

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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Tune – Blest be the tie that binds

6.6.8.6

And shall we see His face
Without a cloud between?
Sweet thought of soul-transporting grace
Through years that intervene.

And shall our eyes behold
The Man of Sychars' well?
Did ever lips such grace unfold
Or tongue such mercy tell?

We long to see the One
Who at the gate of Nain
Restored a widow's only son
Into her arms again.

The One who stilled the waves
And walked upon the deep,
Unto the uttermost He saves,
Unto the end He'll keep.

And shall we see His face,
The Lamb for sinners slain?
Oh! this will all our grief erase,
All mysteries explain.

To see the One who died,
That will be bliss indeed,
T'will be our longing satisfied,
The end of all our need.

The glory now He bears,
Those wounds of Love Divine
Shall be our theme when endless years
Engulf the sands of time.

– J. M. Jones (*Toowoomba*)

Editor's Note

Yes, He will come! The second Advent of the Lord Jesus is one of the main themes of the word of God. Both Old and New Testaments vibrate with the hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus. His lovely promise rings in our ears and warm our hearts.

The map of the world is rapidly changing. The political outlook of nations is in some places almost being turned upside down. Situations that we thought were permanent, established are changing almost overnight. What changes have taken place in Russia, Poland, Hungary, East and West Germany, Austria, Rumania, the Baltic States. One wonders what will happen next!

For our comfort the word of God does not change! Our God still "Works all things after the counsel of His own will" and we know that "all things do work together for good to them that love God."

Sadly, many foolish interpretations of the prophetic scriptures are constantly being made. These bring prophetic study into disrepute. How important to recognise that the scriptures should be interpreted by facts inside the book and not by the changing events of this world — the Lord preserve the dear saints from fantastic interpretations and applications of the Word of God.

While the world scene may be changing and fanciful interpretations of Holy Scriptures are being discredited before our eyes — The Word of God and its sure prophecies remain — Let us rest in them and the God who made the promises and therefore be: 'Steadfast, Unmoveable always abounding in the work of the Lord.'

Let us remind our hearts again of the simplicity of these promises and rest in what God has said;

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

—*John 14.3.*

"Heaven, from whence we look for the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change these bodies of humiliations, that they may be fashioned like unto this glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."—*Philippians 3.20,21.*

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." *1 Thess. 4.16,17.*

Wishing you all the Lord's blessing till He comes. Maranatha!

The Editor.

THE BLESSED HOPE

by D. M. MARTIN, Dorset

Part V — THE JUDGEMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST

We ALL must appear before the judgement-seat of Christ (2 Cor.5.10.) Any pre-judgement of the motives of believers before this occasion is unscriptural, however, 'justified' the pronouncement may be, for the following reasons.

It is not safe to do so, "Judge not that ye be not judged. (Matt.7.1.) "Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself". (Rom 2.1.) To pass judgement on others is to invite a similar process with respect to oneself. Secondly, we are not qualified. When the woman taken in adultery was brought to Jesus, he said "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her". (John.8.7.) He counselled the man with a 'beam' in his eye not to concern himself with casting the 'mote' from his brother's eye until he had first dealt with his own condition. (Luke. 6.41.) Our own consciences are hardly so at rest that we can indulge in judging others. Such judging is actually harmful, since it distracts us from that self-examination which is the primary duty of the believer. Thirdly, judging others does not come within our province, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant"? to his own master he standeth or falleth. (Rom.14.4.) Judging is God's business, not ours "He that judgeth his brother judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge (James.4.11.) To pass judgement on others is to usurp a divine function. Lastly such judging is irrelevant. Neither Paul's view of himself, or others view of him matter in the slightest: "He that judgeth me is the Lord". Thus Paul commands "Judge nothing before the time". (1 Cor.4.3-5.) All of this, of course, does not detract from the solemn responsibility, so clearly taught in 1 Cor.5., of assembly discipline which is dealt with later. Paul includes in his statement of 2 Cor. 5.10 undoubtedly, both believers and unbelievers, though there is a long intervening period between the judgement of the two classes; there is no foundation in the word of God for the common idea that saints and sinners will appear at the same time before the judgement-seat. It is

with believers that we are now concerned, and their appearance before the tribunal of Christ which will take place between His coming and His appearing, (Article II differentiated these two events.) Caught up, to meet the Lord in the air, we are then like Christ, we will see Him as He is, (1 John.3.2.) and will be with Him for ever. (1 Thess.4.v.17.) The place where we will be with the Lord, is the Father's house. This we know from the Lord's own words (John.14.2,3.) There our blessed Lord will conduct all His own, and, if we may adapt the words, will present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude.24.) With what joy will He and the children God has given Him appear before His Father and their Father, and His God and their God! And with what joy will God Himself behold the fruit and perfection of His own counsels, the redeemed all conformed to the image of His son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren! (Rom.8.29.) The saints, then, will dwell in the Father's house during the interval that will elapse between the coming of Christ FOR, and His return WITH, His saints; and as before remarked, it is during this time that we will be manifested before the judgement-seat of Christ. The proof of this is found in Rev.19. Just on the eve of returning WITH Christ (vv.11-14), John also tells us, "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints". (Rev.19.6-8.) Here then we find the saints robed in their (not God's) righteousness, the fruit of their practical ways, produced and brought about by the Holy Spirit, but nevertheless counted as theirs in the wonderful grace of God; and since the judgement-seat of Christ for believers is concerned with things done in the body, this can only be the result of declared judgement. The arraying the Lamb's wife in fine linen, clean and white, will therefore follow upon the manifestation of the saints before Christ's tribunal; and both take place, as it would seem from this chapter, preparatory to, and immediately before, the appearing of the Lord with His saints.

The character of the judgement must be distinctly observed, and

one or two preliminary remarks will greatly help to prevent mistake and to the understanding of the subject.

Firstly, the believer will never be judged for sins. In the passage before us it is not sins, but deeds done in the body; and to suppose that the question of our guilt, our sins, could be again raised is to overlook, not to say falsify, the character of grace and work of redemption. "Truly, truly, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but is passed from death unto life". (John.5.24.) Again we are told, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified".(Heb.10.14.) The question of sin was settled, and closed for ever, at the cross; and every believer is before God in all the abiding efficacy of the sacrifice there offered, yes accepted in the Beloved. Even now we are without spot before God, and our sins and iniquities will be remembered no more. (Heb.10.17.)

Secondly, this will be at once seen when it is remembered that we shall have our glorified bodies before we are manifested before His judgement-seat; for as already pointed out, the resurrection of the saints who have fallen asleep in Christ, and the change of the living, and the rapture of both into the presence of the Lord, will precede our judgement. This is unspeakable consolation; for being already like Christ, we shall have full fellowship with Him in every judgement He passes upon our works; and we shall rejoice at the exposure and rejection of all that flowed, in our lives down here, from the flesh, and not from the Holy Spirit. This answers the question sometimes put, whether we shall not tremble and be ashamed as all the deeds of our Christian life are brought up and shown out in their real character? Indeed, as another has said, "We are in light by faith when the conscience is in the presence of God. We shall be according to the perfection of that light when we appear before the tribunal of Christ. It is a solemn event, for everything is judged according to that light; but it is that which the heart loves, because, thanks to our God, we ARE light in Christ!

But there is more than this. When the Christians is thus manifested he is glorified already, and, perfectly like Christ, has no remains of the evil nature in which he sinned; and he can now look back at all the way God has led him in grace - helped - lifted up - kept from falling, not withdrawn His eyes from the righteous. He knows

as he is known. What a story of grace and mercy! If I look back now, my sins do not rest on my conscience, though I have a horror of them; they are put away behind God's back. I am the righteousness of God in Christ; but what a sense of love and patience, and goodness and grace! How much more perfect then, when all is before me! Surely there is great gain as to light and love in giving an account of ourselves to God, and not a trace remains of the evil in us. We are like Christ.

Bearing these things in mind, we may consider more closely the nature of the judgement itself. It is not we ourselves who have to be judged, nor, as already explained, will our sins reappear against us, but, as the scripture itself says "we must all appear (be manifested), before the judgement-seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad". The body of the believer is the Lord's, a member of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor.6.15-19), and is therefore to be used in His service for the display of Christ Himself.(Rom.12.1; Cor.4.10.) The apostles earnest expectation and hope was that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. (Phil.1.20.) It is on this account that we are responsible for the deeds done in our body, so that while we are perfected for ever through the one offering of Christ, and there can not be any further imputation of sin to us, every act of our lives, not only as service, but every deed which we have done, will be manifested, tested, and judged when before the judgement-seat of Christ. The good will be seen, and declared to be such; although brought about through the grace of God, and the power of His Spirit, they will be reckoned as ours, and as such we shall receive the recompense.

The bad, however fair they appeared here, will receive their just condemnation, the time for concealments will then be gone. It is a question worthy of consideration whether this truth occupies its due place in our souls. Knowing grace and the fulness of redemption, there is danger of overlooking or forgetting our responsibility. The prospect of the Judgement-seat of Christ, while it holds no apprehension for the believer, is intended to exert a practical influence on our souls. The very connection in which it is found shows this to be the case "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him". This prospect

braced the soul of the apostle, stimulating him with zeal in all that he did to seek the approbation of Christ. This is precisely what it does for us, helping us to do them for and unto Himself. Herein lies our strength. Satan is very subtle, often tempts us to be men pleasers; when we remember that all will be manifested at the judgement-seat, we are impervious to his snares, knowing that if we commend ourselves to others, it may be at the cost of displeasing Christ. To be acceptable to Christ will be our aim just as we have His tribunal before our souls. It will also help us to be patient under misconception and in the presence of wrong-doing or evil. The Lord give us to live more continually under the power of this truth, that all that motivates our words and acts may be spoken and done in the light of that day.

ADDENDUM — ASSEMBLY DISCIPLINE.

It may have been mistakenly thought by the foregoing, that the writer was suggesting that Assembly Discipline deferred, until the Judgement seat of Christ, this is not the case, for the following reasons:

(a) There is scriptural teaching which instructs elders that excommunication be insisted upon those guilty of any of the catalogue of sins listed in 1 Corinthians 5.11. and verse 13 teaches that such be put away from ourselves.

(b) For anyone guilty of doctrinal error, 2 John 9-11. Any person who sins and does not remain in the truth, HATH NOT GOD. He who does not sin and who remains in the truth has BOTH the Father and the Son. This warns of backsliding and losing rewards (v8). As well as not having God and Christ(v9). We must reject such people.

(c) 1 Tim. 5.20. teaches public rebuke for sin, the original means test; trial; examine, it is to convince, convict, refute, expose such to shame, the person reproved.

(d) There should be avoidance and disassociation for disorderly conduct. 1 Thess. 5.14. “unruly” in this context means those who are out of step with what we acknowledge to be N.T. Church teaching, “feble-minded” should be rendered faint-hearted, i.e. those who lose heart in any battle.

(e) Another discipline should be against those who form factions. Titus. 3.10. One who maintains opposition to truth, the word “sect” raises its ugly head here, although the word itself has not an evil meaning, it simply refers to a doctrinal view or belief at

not an evil meaning, it simply refers to a doctrinal view or belief at variance with the recognized and accepted tenets of a system, church, or party. The word heretic is used once in scripture (Titus 3.10) and means one who holds a heresy; a dissenter, nonconformist, it only takes on an evil meaning when sound doctrine is rejected and fallacy is accepted and taught in preference to truth. If the doctrine is unsound and one dissents from the main body who hold the fallacy, then they are a heretic in a good sense. All deviation from truth is heresy (Gal. 5.20; 1 Cor. 11.19; 2 Pet. 2.1.).

(f) Silencing of vain and unprofitable talkers: Titus 1.10,11. This is the duty of the elders of each fellowship, Titus was reminded that the saints lived among Cretans who, are described as being “always Liars.”

