract his attention by calling "Son . . ." John's eyes were fixed upon Christ. John will fill the place of a son to her now in the stead of the Lord Jesus. This seems to be a strange statement. The inference is plain, however. John, as usual, is quick to receive and respond; from that hour he took her to his own home. Thence to care and provide for her as a son for a mother. How could John object to the Saviour's last word to him? What a trust! What a privilege! How blessed he was for being at the Cross. Mary subsequently opened her heart to John and poured into his ears the thoughts, observations, the intimate details surrounding the life of the Lord. No wonder John's writings run deep and rich.

John was suited to this trust, apart from the natural relationship that may have existed. He was the more sensitive and appreciative of the disciples. When others had fled, his love clung to the Lord. He sought out Mary, knowing her anxieties and doubtless on her insistence, accompanied him to Calvary. He had an exercise and concern before even the Lord granted him the service. This is always so. No service or trust will come our way unless similar exercise in the presence of need characterises us, and then too as we are prepared to take our place 'beneath the Cross of Jesus'.

Here is a practical lesson of love and care, yet what strain, inconsideration and lack of concern oftentimes there is amongst believers. Can our hearts be heedless to this third saying from the Cross? Every hard and bitter thought is melted as this saying is recalled. "Love one another as I have loved you" is His command. We are to put on bowels of mercies, show hospitality and sympathy. We are to enter into the blessed relationships of assembly life in the family of God, treating older men as fathers, younger as brethren, older women as mothers, the younger as sisters in all purity (1 Tim. 5. 1-2).

(To be continued)

THE VEIL OF RECOGNITION

by A. NAISMITH, M.A.

AS Rebekah neared the end of her long journey and saw her future husband Isaac walking in the field, she alighted from her camel and, in token of her subordination as Isaac's betrothed, took a veil and covered herself. The same recognition of authority as vested in the man is practised to this day in Eastern lands; and there, too, in a similar fashion, divine authority is recognized. Indian Christian women, as they enter the place of worship, cover their heads with that part of the sari which has hung loose over their shoulders while they walked from their homes. Christian women in Malaysia carry with them veils of white material that resemble brides' veils and cover their heads as they reach the threshold of the house of prayer.

In 1 Corinthians 11. 2-16 the Holy Spirit directs the Apostle Paul to show from the divine viewpoint why the woman should be veiled. The R.S.V. rendering of 1 Corinthians 11. 5, 6 is: "But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonours her head—it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a woman will not veil herself, she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil": and in v. 13, "Judge for yourselves, is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered". In the course of these fifteen verses the verb related to the noun—"kalumma", a veil—occurs five times in various forms. The last word in v. 13, above quoted, is one of these and might be translated "unveiled".

A brief statement of graded Headships, denoting divinely-appointed authority in certain relationships, is the apostle's introduction to the practice with which he is about to deal. Various headships are indicated in the New Testament in differing contexts. Romans 5. 12-17 distinguishes two federal headships, to one or other of which each human being belongs. We are either "in Adam", the first man, by whom sin entered into the world, or "in Christ", the second Man, who delivers from sin's power. The Church of God, composed of all the redeemed, recognizes the pre-eminence of Christ Jesus who is the Head of the Church (Col. 1. 18). The headships in 1 Corinthians 11 are of a different order, neither federal nor ecclesiastical, but universal. The head of the woman is the man: the head of the man is Christ: and the head of Christ is God. Here the principle of subordination to ordained authority is emphasized, the woman being

subordinate to the man, the man to Christ, and Christ, as the One who in incarnation voluntarily took the place of dependence, to God. Though this is a general principle that applies to all mankind, only those who are Christ's recognise and observe it. In the systems of this world men maintain and contend for the equality of the sexes in every sphere.

The conditions under which believers are contemplated as meeting together in this first paragraph of 1 Cor. 11 are not defined as church gatherings. Not till v. 18, in the paragraph that follows and deals with the Lord's Supper, does the apostle refer to the occasion as "when you assemble as a church". There are thus occasions other than assembly meetings when women may pray and testify audibly: but the rule of silence imposed on the women in 1 Cor. 14. 34 is to be observed in all church gatherings.

It is significant that the outward sign of divine authority and human subordination, as outlined in those headships in verse 3, should be centred in the physical head. Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonours his head, that is, Christ. Any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled (or uncovered) dishonours her head, that is, her husband if she is a married woman, or the male sex in general if unmarried or a widow. What the apostle thus sets forth for the guidance and observance of all believers is that, when we meet to wait before God, the male should have his hair short and his head uncovered, and the female should have her hair long and her head covered. Two reasons are given for the wearing of a veil or covering, the symbol of authority, by the woman: first, as a godly recognition of submission to divinely-appointed authority, and secondly, as an intelligent recognition of the interest of angelic beings in the divine wisdom displayed in the Church. "Because of the angels"—is probably a reference to the significance of the inspired statement in Ephesians 3. 10, which in the Amplified New Testament is rendered, "that through the church the complicated, many-sided wisdom of God in its infinite variety and innumerable aspects might now be made known to the angelic rulers and authorities in the heavenly sphere". Commenting on this verse (1 Cor. 10. 11) W. E. Vine has written, "The veiled condition of the woman, therefore, sets forth the authority of Christ".

The sexes therefore should be visibly distinguished by their hair and their head-dress when they come together to approach God in the presence of the angels.

While insisting thus on the recognition and observance of these divinely-ordered headships which imply authority and subordination, Paul adds, "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord". Each of the sexes is necessary to the other in the Lord: they are mutually dependent, each recognizing His authority. Thus seen "in Christ", they are equal in God's sight but complementary in their spheres of service and activity. In summing up the position resulting from the doctrine he has stated, Paul adds that, even out of consideration for natural propriety, the man should appear before God with his hair short and his head uncovered, and the woman with her hair long and her head covered.

Gleanings from First Peter, chapter two

by J. K. DUFF, Belfast.

ONE thing that makes this chapter most interesting and instructive is the different ways in which we, as the people of God are viewed.

Firstly, as Children (v. 2), then as Priests, both holy and royal (vv. 5, 9), after that we are seen as Pilgrims (v. 11), and finally as Disciples (vv. 20-23).

CHILDREN

Towards the end of chapter 1, our birth into God's family is mentioned, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever", and now in chapter 2 the apostle gives this fitting exhortation: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby".

Parents expect to see their children increase in weight, strength and intelligence, as they get older, and would be greatly concerned if it were otherwise. So God looks for growth and development in His children, and has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness in His Word to this end.

In the natural realm it is most important for children to eat and assimilate good food, not only to sustain life, but also to develop bone and muscle, so as children of God we need to feed upon the Word of God that we may grow thereby.

It must not be overlooked that the exhortation of v. 2 is prefaced by the injunction of v. 1, to lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings. These vices which are the product of the

old nature, if not suppressed, will stunt our spiritual growth, and take away our appetite for the Scriptures.

On the other hand, feeding upon the word of God will preserve us from these things. Note the revised reading of v. 2, "that ye may grow thereby unto salvation".

Let us challenge our hearts on this matter. Are we as much concerned about feeding our souls as we are about nourishing our bodies ?

HOLY AND ROYAL PRIESTS

The priesthood of all believers is a truth that is clearly taught in verse 5. This passage sounds the death knell of all clerisy and priestcraft. Every child of God is constituted a priest of God, having the great privilege of coming into the presence of God and offering spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. When David in Psalm 65 pronounced the man blessed, whom God chose and caused to approach unto Him, he likely had Israel's high priest in mind. Only he had the hallowed privilege of entering into the most holy place, within the veil, and that on one day of the year, and not without blood. The Hebrew epistle tells us that this signified that the way into the Holiest was not yet made manifest. Now through the death of Christ, the veil has been rent, the new and living way into God's presence has been opened up, and the believer is invited to draw near in the full assurance of faith.

How blessed is our position and portion in Christ. Peter unfolds that we have been chosen, redeemed and made a holy priesthood to approach unto God in worship, offering up spiritual sacrifices which are well pleasing to Him through our great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

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

Not only are we constituted holy priests to worship in God's presence, but verse 9 informs us that we are royal priests to show forth the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. We are left in this world to be a testimony for God, to display in our conduct those graces which were seen in perfection in the Lord Jesus during the days when He was here upon earth. Are we Christ-like in all our ways ?

PILGRIMS AND STRANGERS

God ever and anon reminds us in His Word that this world is not our home. We are in the world but not of it.

We are exiles, away from home, but we are pilgrims, those going home. That being so we are implored to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul and to so conduct ourselves among those who oppose us, that as they witness our good deeds, they may be influenced to glorify God in the day of visitation.

If we understood rightly our status as pilgrims and strangers, we would be kept clear of all entanglements with the world in its politics or religion.

Are our affections set upon things above ?

DISCIPLES

Peter would doubtless remember the words of the Lord when He said: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16. 24). Thus the path of discipleship is a path of suffering.

The saints to whom Peter wrote were passing through fiery trials at this period, hence the message in this part of the letter was very timely. They were seeking to do good to all men, and yet they were the objects of fierce persecution. This was hard to bear and likely brought many a sigh from the hearts of these dear saints. The great panacea is in Christ Himself. He is set forth as the great Exemplar, that we should follow His steps. He did good, and nothing but good, and yet He suffered. The Lord said: "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord". "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (Matt. 10. 24; John 15. 20).

How should we react to suffering for righteousness sake ? The answer is as He reacted to it. "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed His cause to Him that judgeth righteously". Let us seek grace as His disciples to follow His steps. In His sufferings for righteousness sake during the days of His flesh, He is our great Example to follow, but in His vicarious sufferings upon the tree for our sins (v. 24), He is our great Saviour, to trust, love and adore. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree (the fact of His sufferings), that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (v. 24) (the purpose of His vicarious sufferings).

May we who were once as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, increasingly understand the import of these things, that we may be His disciples indeed.

Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens

by the late WALTER SCOTT.

Matthew 13.

INTRODUCTION

THE word which stamps its character on the Gospel by Matthew is **Kingdom**. Round it every truth and incident circles, and everything revealed in the Gospel takes shape and character from it. Nor must the Church and the Kingdom be confounded. They are distinct in character and aim. Christ stands related to the Church as its **Head**; whereas the head of the Kingdom is Christ the **King**. As Christians we are both in the Church and in the Kingdom.

The "Kingdom of the heavens" is a phrase peculiar to our Gospel. It occurs thirty-two times, and is the New Testament form of the Old Testament expression "The heavens do rule" (Dan. 4. 26). It neither means "Heaven" nor the "Church". The Kingdom of the heavens is the consummation of what prophets foretold, and seers beheld in vision. The coming Kingdom occupies about a third of the contents of the Sacred Volume. The Kingdom of the heavens is to be established on the earth. Its greatness, its glory, its extent, its stability, its endurance, its righteous and holy character, and, above all, the pre-eminent glory of its King, make up a study of surpassing interest. The centre of the earth of this great system is the Jews as a people, Palestine the land, and Jerusalem the city. That was the Kingdom preached by John the Baptist, and by our Lord—the King Himself.

But the **mysteries** of the Kingdom of the heavens would indicate a change in the character of what is now suitable in the absence of the King. How possibly could we have greatness and power in characteristic display on the earth in the absence of the King? The meaning of the phrase therefore must apply in a different connection from that contemplated in the Old Testament. There the King on earth, and reigning over it in public display, is the grand object for Israel and the Gentiles. But in our chapter the rejection of the King by Israel, His session at God's right hand, and the Kingdom consequently in abeyance, give their own character to the new state of things. Christianity, or rather the history of Christendom, in its outward and inner features and its end are, in brief, the mysteries of the Kingdom, and forms the subject of our chapter.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

Before considering these parables in detail, several

questions suggest themselves: Why seven parables? How are they divided? Why termed "mysteries of the Kingdom"? Why is the first parable not said to be a similitude of the Kingdom? And lastly, What is the length of time covered by these parables? Satisfactory answers to these questions will enable the reader to grasp the subject with a measure of intelligence and fulness.

Why seven parables? This numeral, which is the ruling number in the Apocalypse, occurring about fifty times, signifies what is **perfect, complete**. It is frequently broken up into three and four; the former signifying what is **Divine**, the other what is connected with **man**. Thus, these seven parables are intended to give us a complete sketch or history of the Kingdom of the heavens.

How are the parables **divided**? The first four were spoken to the "great multitudes" on the sea side (v. 1). The three last, as also the explanation of the tare-field parable, were addressed to the disciples in the house (v. 36). The first group presents the **outward** character of the Kingdom during the absence of the King in heaven—the forms which the public profession of Christianity would assume, and so were fittingly addressed to the multitudes, as more directly concerning them. The second group would more particularly engage the spiritual interest of the disciples, of whom others besides the twelve gathered in the house (Mark 4. 10), to these the **vital** character of the Kingdom was unfolded.

Why termed "**mysteries**" of the Kingdom? There are no mysteries in the Old Testament; in fact, the word "mystery" does not occur in the Old Testament Scriptures. There are many New Testament mysteries. The word signifies what is **secret** or **hidden**. The Old Testament prophetic Scriptures never contemplated the Kingdom as it presently exists, and as alone developed in this chapter. In these mysteries are unfolded the rise, history, and doom of the Christian profession in relation to Christ as King and Lord.

Why is the first parable not termed a **similitude** of the Kingdom? Because the Kingdom of the heavens, in its present mysterious form, did not commence till the King went on high. The mysteries date from that epoch. The work and action of the first parable was preparatory to the establishing of the Kingdom amongst the Gentiles. It will be the Kingdom in **power** amongst the Jews. It is the Kingdom in **mystery** amongst the Gentiles. The presence of the King characterises the former; the absence of the King is the key to the understanding of the latter. The first parable sets forth the lowly action of the Lord when on earth—"A sower went forth to sow"—but it is

His presence **in heaven** which introduces the mysteries of the Kingdom, hence the first parable is not termed a likeness of the Kingdom.

What is the **length of time** covered by these similitude-
parables? From the ascension of the Lord till His return
in power—about 2000 years (?). Observe that two actions
close up this age, which may be spoken of as the harvest
and the vintage. The harvest refers to the separation of
the wheat from the tares. The vintage is the expression of
unsparring judgment upon the tares or wicked (vv. 30, 42,
49, 50). The duration of these mysteries extend beyond
the translation of the heavenly saints. It is judgment—
pure and simple—which is the closing act in this dispensa-
tion. The coming of the Lord for His saints is in no wise
alluded to in these parables, and should on no account
be introduced in any part of the chapter. In the first of
the seven parables the King is witnessed in the lowly
character of a sower, but in the coming harvest the King
is beheld as a reaper. (To be continued)

THE PERSON AND PROGRAMME OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

by SAMUEL JARDINE Belfast.

(Continued)

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE WORLD

Reading: John 15. 18-25; 16. 1-11.

IN the context covered by these two passages our Lord
had very much in mind the human society which had
bitterly hated Him and openly ostracized Him. He put
upon that society a term which qualifies and describes it,
“the world”. This is, as the term suggests (**kosmos**), an
ordered society under a strong and powerful ruler called
by the Master, “the Prince of this world” (John 12. 31;
14. 30; 16. 11). Here then is the kingdom of Satan, “the
world”. A deep affinity for each other exists amongst the
citizens of this realm and just as deep animosity against
those whom Christ has “taken out of the world”. An
abiding characteristic of the worldling is his antagonism
to the Lord Jesus. His comment is most illuminating. “If
the world hate you, ye know that it hated ME before it
hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love
his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have
chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth
you”. And again, “They hated Me without a cause” (John
15. 18-19, 25).

This view of unregenerate human society needs to be
accepted seriously by every believer. It explains the
uncompromising insistence of the Word of God on separa-

tion from every phase of this great **WORLD-SYSTEM** in all its forms: religious, social and political. Remember dear child of God, that which ever face it shows it remains the same world that crucified the Lord of Glory and continues its enmity and opposition to those whom Christ has saved and "taken out of the world". This distinctness is ever to be consistent with the love God had when He sent His Son into the world, not to condemn but to save. (John 3. 16-18).

In all the ages through which the world has passed there have been movements of the blessed Spirit of God which reveal the compassion and patience of God with man. Lawlessness, corruption and violence filled the world of Noah's day yet there was a striving of the Spirit in those sinful and rebel hearts. "My Spirit shall not always strive" was God's finding, nevertheless, His longsuffering sustained that resistance for one hundred and twenty years. (Gen. 6. 3). That antediluvian world was subjected to Spirit inspired and Spirit empowered messages by a "preacher of righteousness" (1 Peter 3. 18-21). Centuries later, Stephen addressing the Sanhedrin, the religious court of his day charged them with **RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT**, pointing out that they were following a well-beaten track. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit, **AS YOUR FATHERS DID SO DO YE**" (Acts 7. 51). Here it is possible Stephen was thinking of "the day of provocation", which period of forty years was on the human side one of all-out rebellion and on the divine side one of grief and sorrow. Whether in the days of Noah, of Moses or of Stephen or in this enlightened day in which we find our lot, enmity against God and consequent resistance to the gracious Spirit betray the true condition of every unregenerate heart. We see this taken to the utmost degree of hatred when in our Lord's earthly sojourn the leaders of religion were guilty of the blasphemy of the Spirit. (Matt. 12. 31-32). To understand this enormous transgression it must be remembered that all Christ's "signs" were done in the power of the Holy Spirit and were tokens of His Messiahship. The miracle which Christ had performed had been convincing to many that He was indeed "the Son of David", their way of describing the promised King. This so deeply incensed the bystanding critics, the Jewish leaders, that they viciously sought to repudiate both the miracle and the master. "This doth not cast out demons but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons" (v. 24). The greater than Solomon immediately exposed the absurdity of their charge and the enormity of their sin.