(g) Lastly, withdrawal of recognition for defiance of the church, Matt. 18.15-17. Trespass an unforgiving spirit. (Matt. 18.15-17.). False doctrines and offences. (Rom.16.17.) Hating Christ. (1 Cor. 16.22.) Disorderly conduct and Disobedience. (2 Thess. 3.6,14,15.) Apostasy. (1 Tim. 1.19-20; 4.1-8; 2 Tim. 3.5; 4.1-4.) Heresy. (Tit. 3.10; 1 Tim. 6.3-5.) Fornication and other gross sins. (1 Cor. 5.1-13; 6.9-11; Gal. 5.19-21; Mark 7.19-21; Rom. 1.18-32; Col. 3.5-10; 1 Tim. 6.3-5.)

GOD'S SUMMER TIME

By the late W. W. FEREDAY, Rothesay.

Our Lord used a very interesting simile in the course of His talk with the disciples on the Mount of Olives two days before he suffered. Here it is: “Behold the fig tree and all the trees: when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that *Summer is now nigh at hand*. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, Know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand” (Luke 21.29—31).

From His words we gather that the promised Kingdom of God, when it is established, will be

The World's Summer Time.

The suggestion is attractive. We all welcome the returning Summer; we rejoice that Winter's darkness and storms are over, and we enjoy the happy increase of light and warmth.

As every one knows, Summer and Winter are determined by the earth's position in relation to the sun. The physical sphere is in this respect an illustration of the moral and spiritual. In Malachi 4.2 the Lord Jesus is described as "the Sun of Righteousness," destined yet to shine forth with healing in His beams. During long, dreary centuries the Nations of the world have striven to carry on without Him; and, to speak quite frankly, the multitudes do not want Him to—day.

This evil attitude towards God's Christ

Is the True Cause of all the World's Troubles.

There is no real peace. When the storms of war are not actually raging, the whole atmosphere is more or less electrical, with threats and alarms of war, and better disposed of the world's statesmen are continually exercising their minds as to how fresh disastrous outbursts may be averted.

God will not allow this calamitous condition of things to continue indefinitely. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psa.24.1). Men are thus only tenants here

By Permission of the Great Proprietor

of the universe. He will not allow His property to be perpetually desecrated. The oceans of tears and blood which men have caused one another to shed are beyond all our computation, and the Creator's beautiful earth has become a vast cemetery, as the fruit of sin.

God intends to take definite possession of the earth ere long and to reverse all these conditions, and we may learn from the Second Psalm that he will commit the administration of it to His Son. He laughs derisively at all opposition to this, whether it comes from the kings, the masses, or Satan.

The Son of God is not at present insisting upon His rights. He sits patiently in Heaven, awaiting the time that is already settled in the Divine Counsels. When that time comes. God will say,

"Give this Man Place,"

and all the would-be mighty ones of earth will have to stand back for the One who was crucified (Luke 14.9).

The Man who humbled Himself must be exalted, and all who exalt themselves must be abased. His present glory in Heaven is not a sufficient answer to His Cross and shame, for He has never been dishonoured there. The purpose of God is to glorify Him also in the very scene of His rejection. He will yet enter triumphantly into the city through whose gates He once carried His own gibbet, and the people will cry: "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord" (Matt.23.39). He is destined to be King of kings and Lord of lords and no power, earthly or infernal, will be able to prevent this happy consummation.

"Thy people shall be willing in the Day of Thy power." Thus wrote David nearly three thousand years ago (Psa.110.3). This marks an entire change of attitude on the part of men towards Christ. The earth, so to speak, will turn towards the Sun once more, and

God's Summer Time will set in.

An absolutely perfect Government will be experienced, all wrongs will be righted, God will scatter the people who delight in war, and peace will prevail from pole to pole. There will even be physical changes. "The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" (Isa.35.1), "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree" (Isa.55.13) and "there shall be abundance of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains (what a marvel!), the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon" (Psa.72.16).

The World's Troubles throughout all Ages,

have been self—inflicted. Had God been accorded His rightful place in the hearts and lives of men, all would have been well from first to last. Happy and wise is the individual who understands this, and who seeks to be himself right with God. The great heart of love which led Him to give His only begotten Son for the salvation of sinners is prepared to welcome and pardon all who bow humbly before Him. Those who take this becomingly low place get right with God while as yet the world is all wrong, and they are entitled to say, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and they may add, not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom.5.1,11,R.V.).

"THE PROPHECY OF NAHUM"

by E. R. Bower.

CHAPTER TWO — The Fall Of Nineveh.

(a) The initial attack. Vv.1-10.

V.7 could well be the 'text' to sum up this chapter. "It is decided. He is laid bare. He is removed away" (as some read). Nineveh fell, and with it the Assyrian empire. Babylon, too, was to come under the decree of the "watchers and the holy ones" and go the way of Nineveh. Persia, Greece and Rome were to follow. We read what has been divinely recorded of the histories of these empires, and our thoughts are drawn forward to the word of God and its ultimate Revelation (Ch.18) and we see a repeat of the visions of the prophets concerning Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar assisted in the fall of Nineveh, and Jeremiah (50.18) records, "Behold, I will punish the King of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria." Nahum's epic poem is so graphic that it requires little imagination for us to see the horrors of the last days of Nineveh, mirrored for us in current events (1983) in the Lebanon. Comment upon that seige is almost unnecessary. Nahum is so descriptive. In v.1 we see him "that dasheth in pieces", the disperser or hammer (margin) and his army at the gates, prepared for the final assault, and the ironic cry of the prophet is, "Be on your guard; strengthen the defences; watch; prepare yourselves," (cf.v.10; 3.14). For (v.12) Jehovah is going to restore His vineyard, the magnificence of Judah as the ancient splendour of Israel, though plundered and the vine marred by the enemies of God. God had given His permission for this, but Jehovah's vineyard would flourish again. cf. Ps.80 particularly vv.8-16. As we have said, Nahum looks beyond Nineveh; he sees the suffering of Israel the firstborn (Ex.4.22-23); he sees the glory that will follow. (cf.1 Pet.1.11.). v.3. is the scene from walls; vv.4,5 the panic within the walls as the defenders are mustered and the besiegers prepare the "storming shields" - the protective covers for scaling ladders and battering rams. It is then (v.6) that the walls, undermined by the swollen waters of the Tigris, collapse and the citadel dissolves.v.7. is perhaps more easily read as, "And it is decreed. She is removed away". Some see "Huzzab" as either the

name of a queen (“the Lady”) or goddess, or as a name symbolic of Nineveh. The maidens or slavegirls would be either the dependent or tributary cities or the temple prostitutes.v.8. describes the panic as a flood of swirling waters; people, civilians and soldiers rushing everywhere from the flood waters of the river and from the besiegers pouring through the breached walls. The officers of the people and of the army were shouting, “Stop! Stop!” in an endeavour to stop the panic, but no one paid attention. The battle seems to be over (vv.9-10). Now it is sack the city and away with the booty! The population agonizes in fear; knees are knocking; faces pale.

(b) After the battle. The Lion of Assyria. Vv.11-13.

The lion, we are told, was prominent upon Assyrian monuments, and might even have been a national emblem. Assyrian records bear evidence of their rapacity and of the heavy burden of tribute placed upon those they had conquered. Nahum portrays the city as a ravaging beast of prey; a pride of lions, but the Lord of hosts Himself goes out against the lions, even as David pictures for us. “I am against you, the sword shall devour your young; your plunder will be taken away: your ambassadors will no longer speak, Cf.2 Kings 18 and 19 and the words of Rab- shakeh.

CHAPTER THREE

(c) The Battle - and the reason. Vv.1-7.

As the prophet paints the vivid picture of the battle and its aftermath, he says (v.4.) “BECAUSE”. The historians tells us that included in the idolatrous worship of the Ninevites was the worship of the Babylonian Beltis with its practise of ritual prostitution. God has dealt with the lion of Nineveh; now he deals with its filth. And the story of Balaam and his ‘way’ or counsel, and how Phinehas dealt with it comes to mind. (Num.19). In recent history, we saw the shameful end of a dictator and his mistress, and v.6. gives us a similar picture of Nineveh. Revelation 18 has a like picture of Babylon-to-be.

(d) The example of Thebes. Vv.8-11.

The father of Sennacherib has once dealt severely with Thebes, or No-Amon, capital of Upper Egypt. Sennacherib’s son and also his grandson also dealt hardly with Thebes. The city had been sacked and great booty was transferred to Nineveh. Thebes, the city of a hundred gates and protected by water had fallen. Was Nineveh any better? Nineveh would drink the cup of Jehovah’s indignation

to the full. (cf. Hab. 2.16); her strongholds would fall like first-ripe figs.

(e) *The useless preparation.* (vv. 12-18).

Again Nahum waxes ironical. "Look at your people" says he, "they are as weak as women. Your gates are useless, for fire has burned their bars. Draw water; make clay and build up the walls. Call up your reserves." The very fire of the brick kiln would devour them; the sword cut them off; the fire and the sword are as hungry as locusts. And speaking of locusts, go and multiply yourselves as locusts; multiply your merchants as the stars; they spread themselves like the locusts, and go away leaving everything bare. Your tributary kings and your officers are like the locusts; they hide from the cold, but go on their way to fresh fields as other opportunities for plunder open up.

(f) *The address to the king of Assyria.* Vv. 18-19.

Nineveh disappeared from history for about 2,400 years; it had become a desolation; empty and void; waste. (1.8; 2.10). A second century writer wrote of the once great city, "Nineveh has perished, and there is no trace left where it was." (cf. Zeph. 2.13-15). Not until the mid 1800's was the site identified and its ruins excavated. The prophet cogitates upon the fall of the city "great unto God" and he addresses the king of Assyria, (cf. Is. 10.5; 14.25), "your nobles lie still; your leaders sleep (see Jer. 51.57); your people are irretrievably scattered; your bruise cannot be healed; your wound has no remedy. The news of your downfall is greeted with joy for who has not felt your cruel oppression."

As we have read this short prophecy we have become aware of the possibility that Nahum has at least three future happenings (future that is to him) in mind - the assassination of Sennacherib, the fall of Nineveh, and something far away beyond his ken.

Many of the references to "the Assyrian" refer to the ever present enemy of Judah and Jerusalem, but such passages as Isa. 8.1-10; 10.5-19; 14.24-27; take us into the days of the remnant of Israel. Some writers equate "the Assyrian" with the antichrist and Micah's prophecy (5.1-15) may give colour to the thought for it deals with the future reign of the Messiah (Matt. 2.6) and, "This (emphatic) will Himself be our peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and he shall tread in our palaces" cf. Dan. 8.9-11; 11.36-41. Micah's reference is the last in the O.T. for the Assyrian, and Nahum's the last reference to the king of Assyria.

VITAL VERITIES (7)

by E. W. ROGERS

The Book, The Message and the Power

Luke 24, vv. 44-49

Three things are mentioned in this message: the preacher's book, his message, and his power.

The preacher without "the book" is left to his own ideas, or to the ideas and opinions of others, all of which are of no essential worth, being merely blind guesses.

The preacher without "a Message" for the generation in which he lives is but a "vain talker," whose preaching fails to deal with existing conditions and needs.

The preacher without "power" is non-effective, whose energies are expended with no satisfactory results.

The Book, the Message and the power are, therefore, three essentials to the servant of the Lord wheresoever he labours.

It will be observed that the Lord refers His apostles only to one volume, namely, the Old Testament, expounding from its three parts the things "concerning Himself." In the Scriptures His servants have all that is requisite for positive preaching. The New Testament has now been added to the Old Testament, and has equal rights to the Old in claiming our submission. In the entire volume known to us as the "Holy Scriptures" is everything which is necessary for authoritative God-pleasing preaching.

From the Scriptures the Lord expounded to His disciples "all things concerning Himself"; the central theme of the Scripture, around which all else revolves, is Christ. This was entirely new to those to whom He spake. It is important that we should ever keep it in mind, and give Christ the central Place in our preaching.

This Book gives perfect assurance. The Lord pointed out to His disciples that "all things written concerning" Him "must be fulfilled". Not one point could fail: He explained to them how its statements had all been accomplished in respect of His death and resurrection, thus demonstrating to them the absolute reliability of

the book. It is none the less reliable to-day despite all the attacks which have since been made upon it: it still stands and will stand.

The Lord "opened their mind to understand the Scriptures." The Book which hitherto had been wrapt in mystery became now an open and plain volume. What a different Book the Scriptures must have seemed to them! Adam's coat, and Abel's lamb, and Noah's ark, and David's psalms, and Isaiah's prophecy, indeed the whole content of the Old Testament became clear with divine light as the mind was opened to HIM.

The mere possession of the Book, however, is not sufficient. Its message has to be heralded. It is not intended that its contents should be enjoyed only by the few in secret. It should be announced to all.

The message is *authoritative*: it is "upon His name" - This preposition being used to indicate that the Name, the Person, is the foundation upon which the superstructure of the declared message is built. He authorises its dissemination; He commands His servants to go forth "in His name," supported by His sanction and His presence.

The message is *scriptural* for the heralding of the good news to all nations was, as the Lord states, foreshadowed in the Old Testament writings. This was the imperative issue of His death and resurrection. It is not optional whether or not we declare the gospel: we must: the Old Testament Scriptures foretold such propaganda, and the Lord commands it.

The message is *comforting*: note what its terms are. They are (a) That *God hates sin* and calls upon all men to repent. It is not the sin of rejecting Christ which is in view, but it is sin in general which requires repentance. Here the preacher is apt to fail and in his zeal to spread the news of the love of God he is apt to omit to emphasize the holiness of God and His hatred of sin. This hatred was, then but so recently, seen in its fulness at the Cross: for that Cross clearly manifests what God thinks of sin.

The next term item of the message is that (b) *God remits sin*. Not merely does He forgive it, but, as the words used both in Old Testament and the New Testament imply, He removes it irrecoverably and eternally. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" reminds us of this. Further, (c) That *God is ready*

to forgive the sin of anyone irrespective of the nation to which he may belong, for the apostles were enjoined to go "all nations". The cases of the sons of Shem, Ham and Japheth in Acts, chapters ix., viii. and x., confirm this. Lastly, (d) That *God forgives the worst of sinners*, as indicated by the phrase "beginning at Jerusalem," where the actual murderers of His sons were living.

Nor must we omit to observe that the very preachers themselves were living witnesses of the truth of their preaching, for they themselves were forgiven sinners, forgiven in virtue of the death, proved efficacious by the resurrection, of their Lord.

In view of the immensity of such task, a task of convicting men of the heinousness of sin, and of opening their eyes to the redeeming love of God: a task the geographical extent of which is worldwide: a task which involved dealing with all races, kinds and dispositions of both men and women, one may well ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The task is too great for the men themselves, they need an external source of power to enable them to undertake it. Such power the Lord asserts would be available.

It was useless to start work without it. "Sit here (as the word literally is) until ye are "clothed with power" is the command.

The servant's need of Divine power is provided for by the three persons of the Holy Trinity, who work harmoniously for the eternal good of the sinner. *The Father* promises to send the Spirit: *the Son* says, "I will send Him," emphasizing the pronoun "I," thus manifesting His interest in the work to be done: and *the Spirit* Himself, who would make His abode on earth, enabling and co-operating with the Lord's servants.

The word "endue" is instructive. The Spirit of God clothes the individual whom He takes up and thus enables such individual to effect things which are ordinarily outside of the power of man; in the Old Testament the case of Samson is to the point: "the spirit of the Lord clothed him"; in the New Testament the Book of the Acts is full of exemplary cases.

The words "from on high," too, are instructive. They show that the source of power is not discoverable on earth, or in any of the schemes of men. This we ever do well to remember; it would save wastage of energies by adopting worldly methods. The power must come from another source: "FROM ON HIGH"

WORDS OF JESUS

by Charles Stanley

“And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.” —
John v.40.

Jesus had spoken of two periods—one of wondrous grace, the other of judgement. He has also spoken of two resurrections—one of life, the other of judgement. He has also spoken so plainly, that no one need doubt to which of these periods, or of these two resurrections, he belonged. Of the period of grace he had thus spoken: “Verily, Verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God; and they that hear shall live.” That hour, or period, has lasted nearly nineteen hundred years, and we are in it. In the beginning of the chapter we see divine grace seeking the blind, halt, withered—the helpless. But here grace is seeking its objects amongst the morally dead—the dead in trespasses and sins. Even there the voice of Jesus, Son of God, in freest grace reaches them; and they that hear shall live.

After this hour of richest grace shall come another. “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgement.” Jesus said it, and the day of grace is now; Jesus said it, and the period of judgement shall surely come. The words of the Lord Jesus must be heard in grace, or in judgement. There can be no escape. One of these must be the portion of the reader. We beg, then, your attention as a deeply interested person. Nineteen centuries have run their course, and not one who has heard and received the words of the Lord Jesus has been lost; not one who has come to Him has been refused, or cast out. Mark, it is the most absolute grace: “The DEAD shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” There is neither merit nor motion in the dead. And does not the death of Jesus prove the state we were in? “We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.”

The reader may say, How am I to know whether I am dead, or have life? I have made many efforts, but am not sure yet. Do you make efforts to be dead? Nay; those efforts rather prove that you do

not believe in the grace that reaches the dead; nay, the grace that has reached us by dying for us. "How, then, am I to know?" do you say? Harken to the words of Jesus. He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but passed from death unto life." (Ver.24.)

Is it not thus clear, whether you are still a state of spiritual death in sin, or have passed from that state to life? If you have heard the words of the Lord Jesus, or lest you should say, "I may have been mistaken in the past," then mark, it is, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath." Hath what? Eternal life. Not merely life for a day, or a year, but, hath eternal life. The Lord Jesus says, "Hath eternal life." He says "shall not come into judgement." He says, "is passed from death unto life."

Could the Lord Jesus speak more plainly, or make it more clear and certain? To hear Him is to hear God; to believe Him, is to believe God. If you hear His word, and believe God that sent Him, then He just represents these three things exactly as they are: you have eternal life; you shall not come into judgement; you are passed from death unto life. You have now to walk as a new creature in a new creation; yes, passed from death unto life. Now walk as such, alive from the dead, to live unto God.

If, then, you have life, you belong to the resurrection of life. Should you die, or fall asleep, as surely as you have heard the voice of the Son of God, raising you from the death of sin, so surely "all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." In 1 Corinthians xv. this resurrection is fully described. This resurrection of life will take place at the coming of the Lord. "But every man in his own order Christ, the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." This resurrection of life is very glorious. Believers, we have seen, as to the soul, have now eternal life. But then the body of corruption will be raised in incorruption and glory. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." What tongue can tell, or pen describe, the glory of the resurrection unto life? But, reader, will it be yours? Or, if you are alive and remain, will you be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and be caught up to meet the Lord, with all those who have heard His voice, and come forth from

the grave to rise to meet Him in the air?

It is quite certain, as we write these lines, that we are still in that period, or time of grace, which began when Jesus took the book, and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord. But can you tell when that period will close? May it not be this very year—nay, this very day? And then, if you die, and are not raised at the resurrection of life, you must be raised, or come out of the grave, a thousand years after, at the resurrection of judgement.

Is not this plainly declared in Revelation xx.? Remember, all that are in their graves must come forth. . . . “and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgement.” “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. . . . They were judged EVERY MAN according to their works.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” At the beginning Jesus said, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only—begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in him Should not perish, but have everlasting life.” This is blessedly true, after nineteen hundred years. It is also as true that the dead who have rejected this love, have not eternal life. “And WHOSOEVER was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Yes, at the resurrection of judgement, every man will be judged according to his works. Well might the heart of the Lord Jesus be grieved when He said, “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.” He knew what would be the eternal consequences of rejecting Him, in the lake of fire.

And now, He gives four distinct witnesses of His Person and work. He says, “Ye sent unto John, and he bore witness unto the truth.” He thus pleads with them that they might be saved. They could not deny that they had regarded John as a prophet of God. They had gone out to be baptised, confessing their sins. And John was a burning and a shining light, and they were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But had not John pointed to Him, and said, “Behold the Lamb of God”? And now the Lord Jesus had to say, “And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.”

The reader may have rejoiced for a season to sit under some ministry, it may have been a burning and a shining light; but does

the Lord Jesus say to you, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Are you still without life?

But the Lord Jesus had greater witness than that of John: "For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me." Was there ever another man on this earth that did the works that He did? Where did he live, and what was his name? The men who saw Him do these works bare record, even at the cost of all things, and often unto death. He calmed the raging sea, He give sight to the blind, unstopped the deaf ear, cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, raised the dead, proclaimed the glad tidings to the poor. But, ah, far more, He offered Himself the sacrifice for our sins, according to the will of the Father. Yes, Yes His own works bear unmistakable evidence that the Father had sent Him. "And ye will not," He says, "Come unto me, that ye might have life."

Still further witness: "And the father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me."

At His baptism the heavens were opened, "And a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved son, in whom I am pleased." Again, on the mount of transfiguration: "Behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved son: hear ye him." And again, in answer to that solemn cry of Jesus, "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." But, oh, that still more glorious witness: When He had borne our sins in His own body on the tree, the Substitute for us, God the Father raised Him from the dead, thereby bearing witness that He had accepted the atonement by His precious blood. And still the Lord Jesus says, "And ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

Lastly, Jesus appeals unto a fact. He does not say, "search," as a command, but, "Ye search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." Is not this equally so at this day? men possess and read the scriptures; they think the scriptures have the truth of eternal life in them; they send them abroad, they preach from them. Is there any other Saviour in them but Jesus? The scriptures are full of Him. Do not all the sacrifices of the law, the tabernacle, and all its furniture; the high priest, and his dress, his breastplate, with Urim and Thummim; the psalms and the prophets, the gospels and the epistles—all proclaim

Jesus Jehovah, the Saviour of sinners? Every book, every chapter, bears witness to Him. "And ye will not come to me that ye might have life."

Oh, by the resurrection unto life, by the resurrection unto judgement, by the witness of John, by the witness of the works the Father gave His Son to do, by the witness of the Father in raising Him from the dead, by the whole overwhelming witness of the inspired word of God, scriptures which you profess to believe—we beg of you answer the question, Is it true that you will not come unto the Lord Jesus that you might have life? Are you vainly seeking to attain to life by works of law? How can this be, since we have seen that the grace of God comes in the voice now that speaks to , and is heard by, the dead in sins? Do you say, Lord Jesus, I come to thee now; but I am so bad, I am not fit to come? Do you come? Yes, just as you are! Then hear His words: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." Do you hear the voice of the Lord Jesus? Do you believe God that sent Him? Then remember—"Will in nowise cast out," "hath eternal life," "shall not come into judgement," "is passed from death unto life." All precious words of Jesus.

The Millennium — (5)

by J. E. TODD

THE APOSTLE

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, but, being himself a Jew, the national unbelief in the gospel by Israel was a constant burden to him. He refers to this burden at length in his letter to the Roman church, chapters 9, 10 and 11. It is understandable that Paul was distressed because the majority of his fellow Jews had rejected the gospel (Rom.9:1-5). 'For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh' (verse 3).

If then the nation of God's own people rejected His son, has God rejected His people? 'No!' (11:1-27). The answer is a two-fold 'No!'. First, a substantial remnant had been saved. A remnant numbering thousands, 'I have reserved to myself seven thousand

men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace' (verses 4-5). 'Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe' (Acts 21:20). But what about the rest of the nation? 'Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded' (Rom.11:7). Is their failure, as a nation, to obtain God's blessing permanent? 'I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid' (verse 11). No, it is temporary, while the Gentiles have the opportunity to obtain God's blessing in the gospel, 'But rather through their (Israel's) fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles' (verse 11).