Had this good deed been in complicity with "the prince of the demons" it would at the same time been wholly detrimental to Him and to His Kingdom. The heart of the matter is laid bare in the authoritative and conclusive sentence of the Lord Jesus, "All manner of sin, and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven Him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come". The great guilt of these blind guides of the nation of Israel lay in attributing to the foul powers of Satan what was the work of the Holy Spirit of God. The exact circumstances in which this took place are not possible to-day and it is the writer's conviction that "the blasphemy of the Spirit" required those circumstances—the presence personally of the Messiah, His operation in token signs for the proof of His Messiahship and the public insult to the Spirit of God by the dominating party, the Pharisees. To equate this sin with the sinner's final rejection of our Lord Jesus Christ is to overlook the heinousness of the nation's crime and to confuse two distinct issues which have the same solemn end—result, the eternal wrath of God—borne however, in differing degrees.

Let us pause, my reader, at this juncture and get things in clear perspective. The Holy Spirit had been operating in this world-scene prior to that revelation of Him given by the Lord in the upper-room discourse. But then, the specific promise of "the Spirit of Truth" surely indicates that in a way not as yet known, He was to embark on a mission-extraordinary. Note the terms of this promise first in John 14. 16-17: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter . . . even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you". Blind unregenerate man is incapable of knowing or receiving Him because of inherent unbelief, nevertheless, there is a special mission to 'the world' of the Spirit. The further expansion of the promise in John 16. 7-10 should be carefully considered. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient (profitable) for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter (Paraclete) will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you. And when HE IS COME He will convince THE WORLD of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness because

I go to my Father and ye see me no more: of judgment because the Prince of this world is judged."

This remarkable statement was bound to raise questions in the hearts of the apostles in the upper-room. How could it be possible for the absence of their Lord and Master to be for their advantage? They had companied with Him for more than three years: they had seen His signs and wonders: had witnessed His moral perfections and revelled in His loving presence and gracious ministry. How could His departure be profitable? The answer, no doubt is a two-fold one: In His departure Christ's atoning work would be accomplished and because of it He would be glorified with the Father. (John 17, 4-5). Then, and only then could the promised Vicar of Christ be sent forth. (John 7. 47). The answer is complete when we recognise the extensive sphere of operations of 'the Paraclete'. The necessarily confined labours of our blessed Lord would be universally extended by this Person who would make Christ available, on terms of faith, to all the sons of men, North, South, East and West. (To be continued)

THE UNITIES OF JOHN 17

(Continued) by Dr. R. C. EDWARDS, Australia.

THE foregoing comments have indicated that in John 17 unity is mentioned in three contexts, with regard to the apostles' testimony, present-day Christian witness, and finally, a future perfection in unity. This variety should be borne in mind in seeking to ascertain the teaching of the various parts of the chapter. Failure to do so leads to misunderstandings some of which it may be profitable to notice.

It is a mistake to put together portions of verses 11, 21, and 23, which are in the three different sections each with its own special significance, and, having done this, to issue an invitation to hear the Lord praying "that they may be one, even as we are, that they all may be one, that they may be perfected into one." This kind of mistake is all too frequent. An apologist for a well-known body writes, "If the Christians now scattered throughout the various religious bodies are ever to fulfil the will of Jesus Christ to be united, as prayed for by Him, we must learn to understand each other better". However well-meant, this is the language of confusion, which is only to be expected if verses 21 and 23 are regarded as identical in scope. To write of the Lord, as another does, "He was praying for the unity of His Church . . . that they may be perfected into one . . . that the world may believe . . ." is to make trustworthy exegesis impossible; it is a sorry

jumble of terms to link a portion of v. 23 with the unity of v. 21, as this does.

Several organizations sponsor the notion that the unity of v. 21 is fulfilled by the union of congregations to form a larger body. But it is not realistic to imagine in the words, "as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee", the thought of "union amongst all the children of God", despite great names that may be quoted for it. It is not implied in "as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be in Us" that "the Christians now scattered throughout the various religious bodies" are intended to be united into one society. To see here a prayer for the visible, corporate unity of all believers to-day in a "Church of God on earth" is an illusion. It is regrettable that this idea is prevalent. One hears such prayers as that "all God's people all over the earth may be together as one". But John 17 gives no warrant for this.

We are not to see in this chapter a prayer that "the disciples and all who were to believe through their word might be kept in oneness, in one unbroken association for testimony, during the time of His absence", or in "a visible, unbroken fellowship", "the great testifying unity". There is in it no expectation of "folk uniting on the ground of the Divine-contemplated undivided Body of Christ". There is nothing in it about **uniting**. In fact, there is nothing in it about **bodies of people**. It deals with individuals, not aggregates. If it be urged against this that verses 22 and 23 do speak of the Body of Christ and that this is composed of churches the objector could be reminded that this Church Catholic consists **not of churches but individuals**. Nothing in John 17 suggests outward form or organization either of groups or individuals.

It is a pleasure to recognise that certain teachers of former days gave the right lead in this matter of present-day Christian unity. For example H. C. G. Moule wrote, "The oneness prayed for by the Lord . . . is a oneness primarily, vitally spiritual, and from within . . . its immediate outlook, therefore, rises above all problems of order, or even of ordinance". "It refers not to any ecclesiastical confederacy at all, but to something far more real and true", said William Lincoln, taking his stand here, as he remarks, with J. G. Bellett, whose comments run, "this oneness is not such, I judge, as . . . manifested ecclesiastical oneness". It "does not, I assuredly judge, respect any ecclesiastical condition of things. That thought has led to many a human effort among the saints". These efforts have greatly increased since Bellett's day. Denominations have combined to form one body instead of two

or more, but this is no fulfilment of John 17. Scripture nowhere enjoins the fusion of denominations.

Let us proceed a little further. Granting that present-day Christian unity according to Scripture, is essentially one of inward spirituality rather than of outward form, will its operation lead, as a by-product, to any diminution of the scandal of denominationalism? For scandal it is; there were no so-called Christian denominations in the first century of our era. In this connection, it would be relevant to consider Romans 16. 17, where, in our R.V., Christian doctrine is described as "that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered." That is, it is a mould all believers are meant to take. This might be deemed a suitable commencement for an investigation of the question before us in this paragraph. And as to sectarianism, Scripture teaching develops this subject from 1 Cor. 1. 9. Paul proceeds thence to unfold what that practical unity is among saints which is desirable, and also that assembly disunity which is undesirable. The believer who is anxious to know what sectarianism is should follow this line of inquiry. And it was in existence long before any so-called Christian denominations were known.

Finis.

THE RED HEIFER

THE WORK OF CHRIST FOR HIS OWN

by the late W. J. McCLURE.

(Continued)

Read Numbers 19.

THE next thing we shall consider regarding the Red Heifer is **The Use of the Ashes**. "And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and lay them up without the camp in a clean place." These ashes were the memorial of an accepted sacrifice, something which would last indefinitely. Typically, they speak of Christ now before God, who once endured the fire of wrath for sin, when He suffered "outside the camp," rejected by man and forsaken by God. Our sin is gone. We see Him in the "clean place", in the Father's presence, in all the abiding value and efficacy of His precious death. "And for an unclean person, they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification by sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel" (v. 17). In reading over this chapter, one is impressed with how easily an Israelite could contract defilement. Touching a dead body,

a bone of a man, or a grave (v. 16), he was defiled, so that he could not keep the feasts of the Lord with his brethren.

Death was the fruit of sin; and the touching of death speaks of sin allowed to act in the believer. For the unclean person there was the "ashes" and the "running water"; with these he was to be sprinkled by a clean person (v. 19). So we read in Galatians 6. 1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual restore such a one" (R.V.). And what are the means to be used? The "running water", the Word of God; the "ashes", the work of Christ. No more than these are needed. The Word of God exposes sin and also points to Christ's death for it. In 1 John 1. 9 we read: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". Here we see these two things. In the word "faithful" we are reminded of God's Word, to forgive and cleanse the believer who confesses his sin, and in the word "just", we see this on the ground of the death of Christ. Thus the believer is no more directed to his feelings for cleansing, than he was at the first for his salvation as a sinner.