Second, in the parable of the olive tree (11:16-24), the Jewish branches in the olive tree of divine blessing have been broken off to make way for the Gentile branches to be grafted in. But the time will come when the national Jewish branches will be grafted back into their own olive tree of divine blessing. 'For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?' (11:24).

This national blessing will take place at the second advent of Christ, 'There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob' (verse 26). Although Israel broke the covenant God made with them through Moses at Sinai, now replaced by the new covenant of the gospel (see Jer. 31:31-34 and Heb. 8:7-13); although they have, nationally speaking, also rejected the gospel, yet Israel is still the heir of the covenant which God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 'As concerning the gospel, they (Israel) are enemies for your (Gentiles) sake: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes' (Rom. 11:28). What exactly did God promise to their forefathers? The covenant with Abraham, passed on to Isaac and Jacob, contained three promises (Gen.12). One, Abraham's descendants would become a great nation (verse 2, Israel). Two, they would be the means of blessing for the entire human race (verse 3, the gospel, Gal. 3:8). Three, they would occupy the land of Canaan (verse 7). Also God promised King David that one of his descendants would reign over Israel for ever (2 Sam. 7:16). Also God continually promised through the prophets that ultimately Israel would dwell in the land

in permanent peace under the prosperous reign of that king (see a previous article 'The Prophets).

So by the temporary breaking off of the nation of Israel from divine blessing, salvation has come to all, both Jews and Gentile (11: 30-32). 'For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all' (verse 32). Such is the wisdom of God (11:33-36).

But at the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ the mystery will be revealed. 'For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob' (11:25-26).

A WORKMAN'S MOTTO

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15.58.

Here we have an uncommonly fine motto for the Christian workman—and every Christian ought to be a workman. It presents a most valuable balance for the heart. We have immovable stability linked with unceasing activity.

This is of the utmost possible importance. There are some of us such sticklers for what we call principle that we seem almost afraid to embark in any scheme of large-hearted christian activity. And, on the other hand, some of us are so bent on what we call service, that in order to reach desired ends, and realise palpable results, we do not hesitate to overstep the boundary line of sound principle.

Now, our motto supplies a divine antidote for both these evils. It furnishes a solid basis on which we are to stand with stedfast purpose and immoveable decision. We are not to be moved the breadth of a hair from the narrow path of divine truth, though tempted to do so by the forcible argument of a plausible expediency. "To obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams."

Noble words! may they be engraved, in characters deep and broad, on every workman's heart. They are absolutely invaluable; and particularly so in this our own day, when there is such

wilfulness in our mode of working, such erratic schemes of service, such selfpleasing, such a strong tendency to do that which is right in our own eyes, such a practical ignoring of the supreme authority of holy scriptures.

It fills the thoughtful observer of the present condition of things with the very gravest apprehensions to mark the positive and deliberate throwing aside of the word of God, even by those who professedly admit it to be the word of God. We speak not now of the insolence of open and avowed infidelity; but of the heartless indifference of respectable orthodoxy. There are thousands, nay millions, who profess to believe that the Bible is the word of God, who nevertheless, have not the smallest idea of submitting themselves absolutely to its authority. The human will is dominant. Human reason bears sway. Expediency commands the heart. The holy principles of divine revelation are swept away like autumn leaves, or the dust of the threshing—floor, before the vehement blast of popular opinion.

How immensely valuable and important, in view of all this, is the first part of our workman's motto! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye *stedfast* and *immovable*." The "therefore" throws the soul back upon the solid foundation laid in the previous part of the chapter in which the apostle unfolds the most sublime and precious truth that can possibly engage the Christian's heart—truth which lifts the soul completely above the dark and chilling mists of the old creation, and plants it on the solid rock of resurrection. It is on *this* rock we are exhorted to be *stedfast* and *immoveable*. It is not an adherence to our own notions—to some favourite dogma or theory which we have adopted—or to any special school of doctrine, high or low. It is not aught of this kind; but a firm grasp and faithful confession of the whole truth of God of which a risen Christ is the everlasting centre.

But then we have to remember the other side of our motto. The christian workman has something more to do than to stand firmly on the ground of truth. He has to cultivate the lovely activities of grace. He is called to be "always *abounding* in the work of the Lord." The basis of sound principle must never be *abounding*; but the work of the Lord must be diligently carried on. There are some who are afraid of doing mischief that they do nothing; and others, who rather than not be doing something will do wrong. Our motto corrects

both. It teaches us to set our faces as a flint, where truth is, in any wise, involved; while on the other hand, it leads us to go fourth, in largeness of heart, and throw all our energies into the work of the Lord.

And let the christian reader specially note the expression, "*The work of the Lord.*" We are not to imagine for a moment that all that which engages the energies of professing Christians is entitled to be designated "the work of the Lord." Alas! alas! far from it. We see a mass of things undertaken as service for the Lord with which a spiritual person could not possibly connect the holy name of Christ. We do not attempt to go into details; but we do desire to have the conscience exercised as to the work in which we embark. We deeply feel how needful it is in this day of wilfulness, laxity, and wild latitudinarianism, to own the authority of Christ in all that we put our hands to in the way of work service. Blessed be His name, He permits us to connect Him with the most trivial and commonplace activities of daily life. We can even eat and drink in His holy name, and to His glory. The sphere of service is wide enough, mostly surely; it is only limited by that weighty clause, "The work of the Lord" The christian workman must not engage in any work which does not range itself under that most holy and all—important head. He must, ere he enters upon thy service, ask himself this great practical question, "Can this honestly be called 'the work of the Lord?'" (*selected*).

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE by Norman Crawford

Price £10.90 per volume (416 pages)

Norman Crawford has joined the writers who have shared in producing the excellent series of Ritchie New Testament Commentaries entitled "What the Bible Teaches". He is extremely well known in the assemblies of the United States and Canada and has served the saints for many years. He is however, not so well known on the mainland of Great Britain. In fact the churches in Scotland and England have hardly heard of him. I have known him for a number of years and have found him to be one of the loveliest, kindest and most Christ-like servant of the Lord. I count it a great privilege to know him.

His character, I feel, fits him to write about the loveliness and moral perfections of the Lord Jesus, the perfect servant, the true meal offering. My personal acquaintance with our dear brother,

would cause me to conclude that the words of Paul would be applicable to him "Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ"

Here is not only excellent verse by verse exposition that would educate the mind, but a work to warm the heart and move the affections toward the person of Christ.

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- (a) The Saviour of the host.
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- (g) Prayers of Perfect Man.
- (h) The use of contact.
- (i) Gentle Service of Women.
- (j) Praise and Glory of God.

Every believer **MUST** read this excellent book.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN by John Heading

Price £10.95 per volume (350 pages)

The Christian reading public has had the privilege of reading the many books of an expository nature which, over the years, have come from the pen of John Heading. (Chronicles, Daniel, Luke, Acts, 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Hebrews, etc) beside the many articles that he has contributed to various magazines.

This volume on John's Gospel lives up to the excellent standard that has already been established in the present series "What the Bible Teaches" and it is indeed worthy to take its place among these commentaries of the New Testament Scriptures.

The work will prove to be of great help to believers who have a real desire to get to know the word of God, and better still to become acquainted with the grand subject of the Scriptures—the Son of God.

Besides being an excellent verse by verse exposition of the much loved Gospel of John, it also includes instructive sections that will be of great profit to diligent students of the Holy Scriptures, such as;

- (1) Greek Text and translations.
- (2) The Conversational style of the Gospels.
- (3) Religious and Political Background.
- (4) Links with Old Testament Scriptures.
- (5) The Authorship of the Gospel.
- (6) Survey and General Outline of the Gospel.

We heartily commend to our many readers this excellent commentary—Every believer should read it. Every young believer should endeavour to purchase it and learn to swim in its deep and refreshing waters.

Committee Notes

Divine preservation is assuredly something to be marvelled at. Where would the saint or company of saints be without it? Each day testifies to it and the beginning of another year causes us again to look back in thankfulness for the preserving hand of a faithful God. Not only preserving but providing in every way for His people and His work.

On the other hand we do well to remember there is another who works, not to preserve, but to destroy, not to build up, but to pull down, not for our good, but for our ill. Our implacable enemy is never slow to stir up strife among the saints, to take advantage of failure, and as from the beginning, to oppose and hinder in every way the work of God. Sadly we are too often "ignorant of his devices". Paul and Peter respectively in Ephesians 6.11-16 and 1 Peter 5.8-9 exhort regarding the armour and vigilance necessary to deal with Satanic attacks. We ignore such exhortations at our peril.

Obedience to the word of God by the individual believer or assembly brings its own preservation and joy, and more importantly such obedience is God honouring. Dissemination of the word is, therefore, vital. This, together with doctrinally sound ministry, is essential for the establishing and maintaining of godliness among the saints.

Our aim has been to assist in this ministry through the Assembly Testimony magazine, and we appreciate all who have contributed either by their articles, their prayers, or their finance. We recognize too the invaluable work of the editor, assistant editor, secretary and the accountant, all of whom give of their time and talent freely, and we express our thanks accordingly. Objectives stated are one thing but objectives achieved are another, and in this we are completely dependant upon God to make good the ministry of the magazine to all readers. May it be so — and to Him be everlasting praise and glory.

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (5)

by J. E. Fairfield (Venezuela)

(b) MY CALL

After my conversion on 9th January 1921 I returned to my church and one day a friend asked me to go with him to the Gospel Hall one Sunday afternoon. Mr. Moneypenny and a Mr. Leer, from the Argentine, were ministering the Word of God. It was all strange to me, two men without clerical garb opening up and

expounding the Scriptures, but it was really good. It was so good I decided to return that night.

Unknown to the friend who asked me I had been enquiring of the Lord what Church I should join. I did not know I was in the Church, a member of the body of Christ. There were a lot of different groups in the town and I knew with all the confusion they all could not be right.

That night I was found again in the Gospel Hall. Mr. Money-penny preached with Mr. James Geddis, who was preaching his farewell sermon before he left for Africa on his first journey. The hall was packed and the meeting was good. An open air meeting was announced to follow the meeting in the hall. I went down High Street and stood on the opposite side of the street and to my surprise, out of the packed hall six lonely men arrived to preach Gospel!! I could not reconcile a wee weak company in the open air and a great big crowd in the hall where nobody could see them. I took pity on them and went and stood beside them. After the meeting one of the men approached me and discovered that we both lived in the same area and so we walked home together.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday night I was back to the meetings. I was like the dove Noah let loose — which initially found no rest for the sole of her foot, but did so eventually. So it was with me — I seemed to have found a resting place. After the meeting on Wednesday night a brother approached me and introduced himself — he was Bertie Douglas. He eventually went to Venezuela to serve the Lord. That began a friendship which was deep. I can say I loved Bertie Douglas with all my heart.

I was regular in my attendance at the meetings and one Sunday Dr. Darling said to me “What do you want?” I was quite taken back and I replied “I want in”. He said “Do you want to come into this meeting?” I said “That’s what I want”. “Well you know we generally baptise people. Would you mind?” he asked. (If he had said I had to be baptised six times I would have obeyed him because I had not learned the truth of baptism at that time.) “No Sir” I replied and arrangements were made for me to be baptised.

I’ll not forget that occasion. The hall was packed to see this spectacle. I was going to be “dipped” they said. It was like a fresh conversion. To obey the Lord brought such joy it was like being saved again. The following Lord’s day I sat down with the saints in Lurgan to remember the Lord for the first time.

A few Sundays later I missed Bertie Douglas and discovered he had a Sunday School in a place called Kilmore and I was invited to join him. One of the wee boys he was teaching at that time was our brother Mr. Albert McShane. It was in Kilmore that I first took a Sunday School class. I was eventually taken by older brethren to give a word in the gospel on Sunday evenings and thus began preaching here and there. I was exercised about the Lord's work and what I should do but had no thought of Venezuela. I was still working by day and preaching by night in barns, tents and halls around the locality. The brethren in the assembly approached me and said that it was time for me to make a decision to either leave work or leave the preaching. I was working every day, leaving for a meeting without a meal, preaching every night and not getting home until around midnight and this had been going on for about a year. The brethren said if I was thinking about the Lord's work they would commend me. I did not tell what I was thinking.

I had been considered Acts 16. There were three parties — Timothy, Paul and the brethren. To me they were the three lights a pilot gets in line when going into harbour. Timothy was willing to go, Paul was willing to take him, and the brethren were willing to let Timothy go. I thought that if ever that happens, — three lights in line, with me I would go.

The brethren in Donegall Road, Belfast had invited me for a series of meetings and Mr. Robert Hawthorne agreed to help me. We preached together and the hall was filled but at the close of six weeks, not a soul was saved. However on the Wednesday night of the seventh week God began to work and when the meetings finished, after ten weeks, nine souls were consequently added to the assembly at Donegall Road. This formed a partnership with Mr. Hawthorne and we preached together for almost a year. I thought "I am like Timothy, Mr. Hawthorne like Paul — if he asks me I will go and the brethren will commend me, thus the three lights will line up"!!

The night we closed the meetings in Kingsbridge Gospel Hall, Belfast and were walking to the bus Mr. Hawthorne said to me that he was leaving for the Orkney Islands. I was just bursting for him to ask me to go with him but he never asked. I went home and cried and cried. I longed to go but was somehow held back. The third light was not in place!

About that time Mr. Williams came home from Venezuela. I was told that the first time he came home he took Bertie Douglas back, the second time John Wells and this third time he was going to take me. Well I thought there was no possibility of me going to a Roman Catholic Country that requires the mastering of a foreign language. Now 'Paul' wanted 'Timothy' to go, the brethren would let 'Timothy' go, but 'Timothy' would not go!!

It was the 11th July, 1933. A big tent has been erected in Ballybolan for the conference the next day. I had never been there before. That night Mr. Williams and I walked up the road behind a haystack and brother Williams prayed that the Lord would help me to make up my mind to go to Venezuela. Eventually I went to bed and did not sleep too well. It was like being saved — a crisis was reached and a decision had to be made. I thought if I go to Venezuela who would pay the rent if I get married it would be worse. I watched the sun rising, a beautiful dawn it was was, and looked out to see the cows lying chewing the cud. The verse came 'the cattle on a thousands hills are mine'. I thought well if that is the case the Lord can pay the rent. I got up early and was on my knees reading in Isaiah chapter seven. I came to verse 9 "... if ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established". The margin reads "Do ye not believe? It is because ye are not stable". I thought that is just what I am — "not stable". The Lord has given me what I wanted from Him and yet I am not prepared to take it and as I looked at that verse I just burst out weeping and I cried "Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief" using the words of the father of the dumb child Mark 9.24, and I got peace.

Just then there was a knock at the door and Mr. Williams came in. After a little chat he said "Well, what is it?" I said "I'm, not going." Even after having a word from the Lord I was still afraid!! He said "What is the matter with you?" Some people need to be held back and some need to be pushed. Wilt thou go with this man?" Just like my conversion once again I said "I will". It was all over. The burden lifted and soon I was in the tent for the conference. Mr. McCracken got up to make some announcements and he said "I have heard news which has touched me today as if it were my own son —Eddie Fairfield is going to Venezuela". I thought that he might as well have put it in the newspaper and to make it worse he continued, "we're going to give him a little while

at the beginning of the meeting to tell his story". I got up in weakness and took a few minutes and as I told my story a voice boomed out "and God will prove you". It was Mr. John Knox McEwan a veteran pioneer of The Gospel, and at the end of the meeting he put £2.00 into my hand and said "The Lord bless you". It was the first gift, I received.

We left Belfast by ship the S.S. Montrose on 11th, August 1933 and after spending some time in Canada until all was clear with the Venezuelan Government, we arrived at last in Venezuela September 1934 and have enjoyed the blessing of the Lord in our labours. There are now over one hundred assemblies gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus in that Land and fourteen couples, all National workers and commended by their own assemblies. As to these brethren I am happy that I can say that they all work happily with us. Please pray for the preservation of the work and workers so that the Lord may continue to be glorified.

PRAY FOR VENEZUELA.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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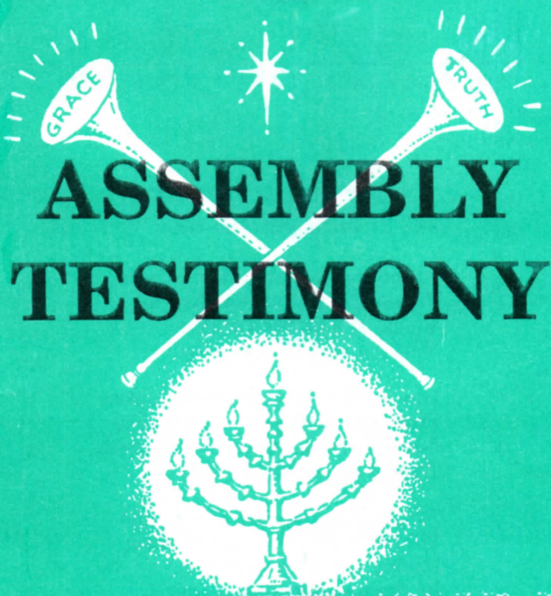
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Luke viii. 43—48.

In the crowd that gather'd there,
Round the Saviour on His way,
Going, at a father's prayer,
Where a maiden dying lay.

One there was whose sore distress
Prompted her those steps to take,
Nearer through the crowd to press,
Trial of His grace to make.

Skill'd physician there was none
Till this wondrous Healer came;
Mighty miracles were done
By the naming of His name.

Healing power in Him resides,
If I touch, I shall be cured,
Boundless grace in Him abides;
She of both was well assured.

Fully in Him she believed,
Touched Him softly, trembling much:
In a moment she perceived
She was healed by that one touch.

Jesus turned and looked around,
Asking of them, "Who touched me?"
And the woman courage found,
To confess that, it was she.

Then the Lord rejoiced indeed;
There was one whom He could bless,
One who trusted, in her need,
Both His power and willingness.

—(Selected)

THE BLESSED HOPE

by D. M. MARTIN, Dorset

Part VI—The Marriage Supper, of the Lamb.

After the judgement -seat of Christ and before His return WITH His saints, another event takes place in heaven. There is only one verse of scripture that records this event.

It is the marriage of the Lamb, and as another has said, "The Lamb" is a figure or description of the Son of God, which reminds us of His sufferings. The soul understands this, and therefore this title 'The Lamb's Wife' tells that it is by His sufferings the Lord has made her His own; that He so valued her, He gave up all for her. Even now as believers we are united in Christ; but the marriage speaks of another thing. It is the time when believers of this dispensation—embracing all from Pentecost until the Lord's return—already glorified, and looked at corporately, are fully and finally associated with the risen and glorified Son of Man, with the One who, in His own matchless grace and love, has chosen the church to be His companion for ever. He is in the scene before us, on the eve of His appearing; but before He returns to the place of rejection He will formally take into union with Himself her who has shared in measure His sorrows and sufferings, that He may display her to the world as sharing in the same glory as Himself (Cf John 17.22,23.) This refers to the time when He returns to take His power and reign.

"And earth His royal bride shall see
Beside Him on the throne".

The marriage is preparatory to this public display, and is the expression of His own heart of love in bringing the church into participation with Himself of His own glory and joy.

Several distinct things mark the celebration of the marriage. First, there are the outbursts of joy and praise. We shall hear the fourfold 'Alleluias' of verses 1,3,4,&6. They will reverberate to the farthest point of the universe, they will not be inspired by vindictiveness or revenge, but will be jubilant with the conviction that God has vindicated Himself and has proved that right can conquer wrong; truth, falsehood; and love, hate. Our anticipation as

we think of the future is that God's character and government of the universe will be amply vindicated. Contemporaneous with the fall of Babylon will be the marriage of the Lamb. Before He assumes, together with the saints, the task of governing the world, the union of supreme love will have been consummated, and the marriage supper will have been filled with guests. Note also that angels are our fellow-servants. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." They acknowledge us as fellow-servants on the condition that we never fail from maintaining the testimony of Jesus.

But it is the Lamb Himself who attracts our gaze as the prominent figure of that day; and it is called, as another has said, "The marriage of the Lamb, not the marriage of the Church or of the Lamb's Wife, but of the Lamb, as though the Lamb was the One chiefly interested in that joy. The Church will have her joy in Christ, but Christ will have His greater joy in the Church.

The strongest pulse of gladness that will beat for eternity will be in the heart of the Lord over His ransomed bride.

In all things He is to Have preeminence; and as in all things, so in this — that His joy in her will be greater than hers in Him.

For thee, His royal bride — for thee,
His brightest glories shine.
And, happier still, His changeless heart,
With all its love, is thine.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Being puffed up with conceit doesn't mean that a man is a swell guy.

No one gets less true pleasure out of life than he who lives only for pleasure.

God loves everyone of us as if there were but one of us to love.

Give your all to Christ : He gave His all for you.

The man who lacks the courage to make a start has made a finish already. —Anthony Orsini, Florida, U.S.A.

“THE EPISTLE BY JAMES”

by E. R. Bower.

The identity of the author of this earliest of N.T. writings has been much discussed, but many commentators identify him as James “the Lord’s brother “ for whom references occur at Matt. 13.5; Mark 6.3; Acts 12.17; 15.13; 21.12; 1 Cor. 15.7; Gal. 1.19 and 2.9.12. We need not dwell here upon the ‘difficulties’ concerning our Lord’s brethren, but accept the plain statement of Scripture and make one reference to the Jewish historian Josephus who speaks of “the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James.” James, was known as James the Just, or James the wise, and because of his long and frequent devotions he was also known as the “camel kneed.” It is said that James was killed at the instigation of the Sadducean high priest Anannus, circa A.D.69, but earlier dates have been suggested. We need not dwell, either, upon the disputations which have arisen about the canonicity of the letter, or upon its apparent emphasis on ‘works’. The letter has been given an established place in the book which we accept as the Word of God.

The dominant theme is Faith and its Outworking, and one writer has given the letter the title, “The Necessity of a Living Faith” with the outline —

- Chap.1. A Living Faith TESTED by trial
- 2. A Living Faith PROVED by works.
- 3.4. A Living Faith EVIDENCED by conduct, and
- 5. A Living Faith EXERCISED by persecution.

To avoid a multiplicity of headings and sub-headings, these headings have been adopted in the following notes, but it may be noted, too, that the phrase ‘my brethren’ also divides the letter into a series of thought-sequences, each of which arises from, or refers back to, the preceding sequence or sequences.

CHAPTER ONE. A Living Faith TESTED by trial.