The defiled Israelite was sprinkled on two separate days—the third and the seventh (v. 19). The third day brings the Cross and the Resurrection before us. All mercy to saint or sinner, is inseparably connected with this. And the seventh day speaks of the old creation. Every real case of restoration leads not only to the confession of some particular trespass, but like, as in the case of David, to judging what he was in the old creation, as he declared in Psalm 51. 5: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me". David thus goes to the root of all trespass; it was his "seventh day". Then, upon the eighth day, which speaks of the new creation, the cleansed Israelite could take his place in the congregation and join with the others in keeping the feasts of the Lord. The soul restored to God and to fellowship with His people, knows in fresh power the value of the great Sacrifice of Calvary. How sweet to the believer so cleansed and restored to fellowship with God, is the truth of the lines we so often sing—

"Not a stain, a new creation,
Ours is such a full salvation,
Low we bow in adoration,
Inside the veil."

It is blessed to know that any child of God who is conscious of departure from Him, need not wait a whole week to get right, as was the case with the Israelite, but

may at once know the peace and rest of a restored saint.

But the provision so graciously made, might be rejected. Two reasons God gives, for cutting off a defiled person. First, in v. 13: "Because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him." God knew the danger of contact with death, in the tent and in the open field. He was not angry with the man to cut him off **because** he touched it. But as He had made provision for his cleansing, He will brook no indifference. So it is now. Danger of defilement abounds in the "tent"—the family, or the assembly; and in the "open field"—the world, where we must live and do business. In these places we are constantly in danger, as well as from the "dead" body we carry around with us all the time—the old sinful nature. It is indeed most comforting, that God understands our dangers and difficulties, and that He also knows our weakness. But we must never forget, He cannot and will not go on with sin covered up, ignored and unconfessed. This will bring down, sooner or later, His chastening hand upon His child. Second, in v. 20: "Because He hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord." One who became unclean might say to himself—"No one will know of it. I am not going to remain seven days outside, to wash my clothes, to bathe my flesh in water. It is not known, that I touched a bone or a grave." God would make such to feel the reality of His presence in the midst, as a holy God, and that holiness becomes all those who are about Him. And so it is now. There can be no greater deception than for a child of God, with some hidden sin, and out of fellowship with God for any reason, to say, "Well, I do no one any harm but myself." It is not so. A defiled Christian out of fellowship with God does harm to all with whom he associates.

Years ago, we looked at a sailor drawing up a pail of water out of the sea, as we were steaming across the Atlantic. As it was by no means an easy feat, we wondered why he did not go to one of the hydrants, open it, and get all he wanted. After a while we asked the reason, and were told it was done that the officer on duty might take the temperature of the sea water, to determine if they were in the vicinity of icebergs. A believer out of fellowship with God, will as surely influence the spiritual temperature of an assembly, as an iceberg does the waters of the ocean. May not this explain many a stiff and hard meeting, in which there is little worship? How very solemn, then, if I should be one with whom God must deal, for defiling what He loves so well, His dwelling place down here, the assembly of His people, by not seeking unto Him for personal cleansing and restoration.

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The Victor's Path

He came, He came from the realms of light,
To this world of sin and mourning,
He walked apart, with a stranger heart,
'Midst insult, hate and scorning.

He wept, He wept as a human babe
In a stable dark and bare,
No kingly throne, or royal home,
But one of toil and care.

He lived, He lived, a wondrous life,
As He moved from place to place.
He glory brought, in deed and thought
To God, the God of grace.

He showed, He showed that God of Grace,
In a human form as Man.
In Manhood true, but Jehovah too,
Eternally, "I am."

Betrayed, Betrayed by a friend professed
For a paltry, silver bribe,
Condemned by all in the judgment hall
And by true friend denied.

They scourge, they scourge that holy back
Till all is flayed and scarred,
His brow is torn with many a thorn,
His visage bruised and marred.

He sinks, He sinks 'neath the wrath divine
That was due to a fallen race,
He bore it all, that none might fall
On those redeemed by grace.

'Tis done, 'Tis done, He loudly cries,
No feeble dying groan,
He'll die no more, the conflict's o'er
And now the glory home,

Lift up, lift up your heads, ye gates
And let the Victor in,
The Lord of might, Who won the fight
O'er death and hell and sin.

He comes, He comes from His glory home,
For the meeting in the air,
He leaves the throne, to claim His own,
That they His all may share.

C. W. Nightingale.

THE PERSON AND PROGRAMME OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

by SAMUEL JARDINE, Belfast
THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE WORLD
(Continued)

Reading : John 15. 18-25 ; 16. 1-11.

The coming of the Holy Spirit in extraordinary fashion on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) was at once, the fulfilment of Christ's promise and a potent reminder of the world's rejection of Him. He came to vindicate and glorify the absent Lord Jesus Christ, and this is traceable in three directions: Man-ward, Christ-ward and Satan-ward. He brings home to men their greatest sin; He demonstrates the character of the rejected One: He indicates the overthrow of the WORLD-RULER and his kingdom.

1. THE CONVICTION OF SIN

The spearhead of all human transgression is the refusal of God's Son. Accordingly the Spirit reproves (convinces) the world of sin because they believe not on the Lord Jesus. Anyone who refuses Him as Saviour and Lord assents to and acts in complicity with that deed of the world by which the blessed Lord was slain on Calvary. Man can offer God no greater insult than to reject "the Son of His love". Therefore the Spirit of God—through the messenger of God, and by the Word of God—lays upon the unbeliever's conscience this super-sin, the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "reprove" (16. 8) is in the R.V. "convict" and has the sense of bringing to logical demonstration. This is exactly what took place on the day of Pentecost a few weeks after these words were spoken. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, laid this very sin on the consciences of the thousands of Jews who were in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. Here are some of his actual words: "ye men of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have CRUCIFIED AND SLAIN: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." Having fortified his proposition by appeals to Psalms 16 and 110, he concluded with the assertion, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom YE HAVE CRUCIFIED, both Lord and

Christ". This was unanswerable and when they heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" There and then by faith and public confession three thousand souls deliberately took sides with the One who so recently had been slain without the city's walls. Here then is a precise historical example of the work of the Spirit in bringing to logical demonstration the sin of unbelief alongside the gracious intention of bringing the convicted ones to repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. THE VINDICATION OF CHRIST

In another important direction the Holy Spirit espouses the cause of the absent Lord. "He shall convince . . . of righteousness because I go to the Father". This is essentially Heaven's verdict on the Lord Jesus as opposed to earth's. The Holy Spirit who conveys it acts as Christ's Advocate (Parakletos) as well as ours. It is His to defend and uphold the character of Him who men maligned and slandered. Their verdict was, "we know that this man is a sinner" (John 9. 24). They numbered Him with the transgressors. (Mark 15. 27). When they spiked Him to a cross it was a vile assault upon His sinless character, for in their law it was written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree" (Gal. 3. 13). Inspired by Satan, man has sought to stain and dishonour the person of the Lord Jesus, but God has seen to it that His blessed Son is fully vindicated in the presence and message of the Spirit of God. His presence on earth is a monument to Christ's personal rectitude: He is present here because Christ is received in Heaven. Another brief look at Peter's Spirit-begotten speech on the day of Pentecost will show how positively true this is. The climax of that message was the fact that "the Crucified" was "the Glorified", that "the head that once was crowned with thorns is crowned with glory now". "This Jesus," he said, "did God raise up whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the HOLY SPIRIT, HE hath poured forth this which ye see and hear." It cannot be overstressed that the amazing events of that final Pentecost argue the acceptance in Heaven and the vindication on earth of the Christ who died, rose and ascended on high. The Spirit-controlled messenger of the Word of God will have these facts concerning our Lord Jesus Christ in the forefront of His message.

3. THE CONDEMNATION OF SATAN

The Spirit convinces "of judgment, because the Prince

of this world is judged". In thus anticipating the third phase of the Spirit's work of conviction our Lord is looking forward to and beyond His cross. Calvary was the great arena where the great enemy of mankind would be met and overthrown. This becomes crystal clear from a parallel passage in this Gospel, John 12. 31-32: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the Prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." He foresaw the Prince and his Dominion falling before him. He knew Himself to be the Stronger than the strong man armed: that He would invade Satan's territory and make a show of him openly. (Luke 11. 21-22; Col. 2. 15).

Victory was ever in the spirit of the Man of Sorrows. Fully aware of the tremendous cost to Himself, He knew Satan would be worsted, bound, judged when He was "lifted up" at Calvary. How remarkable to enlightened hearts it is that the very act in which the world disowned its Redeemer became the occasion of its judgment and that of its Prince.

This facet of Spirit testimony in the world produces some important propositions.