V.1. The salutation is similar to that used by these early bond-servants (Rom. 1.1; Tit. 1.1; 2 Pet. 1.1; Jude 1.) but it is only here and Tit. 1.1 do the writers describe themselves as the bondmen of God. The addresses, in common with the letters of Peter and the letter to the Hebrews are the Jews of the Dispersion, the twelve tribes scattered abroad, but its lessons are for the whosoever will. See John 7.35. It will be recalled that at this time, tribal distinction was largely confined to Judah and Benjamin for, in historical terms the other tribes were practically non-existent, having been removed from the records until such time when God will bring Israel out from among the nations whence they have been scattered. It is a united Israel that James sees here, albeit just a remnant. Twice only in the O.T. does God speak to all the congregation — Ex. 12.3, “Take a lamb”, and Lev. 19.2, “Ye shall be holy.” As we read this letter we shall notice two very strong undercurrents — that of the law and that of the sermon upon the Mount. Did James use Lev. 19 as his ‘text’ for this letter?

vv.2-4. “Temptations” (v.2.) - trials; “Patience” (v.4.) - endurance; “Wanting nothing” (v.4.) - lacking nothing; “Fall into” (v.2.) - to be involved in. Cf. the seed that fell among thorns (Matt.13.7.) and the shipwreck (Acts 27.41). We are all familiar with the words, “Lead us not into temptation” (Matt. 6.13) but how do we equate them with what James is saying here? Guy King writes, “We shall never comprehend the matter if we treat this verse as two prayers: only as one prayer do we begin to see its meaning, correlating the ‘not’ and the ‘but’. I fancy the purpose is this — “Lead us not into . . .” leaving us to be overwhelmed; but “deliver us out of . . .” the evil to which it would seek to lead us . . . the best commentary is . . . 1 Cor. 10.13 “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.” The involvement may result from circumstance outside of ourselves, or from our own actions, but if and when it comes, let us be happy about it because this is how faith is tested; where endurance is engendered; where perfection is attained; or as Matt. 24.13 has it in another context, “He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.” It is the overcomers who attain to the perfect work; a work wholly

dependant upon God. It is thus that completion and contentment comes.

vv.5-8. “liberally” (v.5) - simply; “upbraideth not” (v.5) - does not reproach; “nothing wavering” (v.6) - doubting nothing. How do we deal with temptations when it comes? The answer is — pray. We need wisdom, but if this wisdom or nous is absent then, let us ask God for it. The prayer is not for the removal of the trial, but for wisdom to deal with it. “And it shall be given him”. Any lack seen in v.4 is made up in v.5. There are no restrictions here; it is a simple asking; an asking unclouded by any doubt as to the answer. See Matt. 7.7-11; 21.21-22. This is the highest form of petition — faith unhindered by doubt. It has been said, “God has the right to test true faith; not in order that He might prove it so, but that we might prove it for ourselves. But he whose faith is never tried knows no tempest, fears no quicksands, and his ship needs no undergirding. But neither does he prove God.” An evident reference to the storm of Acts 27. Another writer, “Holiness is perfected by the testings of life, and in the will of God there is no other way forward.” A wavering faith is a mark of instability.

vv.9-11. “low degree” (v.9) - lowly, humble; “low” (v.10) - humiliated; “grace of the fashion” (v.11) - comeliness of appearance; “fade away” (v.11) - fade, wither, perish. Then, as now, men sought for riches. Our Lord warned, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . .” (Matt. 6.19-21). The operative word is ‘yourselves’. And how we need this message today! James reminds his readers of the dangers of wealth. The gospel is, or should be, a great leveller (Matt. 23.12). See Luke 12.16-21; 14.10; Mark 10.25; etc., It is not always a question of poverty or riches in terms of money, but, it may be, an attitude of mind in the face of trial; humility as opposed to boasting. “Blessed are the poor in spirit . . .” is the opening of the “sermon”. To the church at Laodicea our Lord wrote, “Thou sayest, ‘I am rich’ . . . but thou art wretched, and miserable and poor” (Rev. 3.17) and to the church at Smyrna, ‘I know thy poverty . . . but thou art rich’ (Rev. 2.9). See Is. 40.3-8; Matt. 6.30; 13.5,6,20,21; Mark 10.28; Luke 12.16-21, 14.10 etc.,

vv.12.-15. “tried” (v.12) - tested and found worthy. Echoing

the joy of v.2. James now says, "Happy is the man who endureth (the patience of vv.3-4) temptation" and in so saying, summarizes the nine beatitudes of Matt. 5.3-12 which end with the word, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad . . ." The Crown of life is the hope of the righteous Jew, and the church at Smyrna was told to, "Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer . . . be thou faithful (or, full of faith) unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." The Apostle Paul also spoke of the crown of righteousness laid up for him" (2 Tim.4.7-8). Israel met with temptation in the wilderness, but it was God who led them, humbled them, proved them, chastened them, that He might "make them know that man shall not live by bread alone" (Deut.8.1-6). "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you . . ." (John 6.27). Thus patience has its perfect or complete work (v.4). We are told (1 Cor. 10.13) three things about temptation. It is common to man; controlled by God; and is conquerable by us through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"tempted" (v.14) - tried, proved; "enticed"(v.14) - allured; "finished" (v.15) - completely finished. Temptation and its resultant evils do not come from God, for He cannot be tempted by evil. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look upon iniquity." (Hab. 1.13). Not knowing evil, He can neither tempt nor be tempted by it. Temptation and what follows is the result of our response to an allurements. This is a legacy from Eden's garden (Gen. 3.6). Sin followed, then the wages of sin (6.23). Sin is the deadly plant arising from the seed of desire.

vv.16-18. "err" (v.16) - be misled, deceived; "good gift" (v.17) - the good act of giving. The Greek word is only here and Phil. 4.15; "variableness" (v.17) - variation in shadow cast by turning. Contrasting the evils of vv.14-15 is the new birth and its outcome; that is the good which, like the new birth itself, is from above. (John 3.3. margin). If the literal meaning of 'good gift' is followed then the thought here is more the ACT of giving than the gift itself, nevertheless it is the act which produces the perfect gift. The title 'Father of lights' may have come from Gen. 1.3, 14-19. The heavenly lights are the dividers between night and day, and are for signs and seasons. They may be eclipsed and under go change and variation (cf. the true North, the Grid North

and Magnetic North as shown upon Ordnance Surveys), but God the Creator does not change. "I change not" (Mal. 3.6). The thought expressed by James here, we have met before. James says, "Of His own will begat He us by the word (logos) of truth" and the prologue to John's gospel reads, "As many as received Him, to them He gave the privilege (margin) to become the sons of God . . . born, not of blood . . . but of God." (John 1.12-13; 3.8-9;). We are just as much a creation of God, as were the wonders of Genesis 1 for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation)" (2 Cor.5.17). Begotten from above by the Word of Truth (Col. 1.12-17). The reason? "That we should be a certain kind of firstfruits of His creation."

"From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
His high endeavour and his glad success,
His strength to suffer, and His will to serve.
But O, thou bounteous Giver of all good
Thou art of all Thy gifts Thyself the crown;
Give what Thou canst, without Thee we are poor
and with Thee not, take what Thou wilt away"
(Wm. Cowper.)

vv.19-20. The introductory 'wherefore' (you know it, or so that) links the new birth of vv.16-18 with its practical outcome of good works, seen here in four aspects. Knowing the new birth, we should know also the power that produced it. The first aspect is, in modern idiom, 'keeping one's cool'. A lost, or should it be, a found temper, is non-productive in righteousness.

v.21. Here is the aspect which means the setting aside of the carnal man who is "enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8.7). "Superfluity of naughtiness" - overflowing of wickedness. The A.V. 'naughtiness' had a rather different meaning than that usually associated with it today. It was sometimes associated with moral degradation. The sense here is rather that of maliciousness. The need to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Heb. 12.1.). In contrast to 'wrath' (vv.19-20) let us "receive with meekness the implanted word" - the word by which we are begotten (v.18). The Greek for 'engrafted' or 'implanted' has a primary meaning or application of 'inmate', and the inmate

here is our Lord Himself. James now preaches the gospel to his fellow countrymen. He is bringing them the word.

vv.22-25. "deceiving" (v.22) - deluding, beguiling, to deduce by false reasoning. cf. Col.2.4; "looketh" (v.25) - stoop down to look. Cf. John 20.5; "deed (v.25) - doing. Notice the progression - v.19, swift to hear; v.21, receive with meekness; v.22, be ye doers. The phrase 'natural face' is, literally, the face of his birth, and the implication appears to be that the fact and the face of his birth may soon be forgotten. Hearing without the doing is self-deception. Notice that it is not merely hearing, but forgetful hearing. And we turn again to the Sermon, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them . . ." (Matt. 7.24-27). We look at ourselves in the mirror -and we forget. The better mirror is that of the perfect law, the law of freedom, and our look into that mirror should not be a fleeting or cursory glance, but one of a close examination. Cf. Ex. 12.5; Lev. 22.19-21; Deut. 17.1; 1 Cor. 11.28. We hear; we receive; we consider; we obey; and we are blessed. Thus it is that obedience is the third aspect of works.

vv.26-27. "seen" (v.26) - thinks himself; "religion" (v.26) - a careful follower of the observances connected with his belief; "affliction" (v.27) - tribulation. This is the fourth aspect of works - worship. There is something of the Pharisee in this man; his speech betrays him; he thinks 'himself' (Luke 18.9-14). Not only be slow to speak (v.19), but bridle the tongue. James will say more about this 'bridling' or setting a rein upon in 3.5-12. Cf. Matt. 5.33-37. Within the context of these two verses the bridling of the tongue is more concerned with 'religion' as seen in words, and not in deeds. Pure and undefiled religion is manifested by deeds "before God"; help to the helpless is just one example of pure religion in action; another is to remain undefiled, unspotted and blameless in our relationships with the world. Not thinking self, but keep self. See 1 Pet. 1.19; 2 Pet. 3.14; 1 Tim. 6.14.

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VITAL VERITIES (8)

by E. W. ROGERS

On Belief in God

Of the wicked the inspired Psalmist has said, "All his thoughts are, there is no God" (Ps. 10.4 R. V.); and again: "The fool hath, said in his heart, there is no God" (Ps. 14.1). Yet neither such thoughts nor such words can banish God from the Universe, or destroy the fact that "He is". (Heb. 11.6). Not all unbelievers are atheists; not all avowed atheists are serious; but those atheists who profess sincerity would, if they could read themselves aright, discover that the thought is the child of the wish. To banish God from one's life-sphere springs from the consciousness of guilt.

GOD INSCRUTABLE

The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, of course, necessarily believes in God, for He is the Son of God, and the Revealer of the Father. Not that anyone is able fully to comprehend the Godhead, seeing "No man knoweth the Son save the Father: neither knoweth anyone the Father save the Son and He Whomsoever He will reveal Him" (Matt. 11.27).

The Godhead is a trinity—a unity of Three Persons—each in every respect equal with the other, though differing in respective operations. As a cube is of equal height, breadth and length, each of these dimensions being equal to the other, yet there is but one cube, so, too is the Godhead. This, when it is a matter of persons, is confessedly a difficulty to the natural mind, but what is difficult to reason is not ipso facto contrary to reason. The Scriptures abound in evidence that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are the equal possessors of all the divine attributes, in eternity of being and all other things which are peculiar properties of the Godhead. Man must not only believe that God is, but he must also exercise faith in respect of the mode of the being of the Godhead, accepting divine revelation while recognizing inability to offer a rational explanation thereof.

HOLY SCRIPTURE

Scripture assumes the being of God. It does not attempt to give proofs of His being but opens with the majestic words 'In the beginning God,' and at once proceeds to show God at work. This working is later shown to be the harmonious working in respective proper parts of the Three Persons as One God. The whole book has to do with the relation of man to God and of the attitude of God to man. The Scriptures themselves are a very striking and conclusive evidence of the being of God while at the same time they assert it. By them God speaks.

CONSCIENCE

Further, the fact that man has a conscience is itself proof to all who think of the existence of a Superior Power to whom the owner of the conscience is responsible. David, the king, was responsible to no superior ruler in his realm, yet when he sinned he recognised it was "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned" (Ps. 51.4). His conscience smote him, and, instead of being indifferent to the wrong done to two of his subjects whom, in heartless despotism, he could have ignored, he had dealings with God in regard to it, he being subordinate to and responsible to Him. This candle of the Lord is within every man, though sometimes its light is not discerned; or, to change the figure, the pricks of this inward goad are not always felt. Yet, why is a man inwardly troubled because of wrong done, although he is aware that no earthly power can deal with him in respect of it? Why does the "dart strike through his liver," unless it be that, smother it as man may, he is responsible to God Who 'is'?

MAN

Again, if man examines himself, he may learn that God is. His very being presupposes a prototype after Whose image and Whose likeness he has been made (Gen. 1.26). He possesses spirit, soul and body and is himself a trinity in unity. So is God. He possesses faculties and powers that the rest of creation has not. While it is true there are evidences of a fall, yet he is plainly still superior to the brute creation around. The anthropomorphic terms used in relation to God which indicate that He can see, speak, think, remember, plan, feel, has hands and fingers, etc. etc. all show that man is created after the likeness of God, and by his existence declares that

God 'is.' As man in creation is lord, notwithstanding his fall, so, too, God is the supreme Ruler of all.

THE UNIVERSE

The universe itself is a further evidence that God is. The existence of the universe, of which both the world in which we are found and ourselves, too, are a part, demonstrates the prior existence of a Maker. Moreover, its orderly continuance demonstrates the existence of a sustaining God. God, by the agency of the Son, made "all things" (a term denoting the universe) and by Him it is held together (Col. 1.17. Heb. 1.3).

DESIGN

Yet again: the perfect and harmonious working of the universe demonstrates further that there must be a purpose and intention for which it was made, and this in turn presupposes One who purposed. The Scriptures reveal that "Apart from Him (that is, the Son of God) was not anything made that was made" (John 1.3.), that is to say, the Universe was not only made 'By Him' but 'For Him,' and He is the great Object that the Godhead had in mind when creation was formed.

PROVIDENCE

Finally, the manifestation of providence in history proves the being God. This is far too large a subject to deal with adequately in this paper, but the honest reader of Biblical history (which, after all, is the only perfectly unbiased and reliable history of any of the happenings in the world we possess cannot suppose the disasters which befell the wicked and adversities which befell the righteous and the deliverances received in response to prayer (not to mention a host of other phenomena) were all merely matters of blind chance, and not of Personal intervention.

MONOTHEISM

There is a further thing which must be observed, namely that there is but ONE GOD. This is categorically taught in Scripture (Rom. 3.30; Gal. 3.20; Deut. 6.4; Mark 12.32), although it is denied by man. Idolatry has long been practised, and man has devised claims in support of his multitudinous gods, but an examination of Isaiah ch. 42 and 44 and 2 Kings 19 will assure those who are open to be convinced that although "there be that are called gods," yet actually "there is but one God the Father, of Whom are all things"

(1 Cor.8.5). Someone has written: "God is infinite in His being, and in all of His perfections. But the infinite, by including all, excludes all others. If there were two infinite beings, each would necessarily include the other, and be included by it and thus they would be the same, one and identical." These are weighty words and well worth pondering: it is conclusive evidence of the unity and singleness of the Godhead. This, of course excludes polytheism, pantheism, atheism and all cognate errors. There are not many Gods: creation itself is not God: the universe is not devoid of God: there is only one God. There are Three Persons, indivisible, without discord, or disagreement in either thought, word or action.

GRAMMAR

It may be further that sometimes a singular verb is used with a plural noun: e.g. 'In the beginning God (Elohim a plural Heb. noun) created (a verb in the singular) the heaven, etc. This shows unity of action by a plurality of Persons. Sometimes a plural first person pronoun is used as in Gen. 1.26, 3.22, which demonstrates a plurality in agreement in the Godhead. Again, the singular pronoun is used with a plural noun: thus "Thou" is used as referring to Elohim (plural). Space forbids tracing throughout the Scriptures the harmonious working all Three persons, but Luke 15 is a splendid example, where the shepherd who seeks the sheep denotes the Lord Jesus; the light used for the recovery of the lost silver denotes the Holy Spirit and the Father welcoming the Prodigal denotes God, the Father. All these three are thereby shown to be actively engaged in perfect harmony, in respective parts for the ultimate good of 'publicans and sinners.' As another has written: "Each Person possesses the whole essence and is constituted a distinct Person by certain incommunicable properties not common to Him with the others."

DIVINE NAMES

God is made known to man by several names which Bible students can trace out with the aid of a good Lexicon. Such names afford an insight into the nature and power of God.

Notwithstanding all the foregoing, the being of God is altogether beyond the full apprehension of any man. "He only hath immortality (that is, essentially so) dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can see; to Whom be honour and power eternal, Amen" (1 Tim. 6.16). Nevertheless, "The

only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of His Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1.18), and the possessor of eternal life has a capacity to know God which all others lack. “This is eternal life, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou has sent.’ (John 17.3).

GOD REVEALED IN CHRIST

The believer has evidence far stronger and more convincing than the revelation of God in nature, in the world and in providence. He is not left to gather his knowledge of God from description; God has become personally manifest in His Son. The Lord Jesus is the ‘Image of the Invisible God.’ “We are not furnished with a written description of Who and What God is, but God in Christ has become His own Revealer, in personal, living action, by His own sayings and doings — that simplest and surest way of making Himself known.”

He who knows Christ — not as a Man of history but as a Present Living Saviour — needs no other evidence that God is. That is sufficient, final and irrefragable.

The Millennium — (6)

by J. E. TODD

THE PRELUDE

It was given to the prophets Ezekiel and Zechariah to set the scene into which the Lord himself will intrude by his second coming to earth to rule and reign.

In the 37th Chapter of his book Ezekiel visualises the return of the nation of Israel from their Babylonian captivity. He portrays the dried skeletons which had lain on Israel’s land since the Babylonian invasion as coming to life again (verses 1-14). There had been two nations formerly, Israel and Judah, but they would return as one nation (verses 15-23). Then their king of David’s line will come to them (verses 22-28).

Ezekiel passes over their rejection of their King, to tell of that was the task of Isaiah (52:13-53:12), Ezekiel is looking forward to the King’s second advent in the latter days (38:8,16.) He shows how

at that time Israel will be back in the land of Canaan as a nation, see chapter 38 -39. The Jews were scattered from their land by the Romans as a result of the Jewish Wars when Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70. After nearly one thousand nine hundred years Israel was reconstituted as a nation in the land in A.D. 1948. Later, as a result of the Six-day War, the Jews gained control of the whole of Jerusalem, thus ending the Gentile control of that city since Roman times. 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled' (Luke 21.24).

Ezekiel says that the nation of Israel has been gathered from many nations into the land (38.8). The land has known war but is now at peace (verse 8). The land has been a continual waste (verse 8) but is now blossoming (verse 12). Israel has an enemy to the far north of them (38:6.15,39:2), an enemy equipped with a huge army (38:2-6). If the 35th meridian of longitude, which runs 30 miles westward of Jerusalem, is traced to the far north it will identify the land of which Ezekiel is speaking. This army comes to invade Israel, for this purpose it must cross the river Euphrates, as a map will show. Compare this with John's statements about the river Euphrates in the Revelation 9:13-21 and 16:12-14. But that army, expecting an easy victory (38:10-12) will be utterly destroyed by direct divine intervention (38:17-39:5). This is the battle of Armageddon (Rev.16:14-16). John uses the very language of Ezekiel (39:17-20) to describe this battle (Rev.19:11-21, see verses 17-18).

The prophet Zechariah paints the same general picture in the last three chapters of his book (12-14). Zechariah prophesies of the attack upon Jerusalem by many nations. (The land to the far north is a union of republics). Also he speaks of the city's deliverance by the Lord. The time is when the Lord returns to the earth, the One whom they pierced (12:10), the One whom they wounded and smote (13:6-7), the One who will stand on the Mount of Olives (14:4), from whence He ascended into heaven (Acts 1.11-12). Then the whole nation will acknowledge Him as their Messiah (12.10).

'Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old' (Micah 7.20).

'And the Lord will become King over all the earth' (Zech.14.9).

“HE WAS BEYOND REPROACH.”

By the Late Walter Scott.

“There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21.25). No human pen could write down, nor could the world contain all the books that should be written. This is not hyperbolic statement, but sober truth.

Christ in Omnipotent Power is the subject of the *first* chapter of the Bible (see Col. 1.16). Christ in Divine Title and Glory, and in Human Relation to His Church and Israel form in brief the grand theme of the *last* chapter of the sacred volume. In the Old Testament Scriptures Christ in His own Person, as also in Sacrificial, Prophetic, and Regal glory combined with every moral excellence, is prefigured. We have to a large extent lost touch with the Christ of the Old Testament. To regard the earlier oracles of God as a mere epitome of combined history and biography entails serious loss. The Old Testament is redolent of Christ.

In the Ever-memorable Emmaus Journey of nigh seven and a half miles, the Lord Himself expounded to His two fellow travellers, the true character of the Old Testament. “And He said unto them. “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the *Law* of Moses, and in the *prophets*, and in the *psalms*, concerning ME.”

In this threefold division of the Old Testament, we get foretold His Deity; His Holy Humanity; His pre-existence before all worlds; His truly miraculous Birth; His Divine mission; His Sacrificial Death and attendant circumstances; His Resurrection; His Ascension; His present session at God’s right hand; His Coming in Person and in Power and Glory; and His Kingdom Reign of one thousand years. Type, voice, song, and harp combined utter *His* glory and proclaim *His* worth.

The grace of His Person and the splendour of His Kingdom form the delightful theme of Psalms 45 and 72. We love to read Psalm 72. What a rich and full unfolding of the character of the Messiah in righteousness and compassion!

The poor and needy find a shelter and deliverance in the reigning monarch; whilst the proud and disobedient bow before Him and lick the dust. The kings and nations of Europe and Asia pour their gold and treasures at His feet. Daily worship of the king, and prayer for the continuance of His reign with other features of deepest interest, invest this grand Millennial Psalm with a glory second to none. He is presented!

He is the perfect Man of Psalm one; the *Messiah* of Psalm two; the *Son of Man* of Psalm eight; the *Obedient One* of Psalm sixteen; the *righteous One* of Psalm seventeen; the *Victim* for sin of Psalm twenty-two; the *Shepherd* of the sheep of Psalm twenty-three; the *King of Glory* of Psalm Twenty-four.

But in truth, the precious books of the Old Testament are one and all full of Christ. We need spiritual eye-salve to discover the rich hidden glories and beauties of God's beloved Son. Perhaps the most meaningless book in the sacred canon (if Christ is not read into it) is Leviticus—dry and uninteresting in the extreme. But what a delightfully fascinating book to a spiritual mind! How its every page, almost every word, glows and glitters, when the sacrificial and priestly glories of Christ are discerned. We want Christ. The heart cries out and aloud for *Him only*.

Besides finding a harmonious and voluminous witness to Christ in the earlier oracles of God, there are more than 300 *chosen* texts, predictive of His Person, His offices, work, and service. Between the Testaments—a period of 400 years—the voice of prophecy is silent, the song of the bard is hushed, and the harp hung on the willows.

John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan, breaks the long silence, and bears public testimony to Christ as the King of Israel, the Light of the world, and the Son and Lamb of God. Thus the sun breaks and the shadows flee. In the former Dispensation God was hidden behind the separating veil, and the inscrutable glory of His Person wrapped round Himself in an unfathomable

mystery. But the great characterising feature of the new Dispensation is the full orb'd glory of God manifest in flesh—fully revealed to men. The more than 300 descriptive texts in the Old Testament centre and circle in the Lord Jesus Christ. What a Person! Little wonder that the sacred page glows in its revealing light of Jesus.

The four Evangelists were commissioned by the Holy Spirit to write the *actual* life of Christ—the most marvellous life ever lived. It is a perfectly human yet entrancing life. One of absolute holiness, of exquisite tenderness, of profoundest depths of compassion, of deathless love of infinite grace, of inflexible righteousness, of patience, of meekness, of gentleness, of conscious dignity. Infants nestled in His sheltering arms. One who had been justly rebuked rested his head on His bosom. At His touch, sin fled, while sinners worshipped at His feet. He was the most accessible of men. His charm of manner begat confidence in the hearts of the sinful depraved. He was at home in the company of sinners.

His Holiness was Not Repellent, not of the monastic or convent type. He sang, He wept, He rejoiced, He prayed, He suffered, He hungered, He thirsted, He toiled as other men, yet not a trace of selfishness in all He did. He fed thousands, yet never wrought a miracle to satisfy His own needs. “Show me a penny” was the expression of His poverty, yet He made many rich. In life and in death the cry of need ever brought immediate and effectual help.

All this and more, combined with every moral beauty, in constant hourly exercise for more than 30 years was the actual life of the Son of God—a life without a flaw, without a taint. We can but say: “He was a Man amongst men!” Yea, “*altogether lovely.*” In nature He was unassailable—for Satan, the prince of this world, could find nothing in Him—nothing but Divine perfection and human excellence (John 14.30).