1. That Satan is already judged; his sentence will in due course be executed.

2. This his realm of rule has shared his sentence and will ultimately share his doom.

3. That emancipation from that condemnation is now available to all who by faith respond to the pull, the magnetism of the up-lifted Christ. The alternatives are simple and clear; the sharing of the spoils with the glorious Conqueror of Calvary or the sharing of eternal woe with the now defeated Prince of this world. (Isaiah 53. 10-12; Revelation 20. 10-15).

The threefold approach of the Spirit to the needs of sinful men in the world is the essential preparation for the Salvation of the soul; a preparation for which there is no substitute. On the part of the preacher there may be scriptural statements, human reasonings and emotional pleadings all of which 'ALONE' will miss the marks of quickening the conscience, making real the sin of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ and leading to union with Him. It well becomes every servant of God to be tuned in to the Spirit and His programme so that He will bring the sinner to an intelligent consciousness of his guilt and to an equally intelligent choice of the Crucified One. No Spirit-taught or Spirit-filled worker will want to indulge in emotionalism in Evangelism or other tactics which

inevitably produce a deadly crop of empty professions. There is an urgency, an earnestness, a feeling of compassion which the Spirit supplies; which are the only permissible emotions in the presenting of the claims of our absent Lord. Such preaching has a dignity and appeal all its own and finds a response in the minds of both saint and sinner. How important it is, beloved saints of God, to be under the sway and control of Christ's Vicar on earth!
(To be continued)

THE WORD OF GOD

by the late R. C. CHAPMAN.

NOW, touching the divine authority of the Scriptures, if I ask whether the sun, moon, and stars you look upon are the very same sun, moon and stars which the Creator saw when He came in the flesh, and of which His servant Moses wrote in the first of Genesis, you will say, Yes. How came they to be preserved? You reply: Their Maker has preserved them to this very day. Suffer me to say that the preservation of the Scriptures is a still more wonderful thing, for man has not yet defiled the sun, moon and stars; but, in spite of man's meddling, we have the Word of God preserved to us in all its fulness. Marvellous is the preservation of sun, moon and stars; but still more marvellous, I affirm, is the preservation of the Book of God. That Word shines by its own light. If any one were to say that artificial light was the light of the sun, or that the light of the sun was artificial, who would believe him? As the eye of the body can distinguish between artificial light and the light of the sun, so those, who, like Mary, sit at the feet of Jesus, are able to discern between God's truth and all the thoughts and doctrines and words of men.

It is not possible that any child of Adam could have invented one single doctrine of Scripture, for the plain reason that man, having revolted from God, cannot judge himself aright. He has no standard by which to judge himself; God is shut out of his thoughts, and he can only ask: How much good have I done to my neighbour, and how much harm? It is the Scriptures alone that teach the state of man in relation to God; the natural man is ignorant of the fact that every thought of his heart, and every imagination thereof, is enmity against God. But it is a guilty ignorance. This ignorance makes him deny the necessity and righteousness of the atonement; he cannot know that God's glory demands it, or that man's condition requires it. Therefore all

religions of men are founded upon ignorance of God, and of the guilt of sin; and one consequence is that men look for some mercy in God that dishonours His justice. You find this everywhere, even in this land. My special times of evangelising are in railway carriages and tramcars; and I find everywhere that man's religion consists in this: When you have done your best you may trust to God's mercy. This vain imagination is based upon the idea of some goodness in man, and not total corruption, and some mercy in God that dishonours His justice.

Never let a caviller say there are so many religions he does not know which to choose. There is only one way of life, and that is Christ, and we who trust in Him have in Him eternal life and glory. An understanding of the guilt of sin is found in measure in every renewed soul; but in none except the renewed. Then a growing knowledge of sin is only gained by communion with God, and growing up into Christ. It is as we bear His yoke, and learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart, that we find rest from that which darkens faith's faculty of apprehending Him.

The question is sometimes raised: Have not transcribers and translators made some mistakes in copying or translating the Scriptures. Yes, they have, and therefore I say that the preservation of the Scriptures is more marvellous than that of the sun, moon and stars. Let it be especially noted that God so wrote the Scriptures by His servants that no truth hangs upon a single passage; every truth of God runs through the whole Book. There is scarcely an error to be found that is not based upon some passage of Scripture; there is not a single error that will stand the test of all Scripture. Bring any error to that test and it cannot stand, while, on the other hand, every truth will be confirmed, unfolded, and gloriously opened out by passage after passage. Hence, beloved, the deep necessity of dealing with the whole Scripture, if we would take the yoke of Christ upon us, and find the second blessed rest of Matthew 11.

The Epistle to the Philippians

THE EPISTLE OF SACRIFICE AND JOY

by R. WOODHOUSE BEALES

THE entrance of the Gospel into Europe was remarkable (Acts 16. 6-40). Paul and Silas tried to go in the opposite direction, but were "forbidden" and "not

suffered" by the Spirit to do so. In what ways these restrictions were made known to them we do not know, but when, waiting upon God, Paul "saw the vision" and then heard the call, they sailed over to the West and eventually came to Philippi. The whole Western world lay open to the Gospel and God's time had come, the Roman world was to be challenged and evangelised by a handful of devoted men, and this was the vanguard. God was therefore in control though there were to be many adversaries.

Paul was well equipped for this work, he was a Jew by birth and had been by conviction, he was also a Roman, freeborn, although how he had inherited that freedom is somewhat obscure, he was a Grecian by education and culture and therefore knew by experience how to approach those of any nation. Also he had when required, the protection of the Roman authorities to which sometimes he made appeal and laid claim.

Philippi was a chief city of that part of Macedonia and a colony (v. 12), that is, it had been colonised by Rome, whose legions, followed by citizens had marched in military formation and set up a little replica of Rome, with its language, customs, coinage, courts and administration of justice, all of which were strictly according to the pattern of Roman practice. The city was a miniature Rome in the midst of an alien country. The application of all this will be seen later in the Epistle when applied in a spiritual way to the church which was formed there.

Firstly two women are brought into the picture, one a godly woman Lydia and one an ungodly, with a spirit of divination. Later in the jailer we have an ungodly man, all of whom truly converted became the beginning of the first European assembly. The details of these will not here detain us.

It was from a prison experience that Paul left his mark upon that city and doubtless in claiming immunity from maltreatment because of his Roman citizenship, although he had suffered it, was thinking of the safety of the little community, when he did stand upon his rights, and make the rulers acknowledge it. Although he was not now in a dungeon but in his own hired house or rooms, it was as a prisoner again he writes them this lovely heart-warming letter. They had become very dear to him and this is the most endearing of his letters. They had out of their deep poverty sent financial help to him once and again, to which allusion is made by him in writing to others, not so munificent. (See Romans 15. 26 ; 2 Cor. 8. 1-6 ; 9. 2-14 ; 11. 9 ; and Phil. 4. 15).

The Epistle throbs with his affection and longing after them, especially since they had now sent him a further gift, which is the cause of this letter to them.

He is now a prisoner again but still rejoicing, as he had done with Silas in the dungeon at Philippi and this is one of the key words of the letter, "Rejoice". This was not the outcome of circumstances or happenings, but because he had learned through discipline that "for him to live was Christ and to die was gain."

There was no doctrinal error to put right at Philippi, it was a normal Christian assembly, "saints in Christ Jesus with the elders and deacons", a description of a complete, if small local church, as to its order and make-up but on the other hand there were dangers of disunity which Paul endeavours to correct.

If disunity was the danger at Philippi then it was the **mind** of each which would decide the issue and this word occurs again and again in the letter. These are here listed for the help of the reader and need closely studying and more closely carried out in the fear of God. [1. 7; 2. 2; twice 5; 3. 15 (twice), 16, 19; 4. 2, 10 (twice)].

Although this Epistle does not yield easily to any kind of "Structure" (as Campbell Morgan says, 'How can you analyse a love letter?') yet it has often had headings attached to its divisions such as Chapter 1, Christ our Life; 2, Christ our Example; 3, Christ our Reward; and 4, Christ our Provision. Or again, A Supreme Purpose, A Supreme Position, A Supreme Pattern, A Supreme Person, A Supreme Peace. Also a definite development and progression can be seen.

It is not our purpose however to follow this, as this is not the way in which the writers of scripture proceeded and this is often mechanical, and so also is the alliterative process, so very much indulged in, which, while it may assist the memory is not the method adopted by the Spirit of God.

It has, however, been remarked that its position in the canon is interesting in that it seems to form a valley between the mountain peaks of Ephesians and Colossians, a valley indeed in which we have the great stoop of the Lord Jesus portrayed, unequalled anywhere. It does not deal with the Church nor bring before us any of the 'Mysteries'.

Silas, the Apostle's fellow worker and companion in the prison at Philippi is not included in the salutation, as Silas is not with Paul, nor in prison, but only Paul and Timothy.

It is clear that Paul's first visit was by no means his last as the following references show. Acts 20. 1-6 ; 1 Cor. 16. 5 ; 2 Cor. 1. 16 ; 2. 13 ; 7. 5 ; 1 Tim. 1. 3. These visits cover a span of some thirteen years.

(To be continued).

THE COMING OF THE LORD

(1 Thessalonians 4. 13).

by JOHN M. COWAN, Motherwell.

I HAVE entitled this little article, as a fresh look at the Coming of the Lord, as described by Paul in First Thessalonians, Chapter 4, 13-18.

There is a threefold reason why this aspect of the Lord's Coming should be considered. Firstly, because the truth of it is being **denied** by so many today ; secondly, although not so completely denied, it has been so greatly **distorted** by others, that the true concept of the truth has been completely changed ; thirdly, that for the most of us, the lustre and the glory of it has been greatly **dimmed**.

I have the feeling that, if we could recapture something of its **importance**, its **imminence** and its **inclusiveness**, our outlook concerning divine things would be **enriched**, our exercises in service **encouraged** by our affections for Him becoming **enlarged**.

There is nothing in my judgment which would revive the saints so much as a greater consciousness of the nearness of His coming, not merely held in our head, but received with certainty into our heart. The saints at Thessalonica had not the advantages which we possess in these enlightened days and, consequently, we can appreciate something of their perplexities, in relation to the experiences into which they had been brought. What they knew, they performed gladly, even though it was accomplished in the midst of the most severe persecutions. Their perplexity then was not the outcome of what they knew but what they did not know and is the content of the teaching we are about to consider.

The doctrine of the coming of the Lord, in the form in which it is presented to the Thessalonians is an advance on anything which had yet been revealed from God and is the outcome of a fresh and further unfolding of this great truth. We, in this enlightened day, with all the fulness of divine revelation before us, can fill in the many details of that which had been merely suggestive outlines, which had been previously given and which seemingly contained the promise of a single coming, and that coming to establish and set up His kingdom. Probably this concept would be formulated in the light of Old

Testament prophecy and in the further teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, although there were suggestive hints of a further and fuller meaning in the statements made to His own in His upper room ministry. How much of this was grasped is manifested by the first and eager question which was raised by them when Jesus manifested Himself alive after His Passion as, with revived hopes, they said unto Him, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom unto Israel?" The answer made by the Lord Jesus does not entirely disapprove of the question, but defers it, until the incoming of the Holy Spirit saying, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father has placed in His own authority, but ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come" (Acts 1. 6-8). Even at the Lord's ascension, the message from the heavenly visitors conveyed no further teaching than the fact of the Lord's personal return in the manner which they had seen Him go. Consequently, the popular concept of all His disciples was—He has gone to take His place at His Father's right hand until He makes His enemies His footstool for His feet, and then He shall return and set up His kingdom.

This concept had been firmly accepted by most of His disciples, so that it coloured their teaching and was associated with the Gospel which they preached; some eight times in the Book of the Acts, the things concerning the kingdom occupied a large place in the Gospel which they preached and in the teaching which they taught. Even Paul himself in his preaching in the Acts was not exempt from this popular concept, for, even at Thessalonica, one of the charges laid against him was the fact that he was preaching about another King, Jesus.

Those, then, who had accepted this message at Thessalonica, had turned to God from idols, to serve the Living and True God and to wait for His Son out of Heaven, whom God raised from amongst the dead ones, even Jesus, the deliverer from coming wrath. This having been accepted by them, the coming of the Lord and the setting up of His kingdom was eagerly awaited, and at any moment they expected that all those who had accepted Him as Saviour would be sharing the triumph of His reign. During the waiting period, some of them who had accepted Him as Saviour had died, and this unlooked for experience created a perplexing problem for the rest of the Thessalonian saints.

If the teaching of Paul was true, it was true for all His saints, and, if true for all His saints, how could it be possible for those who had died to participate in the

glories of the coming kingdom. This then was their problem, and to meet the need which had arisen, a further and fuller revelation was required. As far as the former teaching was concerned, the Thessalonians were in no doubt, for according to that which has been recorded in Paul's first letter to them, chapter 5. 1-11, concerning times and seasons he had no need to write unto them. The only other occasion in the New Testament where times and seasons are referred to was prior to the Lord's ascension, when, in answer to His disciples' question concerning His kingdom, He told them that these times and seasons were the possessed property of His Father, and at that time the unfolding could not be made known beyond the fact that, at some time and connected with some season, His kingdom should be established. However, the time has now arrived for a further unfolding of Divine purpose and there is now imparted to Paul a word from the Lord which he gladly passes on to the Thessalonian saints, thus removing their difficulty and leaving on record this precious heritage for the encouragement and expectation of all His saints right on to the present moment. This then is the subject matter of that which has been recorded in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18: a section which, into a scene of deepest sorrow and disappointment there is brought the gladdening golden gleams of eternal hope and joy.

Could we now for a little moment try to catch something of the grandeur and the glory, the gladness and the comfort which the section also contains for us, with the brightness of the hope which it has brought, which, with its illuminating beams, sheds light and everlasting joy beyond the tomb. "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that have fallen asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Ignorance causes uncertainty, and uncertainty produces doubt, and when doubt comes in, it usually produces unbelief. Now, in order to produce confidence and assured belief ignorance must be removed. How dreadful and how dismal is the prospect of them that **know not**, compared with those who say, with every degree of confidence, **we know**. Think of the despair of those devoted women who came to the sepulchre that resurrection morning and found it empty, and listen to the pity of their cry, "They have taken away the Lord out from the sepulchre and we **know not** where they have laid Him"; compare that with the note of triumph in the apostle's voice when he says, "**We know that**, if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house **not** made with hands, eternal

in the heavens.”

Ignorance then must be removed, and something of a concrete character put into its place, and so the apostle triumphantly says, I have received a word from the Lord, not I received something out of the word of the Lord, but a word from the Lord, a fresh revelation (as upon other occasions he had received) : a fresh word, a fuller revelation, something that, into this scene of gloom and grief, a fuller teaching has now been brought, pulsating with fresh hope and joy.

Revelation in all its Clearness—

a word from the Lord concerning

Relationship in all its Closeness—

the dead in Christ

Resurrection with all its Certainty—

they **SHALL RISE FIRST**

Rapture in all its Completeness—

we that are alive and remain (all of us)

Reunion with all its Consolations—

shall be caught up **TOGETHER** with them

Realised glory with all its Continuity—

so shall we **EVER BE** with the Lord

Reassurance with all its Comfort—

wherefore comfort one another with these words

This then is a compressed outline of the revelation given to Paul, to meet the perplexities of his day and which, we trust, may be used of God to refresh and reinvigorate the hearts and minds of all His people of today, that with steady upward gaze we may be found looking for “the Blessed Hope and the appearing of the Glory of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works” (Titus 2. 11-14).

Separation from the Religious Systems

IF these “Churches” and “Associations” were according to the Word of God, they ought not to have been separated from ; if they are not, then surely it would be wrong to invite others to go to them for any purpose whatever. It no doubt shows a great deal of what the world calls “charity” and “large-heartedness” to patronize all such things and fraternize with them but this helps to blot out all distinction between what God has commanded, and what men have invented, a climax to which all things are fast hastening, **BUT IT IS NOT OF GOD.**

We believe that the simple path for those who have in obedience to God's Word come out from worldly religion and all its ways, is to go humbly but firmly forward in the ways marked out in God's Book, taking no notice of sects and sectarian associations and their ways, except to show how contrary they are to the revealed will of God.

The saints who are in these systems we are taught in God's Book to love, but not to show that love by identifying ourselves with the worldly religious systems and net they are entangled in. Selected.

PSALM 69

PRAYER MEETING ADDRESS

by W. J. McCLURE

(Notes by Dr. H. A. Cameron)

THERE are in my mind two or three things in this Psalm that I would like to look at. It is a Psalm we are very familiar with in connection with the Lord's Table, but there are subjects in it that we would not think of at the Lord's Table and these I would like to bring before you now. Please read verses 6-7. "Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake : let not those that seek Thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach : shame hath covered my face." Look now at v. 20, "Reproach hath broken my heart ; and I am full of heaviness : and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none ; and for comforters, but I found none."

Now we shall turn to the New Testament presently with regard to these verses. You have perhaps wondered sometimes why the Lord spent nights in prayer, for we read that He spent whole nights praying upon the slopes of the Mount of Olives. What would be the burden of His heart during these long sessions in prayer? We might guess, but here is one thing we need not guess about : He prays for His own. "Let not those that seek Thee be confounded for My sake, O God of Israel. Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach : shame hath covered My face."

Now our Lord Jesus Christ is here in prayer prophetically and He is looking forward to the Cross and He is entering fully into that which shall be to those who follow Him. While He was with them they were convinced that He was the Messiah, and they thought that He would set up His kingdom, and they were looking for that all the time. The idea of a time of rejection and of

the Lord Jesus Christ dying as the Lamb of God never came into their minds. But, instead of what they looked for, a mob came out into that place where He was accustomed to pray, and they take Him a prisoner, and they lead Him to Annas, and then to Caiaphas, and then to Pilate, and then to Herod and back to Pilate, and the disciples saw Him led forth bearing His cross, and at the place called Calvary they saw Him suffer the death of crucifixion. Then they slunk away, and we find them behind closed doors: not that they feared physical harm so much as they expected the taunts of the Jews who would say, "Now, what do you think of your Messiah?" They felt utterly ashamed. Here was One that they had counted upon as the Messiah who would take the reins of government into His hand; and some might come and say, "What do you think now of your Messiah? Don't you see that you made a mistake?" In their hearts they were true to Christ, but what about their minds? They could not find an answer to the enquiry, for they had seen Him put to death. But for all that there was not one of them who said, "We made a mistake. He was not the Messiah." Yet what they had passed through was more than humanity could bear. Now remember that resurrection never entered their thoughts, but notwithstanding that fact, not one of them was upset. And why? Because of the Lord's prayer. God helped the dear disciples and in the light of resurrection all was cleared up. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." They had been sore tried but not destroyed, perplexed but not in despair, cast down but not destroyed. Now the storm is past and they are preserved.

But look at this prayer: "Let not those that seek Thee be confounded for My sake." Why? "Because for Thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered My face". "I have endured the cross for Thy sake: now keep these dear disciples till My resurrection." Look at the reason. "Shame hath covered My face." We often bring the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ into the cross and think He did not feel it. Think of what it was! A shameful death; a death reserved for barbarians and criminals. Did He feel it? "Oh," you say, "He was God and did not feel it." But He was Man and He felt it and the shame of it. You have heard about the pillory: that wooden implement with holes for the hands and head and feet. Anyone could come and spit in the face of the man thus pilloried and make fun of him. Suppose you put a red Indian into the pillory. It would not hurt him much: he would be quite stoical there, or at most he might scowl at those who mocked him, yet his feelings would not be

much outraged. But take a College man with culture and fine family connections and put him there. Oh, it would be awful to such an one: just in proportion to the refinement of his feelings would be the terrible nature of the punishment. Now the Lord Jesus Christ was the finest Gentleman that ever trod the earth. Think of Him suspended upon that cross, nearly naked, and think of the multitude coming and mocking Him. Do not think that because He was God that He did not feel it. It was because He was a Man, and a sinless Man, that He felt it and felt it keenly. "Thou knowest My reproach, and My shame, and My dishonour" (v. 19).

And remember this that there is one thing about the Lord Jesus' prayers: they are not ended. We count on them yet. He could think of His sufferings during the years before the Cross, and He prayed for the disciples in the days of His flesh and also on the Cross, and He is not less concerned about them now. He prays still and we can count upon these prayers.

Now read at Mark 14. 32: "And they came to a place which was named Gethsamene: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy."

I doubt not that you have thought of these two passages as connected; the one in Mark and the other in this Psalm, "Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." Now that is very strange humanly speaking; for it is true that followers have stood by their chief when all was lost and there was no possibility of the day being redeemed: and yet such men did not love their masters with the intense affection that the disciples loved their Lord. Nevertheless they all forsook Him and fled. Why? You get the answer in Psalm 88, "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from Me, and Mine acquaintance into darkness." And so the Lord never scolded His disciples. He never said, "Peter, I am surprised at your forsaking Me. John, I never thought you would leave Me." Why? Because He knew it was His Father who had done it. He would not leave Him one drop of comfort in that dark hour. "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from Me," and yet as a Man He craved it, and so He took Peter and James and John. "Why"? Oh, He would like their sympathy. "Tarry ye here and watch," and then there was the terrible agony with the bloody sweat: and He came back. Of course they would surely watch, He had brought them

here for that purpose. "And He cometh and findeth them sleeping and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour? Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." A gentle reproof. He goes and comes back again, and again they are asleep, and so the third time. And now He says, "Sleep on now and take your rest." He looked for comforters and they failed, and so He says, "Sleep on now and take your rest."

I can imagine Peter years afterwards saying to John, "Why was it that we could not watch with the Lord that night? Can you account for that terrible drowsiness?" "No," John would say, "I do not know what was the matter. I know the Lord has forgiven me but I will never forgive myself. Think of it: we had such an opportunity and we missed it and it will never come again, not in all eternity. Oh, how bad I feel: we had such a chance and we missed it."

And so He said, "Sleep on now and take your rest." I do not believe that the words, "It is enough. Rise up, let us go," follow the others immediately. I only know that He let them sleep on in calm rest.

Now we have only one life and it will never come again, and the Lord has left us here to watch with Him. The disciples could not drive off that drowsy feeling. Dear child of God, you will pass through Sleep Hollow, and it requires self-denial to take hold of opportunities. The Lord has left you here and He has something for you to do. He has tried and tried and come often and found you asleep. He has given you time and talents and money, and He has tried and tried and tried you in vain and some day He will say, "Sleep on now. You had a chance and you did not embrace it." And then will have passed forever all opportunity for the Lord Jesus Christ. It may be some of you could take up a class of children, or you might speak a little word in the Gospel, or comfort God's people, and you let someone else do it: and God says, "Sleep on now." Many a man and woman has God stirred up and they have held back and God has said to them, "Sleep on now." And then the time will come when God will say, "Come up higher." All opportunities past: they will never come again, never again. You have missed it. The Lord help you to remember that we are called by the Lord Jesus Christ to fellowship in the things that He is doing and He might have to say to us, "Could you not watch with Me one hour?" Let us take care that the time does not go by without our making use of it.

THE CHRISTIAN'S "I AM'S"

by W. H. CLARE, Kilmarnock.

THE title "I AM" belongs to God, also to our Lord Jesus Christ, but in a minor degree there are a number of "I AM'S" in Psalm 119 which can refer to a believer. They are:—

1. I AM A STRANGER (v. 19).

This rightly tells of our position on earth in relation to worldly affairs and sinful pursuits which are followed by those who are not born again. In relation thereto—we are strangers.

2. I AM A COMPANION (v. 63).

"I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts." This Christian companionship should be encouraged, and sought after, and we should remember the blessedness of not walking in the counsel of the ungodly. (Psalm 1).

3. I AM BECOME LIKE A BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE

(v. 83).

Think of a skin bottle in a place where there is a fire, and the smoke covers the bottle, and so it may be that in the affairs of life as a Christian you might feel obscure—yet we should not forget the statutes of the Lord, for in the keeping of His commandments there is a great reward.

4. I AM THINE—SAVE ME (v. 94).

How lovely to realise that we belong to the Lord, and we can sing, "Dear Saviour, Thou art mine." What a relationship! May we always represent Him well on earth.

5. I AM AFFLICTED VERY MUCH (v. 107).

Though we are children of God we must remember that discipline is necessary in the Lord's family just as it is in earthly families, so we must not get downhearted, and if we do, let us pray—"quicken me, O Lord."

6. I AM SMALL AND DESPISED (v. 141).

Humility becomes the saints, and if at times we are despised let us think of our Lord who was despised and rejected of men, and if we are called to walk in this way, let us rejoice, and not forget the Lord's precepts.

7. I AM THY SERVANT (v. 125).

Jesus Christ is our Lord, and we are left here to serve

Him by lip and by life, and we need to pray—give me understanding so that the service I render will be acceptable by our Lord, but what an honour—to be able to serve such a dignified person as our Lord.

THE SAVIOUR'S SEVEN SAYINGS

by RAY L. DAWES
(Continued)

FOURTH

“Eli, Eli, Lama Sabacthani, that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27. 46; Mark 15. 34).

Appropriately, this is the central cry from the Cross. It focuses the attention upon the sufferings of Christ. Here was the crowning ordeal; Judas had betrayed Him, the rulers accused Him, the people rejected Him, the disciples had deserted Him and fled. He was left alone with His God, but now God was to forsake the lonely sufferer. Completely alone, He clings to God still.

The original aramaic words are recalled and preserved, marking the deep impression this utterance had made, as if the air still was filled with that tremendous shout. Its peel rung on in the memory. Deep darkness descended, an awesome silence settled upon the scene. Satan's rage, sin's guilt, God's wrath all converged on Christ during these three hours. The intense spiritual agony to His holy sinless soul is beyond human thought and feeling. Human eyes are not permitted to behold any more. Nature only, so to speak, mourned for its Maker in that dread hour. Towards the end of the three hours, the cry escapes his lips:

“It pierced the moral universe on high,
Upon eternal shores the echo brake,
That long, that loud, that lamentable cry,
My God, My God, why didst Thou Me forsake?”

The subject is so solemn and sacred, that suggestion only can be offered as to the import of the cry.

None will doubt the force and feeling of the repeated call, “My God, My God . . .” It is not now, “Father”, but “God” the Judge of all the earth. It is not however, a cry of despair for confident relationship still exists, “My God, My God . . .” Christ clings to His God in the extremity of His felt human weakness and suffering. It is a cry of inexpressible agony, and intense loneliness. He, who in His manhood always remained in perfect contact with

God is now suddenly cut off. In His human consciousness He experiences separation from God to become the sinner and the curse upon the tree. We dare not say, "the Father forsook the Son"—such a thought leads to blasphemous insinuations. As the mystery of this hour is surveyed we must keep strictly to the words of scripture.

The cry is framed as a question. Were it otherwise, it would have implied defeat. God would never forsake such an One without good reason, and the answer is sought. "Why hast Thou . . . ?" It implies trust still in thus addressing His God. Though sinking down, He is seeking up. The heavens are black with wrath and as brass against Him yet upwards still He looks, in faith, searching for the silver lining and the dawn that would soon break. The mystery is solved for us by reference to Psalm 22 whence the saying is culled . . . "Thou art holy". Christ was in the place of sin, indeed "made sin" (2 Cor. 5. 21), laden with the guilt of sinners. God, being of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, averts His face from the sight. Put as a question the cry expresses more acutely the agony that seized the Saviour's soul and provokes every hearer to enquire the reason for His forsaking. Why? Yes, why, indeed? Then a cleft was cut into the Rock of Ages in which the believing soul may find eternal cover. He was forsaken that we might never be.

This reveals the heinousness of sin to God and His Holy Son. May it cause us to feel its loathsomeness too, and flee its influence to follow that which is good.

FIFTH

"I thirst" (John 19. 28). This saying expresses the effects of His sufferings. The heat, the pain, the divine wrath and approaching death all combined to produce an agonising thirst. The whole body was dried up, the tongue swollen, the lips parched (Ps. 22. 15); the thirst was undoubtedly real. The Lord Jesus, the Fountain of living waters Himself, who offered others the water of life freely (John 4. 14; 7. 37) now thirsts. To save us from the unrelieved thirst of hell (Luke 16. 24) and make our souls an oasis in this desert scene, Christ was brought to this experience.

"Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree."

Yet the cry was not uttered so that His cravings could be quenched. No, but that the scriptures might be fulfilled. The pain of crucifixion by this time would have driven an ordinary person's mind into incoherent thought, if not, insanity. The Lord's mind, however, traverses the

entire range of the prophetic Word in these closing moments and, knowing that all things were now accomplished, consciously causes one outstanding prophecy of His passion to be completed by expressing His need of drink. The saying indicates the Lord's devotion to God and His obedience to all the Word of God. No scripture was too insignificant to avoid His scrutiny. All had to be fulfilled. No wonder it is found recorded in John's Gospel only. The burnt-offering is here presented in the perfection of its various parts. The Son of God in His omniscience and dignity is before our gaze. Our hearts are bowed with wonder, and, as one of old "make haste and worship" (Exodus 34. 8).

The practical point for us here is that reverence for, and obedience to God's word might be inculcated. However insignificant a scripture might appear, it nevertheless demands our attention. If the Lord attached such importance to this prophecy, no scripture should be considered to be of no, or little, consequence. Let us give heartfelt attention to the whole counsel of God, and pursue the narrow path of implicit obedience, unperturbed by other popular appeals, or the reproach one might have to bear as a result. Temptations to neglect, ignore or forsake principles or precepts of scripture, lose their power as the motives that evoked this cry from the lips of Christ on the Cross are reverently recalled.

(To be continued)

Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens

by the late Walter Scott.

Matthew 13.

THE SOWER (vv. 3-8; 18-23)

THE same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the seaside." Historically, the break with Israel was at the Cross. A remnant, of which Paul was one, received the King, who in grace for their sins, died on the Cross, but the nation as such, refused their Messiah when on earth, and equally so when in heaven. God in governmental chastisement used the Romans as before the Babylonians to scourge His people. In both cases the temple—the centre of national and religious interest—was razed to the ground, the people sent into captivity, and their beloved city given over to spoilation and capture. The Lord went out of the house, i.e. the temple, and sat at the sea-side, i.e., figure of the Gentile world (Daniel 7. 2; Rev. 17. 15). "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." The prophets of old spoke and wrote of the suffering of Christ and the glories following (1 Peter 1. 11), but that the Messiah of Israel, should first of all

enter upon such a lowly service as a sower of seed, formed no part of their testimony. Sowing was neither suffering nor glory. Had it been written, "A reaper went forth to reap", it would have been in consonance with human thought. But going forth to sow was indeed a new action, and one necessitated by the state of the people. The fig-tree (Israel nationally) was covered with leaves whilst absolutely destitute of fruit (Matt. 21. 19). After centuries of care and culture the vineyard of Israel yielded no fruit for Jehovah, hence the Kingdom of God was transferred to the Gentiles (v. 45). Now, if fruit was to be gathered from Jew or Gentile, the Lord must do a work to produce it. He sowed during His personal ministry on earth. The reaping is yet to come. But as sure as He sowed He shall reap.

This parable, with its accompanying explanation is also related in Mark 4 and Luke 8. Matthew terms the seed, "the Word of the Kingdom." Mark speaks of it simply as "the Word." Luke, as "the Word of God." In addition to these, the seed may be regarded as the Word of Salvation (Heb. 2. 3). In this first and fundamental of parables, there are four casts of the seed. In the first there is no result; in the three which follow there is. It is only in the fourth, however, that permanent results follow on the reception of the seed sown in "good ground."

The wayside hearer (vv. 4, 19) is the most common case of any. The Word is preached—the person hears. There may be a certain effect produced, but it is only transitory, for Satan is there to catch away the seed before it can find lodgment in the heart. This class of hearers are numerous, and are to be found in every grade of society, from its highest to its lowest. The fowls who devoured the seed point to a Satanic agency (v. 4), but Satan himself is the real source of the almost universal carelessness and indifference to the Word of God (v. 19). The moral character of the great enemy of God and of man is referred to in his descriptive designation as "the wicked one." As to who he is there can be no question, for Mark (4. 15) terms him Satan, and Luke (8. 12) the devil.

The stony-ground hearer (vv. 5, 6, 20, 21) is an advance upon the former. In this case the Word is received with joy. But it is not joy that the sinner needs; it is peace with God about his sins. The saint is called to joy, the sinner to peace. Hence, in this case the heart is indeed touched, the feelings are aroused, perhaps, the person weeps, but the word has been received without any exercise of conscience—no sense of sin felt. Souls should

never be hurried into a confession of the name of the Lord. There is an immense amount of mere superficial work abroad. Always look for depth and reality in souls; bring people face to face with the realities of sin, judgment, God, heaven, hell; seek rather for **quality** than quantity. Press the necessity of repentance.

The thorn-hearer (vv. 7, 22) is also in advance of the stony-ground hearer. The rich and poor make up this very numerous company of unfruitful, unproductive hearers. The many cares of the poor, and the deceitful riches of the better-off, equally choke the Word. If the Lord has given you riches, pour them at the feet of your adorable Saviour and Lord, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and **riches**, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5. 12). If you are burdened with cares, go cast **all** upon Him, for He careth for you (1 Peter 5. 7); **then** "be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4. 6).

The good-ground hearer (vv. 8, 23) is a **doer** of the word, and not a hearer only. James describes the good-ground hearer in these words—practical words, which we beg our readers to ponder over, as in the sight of God—"Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and **continueth** therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in **his deed**" (1. 25). Why **good** ground? Simply because prepared by God's Spirit. Then fruit is produced in proportion as there is subjection of heart and conscience to the "Word." "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear **much** fruit." May it be an hundredfold with every reader of these pages!

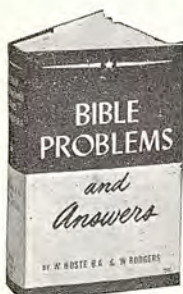
In Matthew the quantity of fruit borne is from a hundredfold **down** to thirtyfold; **whereas** in Mark it is from thirty **up** to a hundred. The work of the sower was perfect, neither was there defect in the seed. But failure and declension in not maintaining the high standard is intimated in Matthew, while in Mark the increasing quantity shows the progress in the soul and life of some. Dispensational failure is the point in the first Gospel; moral advance is the lesson in the second Gospel.

Three things characterise this class of fruitful hearers: (1) they **understand** the word; (2) they **receive** the word; (3) they **keep** the word (see Matt. 13; Mark 4; Luke 8 for these and other interesting distinctions). This first parable is the key to the understanding of all the others. "Know ye not," says the Lord, "this parable"? (Mark 4. 13).

(to be continued)

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