In the varied activities of life, He was Beyond Reproach—His very enemies being witness—“Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (John 8.46) is a challenge unanswered then as now. Such and more than pen can trace, tongue can tell, or mind conceive

was the life lived on earth by the One Who in His mind Person was and is—

SON OF GOD in Divine Greatness.

SON OF MAN in Matchless Perfect Humanity.

SON OF DAVID in Royal Right and Glory.

SON OF ABRAHAM the Depository of Promise.

SON OF THE FATHER in Personal Intimacy and Relationship.

And by One Who is worshipped by many angels round about the Throne, by the living creatures, and by the Elders . . . saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Rev. 5.11,12). By Grace, and by Grace alone, you and I will be there. HALLELUJAH.

WITH AND WITHOUT HANDS

by J. Heading, Aberystwyth

Read Isaiah 66.1-2; Daniel 2.45; Mark 14.58; John 2.19; Acts 7.47-50; 17.24; Hebrews 9.11,24.

Materialism, and hence ritualism, marks Christendom. In the Old Testament, the tabernacle constructed by Moses and his fellow-workers as well as the temple built by Solomon and the thousands of his workers were material structures. They were made with hands motivated by devoted hearts. One was simple so that it could be transported through the wilderness and the other was large and rigid, permanently in Jerusalem. In both cases, there was an elaborate system of ceremony associated with the service of tabernacle and temple. This ceremony was given by God, and was a prophetic picture of many aspects of the person and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, then yet to come into the world. These ceremonies were also carried out with hands, and as long as faithful priests and Levites were obedient to the revealed will of God then He too was satisfied with this ceremony, since He could look beyond the material shadows and see His Son and His sacrifice then many hundreds of years in the future.

But as soon as the Son had come, and had died on the cross,

God had no more need of a ceremonial system based on material objects made with hands. particularly since Herod's temple in Jerusalem had no divinely-given authority for its building and existence, and since the priests had over the centuries added many things to the divinely-ordained ceremony, these additions being merely the work of hands with no spiritual meaning. However, though ceremony should have ceased there and then, how religious men loved to perpetuate materialistic ceremony! At such a stage, ceremony became ritual, and has remained like that over all subsequent centuries. Today, Christendom is largely concerned with things made with hands, and hence the Lord Jesus is displaced from His proper position as made without hands. We think of Cathedrals and so-called church buildings which merely mimic Solomon's materialistic temple. There are also to be found altars, altar rails and veils, together with priests and their garments, being but copies of the Old Testament priests and their robes. There are also bishops and archbishops that are merely copies of the high priests in the Judaistic era. Choirs and mass-singing, religious festivals, candles and bells merely reproduce Old Testament concepts. The concept of a New Testament church or assembly is thereby discarded entirely. Judaism with a thin veneer of Christianity is still Judaism and not Christianity at all. An attempt to use moral teaching of the Lord Jesus or of His apostle Paul is, under these circumstances, a mere excursion back to the law, and does not lead to salvation by grace which is foreign to all religion made with hands.

The subject is therefore an important one for believers today because even in Paul's time, there were those who were seeking to return law and ceremony, as in the Epistles to the Galatians and to the Hebrews. Paul declared that he would not build again the things that he had destroyed (Gal. 2.18); the things made with hands that had once been gain to him he now counted loss for Christ (Phil. 3.3-8). It is good when a believer today can look over his past life, recalling when he discarded a religion made with hands, and embraced truth made without hands.

We shall examine the subject from the Scriptures, based on the references given at the head of this article.

Throughout Old Testament times, God knew that the old

“made with hands” economy would be replaced by a “made without hands” economy. After the exodus, He had said, “let them make me a sanctuary; that I may well dwell among them” (Exod. 25.8). Solomon began to see that a change was coming, “will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?” (1 Kings 8.27). Later, He confirmed this through the prophet Isaiah, saying, “The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: Where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been” (Isa. 66.1-2). It may not be quite obvious that these two verses refer to the change, but Stephen quoted this in Acts 7.48-50 as a proof that the most High does not dwell “in temples made with hands”.

The Jewish Sanhedrin could not tolerate the thought that their cherished centre of religion would no longer be recognized by God. They has accused Stephen of stating that “Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place” (Acts 6.14). Admittedly the Lord had taught that not one stone would remain upon another (Matt. 24.2), and that the city would also suffer the same fate (Luke 19.44). But this would be done by the Jews’ enemies, namely, the Romans. Whatever Stephen had said, the Jews twisted his words so as to give them another meaning. Consequently, in his final address to the Sanhedrin, Stephen traced the history of Israel from Abraham to Solomon, showing their resistance to the Holy Spirit. He ended his historical survey with the proof that the most High did not dwell in temples made with hands. In other words, God had no interest whatsoever in man-made religious ritual, such as Herod’s temple and its service. These men had been murderers of the Just One, in keeping with the Lord’s own words, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise up” (John 2.19).

The Lord said this in the temple courts at the beginning of His ministry. They did not understand, neither did His disciples. men thought materialistically, thinking of the forty-six years already spent on the building of Herod’s temple. Such a building made with hands was built entirely of stones, metals and dead wood; men can only build with dead things, or with material that has never possessed life. How unlike the Lord Jesus. In Him was life; He was “a tender plant, and as a root” (Isa. 53.2), and He was the

true vine. He indeed died on the cross, but His was eternal life, and so in stating that the temple would be raised up, "He spake of the temple of His body" (John 2.21). Truly His holy body had originally been made without hands, for the conception was miraculous, and His resurrection also was without hands, for this had been a divine work, manifested firstly by an angel opening the tomb for women and men to see it empty.

However, when the Lord stood in His perfection before the Jewish Sanhedrin at His trial three years later, false witnesses were able to quote and to misquote His words, saying, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands" (Mark 14.58). This witness was false since they accused Him of stating that He would destroy the temple (instead of themselves), and they added the words "made without hands". How correct they were, indeed, with this latter phrase, but correct statements can be made when falsehood is intended! The suggested reasoning in their minds is that, because "three days" had been stated by the Lord, therefore a miracle had to be involved for a huge temple structure to be rebuilt in so short a space of time, and consequently it had to be "without hands", which of course they did not believe. So to them this false witness appeared to be a very suitable subject to bring up at the Lord's trial.

Certainly Stephen's true testimony did not convince the Jews; it just brought out their hatred. Neither did Paul's testimony convince Gentile unbelievers in Athens. Their city was full of idols and temples made with hands; this was the substance of their false religion. Paul had to stress that God who created the world and all things in it did not dwell "in temples made with hands" (Acts 17.24), and that He was not worshipped "with men's hands", namely with man-made idolatrous ritual. Paul could have said the same thing in Ephesus later, concerning "the temple of the great goddess Diana" (Acts 19.27). Paul's words merely led to mockery. They wanted gold, silver and stone, so the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ was quite foreign to them.

It is sad when believers also need to be reminded of the truth that ritual has no place in their worship, service, lives and testimony. The writer to the Hebrews must have had a heavy heart as he sought to convince the Hebrew Christians that it was useless

to return to ceremony and ritual. The Old Testament ceremony could not accomplish anything spiritual; it could not do anything that the Lord Jesus had come to do through His sacrifice. Thus in chapter 9 we have the Old Testament tabernacle described together with the day of atonement (vv. 1-10). All this was "made with hands". By contrast, "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building" (v.11). He has entered into heaven itself, and the value of His blood shed here on earth speaks infinite things to God in heaven. Verse 11 speaks of His coming, but verse 24 speaks of His going, "Christ is not entered into the Holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us". The reader will see that the spiritual counterpart to the Jewish day of atonement has nothing to do with ceremony and ritual whatsoever. But Christendom will just not see this, and clings to its ritual because of its love of all things material. Clearly believers must watch very carefully, lest they drift unwittingly into materialistic pathways in worship and service. The Father desires worship "in spirit and in truth", namely "without hands". To seek to taste or to experiment with "another field" (Ruth 2.8) is not honouring to the Lord.

The only stones that God is interested in now are firstly the One Living Stone, the Lord Jesus, and secondly the living stones consisting of believers. These from the "spiritual house" where "spiritual sacrifices" are offered (1 Pet. 2.4-5). Nothing "made with hands" exists here, so away with materialism in our concepts of the house of worship. New converts also need to be converted from false ideas and practises, and this process of conversion may take some time, depending on how ingrained the false concepts may be. But Paul was saved from Jewish ritual immediately he was found by the Lord on the Damascus road.

We may conclude by references to the future. After the rapture, materialism will abound. The religion of "Mystery, Babylon the Great" will be solely materialistic in its perpetuation of idolatry. The merchants associated with Babylon will deal in "the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones", followed by a long list of inanimate and animate objects, concluding with the "souls of men" (Rev. 19.11-14). That is the final object of

tempting men with materialism in religion, namely, to gain their souls for Satan.

Politics has also been of a character "made with hands" throughout history. God has allowed it, but has shown its true nature in the book of Daniel. The image in Daniel 2 has consisted of the Kingdoms and leaders of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, and Rome will dominate in the future as far as its nature is concerned. But God will terminate the whole system, when the Kingdom of His Son is established. In the King's dream, there was "a stone cut out without hands" (Dan. 2.34,45) that would destroy the image, and then the stone would become a great mountain to fill the whole earth. This stone will be the Son of man, coming from heaven, a stone made without hands, and hence alone able to deal with the vast Kingdoms of men that are and will be so contrary to the divine will. In the present day, the aspirations of the Lord's people are far from the politics of men, that so obviously has developed as "made with hands". Believers are concerned with the truth "made without hands".

FIVE REVELATIONS GIVEN TO THE APOSTLE PAUL

D. M. Clark (Stoney Creek)

The Apostle Paul was raised up of the Lord to carry the gospel beyond the limits of Judaism. Although he was not the first to carry the message to the Gentiles he was specifically commissioned by the Lord to do so. Acts 9:15-16, "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he (Paul) is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake."

There are five special revelations given to the Apostle from the Lord Jesus. They are included in the "gospel" which he preached and each can be identified as received from the Lord. Gal. 1:11-12. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The purpose of this paper is to consider those revelations.

(1) THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST

That this revelation was of divine origin is learned from this passage in Eph. 3:3-6, "How that by revelation He made known

unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” J.N.D.’s rendering of the sixth verse is helpful too: “That (they who are of) the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of (His) promise in Christ Jesus by the glad tidings.”

The mystery, revealed to Paul, was that Jews and Gentiles alike would be joined together in one body and thereby inherit-in-common all that Christ would bring them into. Each lost their identity in the unity that was to be known as the Body of Christ. They became joint members in the body, for the middle wall of partition had been broken down, through the work of Christ. Eph. 2:14-17.

For the Jew, who had been set apart from all other nations by the covenant that God instituted with them, this was a very difficult truth for them to grasp, and for many impossible. The prophetic scriptures told them that God would ultimately bring all the Gentile nations into subjection under them, e.g. Is. 54:3, and 60:5. What they failed to recognize was God’s timing as to when His kingdom would be established on the earth. They should also have learned, from the scriptures, that God would raise up One from among them Who would be a light to lighten the Gentiles, Isa. 49:6. None other, of course, than the Lord Jesus.

The truth of the mystical Body of Christ had to be a revelation from God to Paul because he testified that his background was not only opposed to Gentiles but also to Christianity. The thought that he, a Jew would ever be joined with Gentiles was absolutely abhorrent to him. Here is what he declared about himself. “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless,” Phil. 3:5-6. Quite clearly it was not of his volition that he would have anything to do with the Gentiles. God had to reveal it to him.

It is true that God will once again take up His earthly people

Israel and establish them on the earth as His chosen people. However we who constitute the Body of Christ will at that time reign with Him over the earth.

This uniting of Jews and Gentiles in One Body now divides the entire population of the earth into one of three positions, as stated in 1 Cor. 10:32, "Give none offence, neither to the *Jews*, nor to the *Gentiles*, nor to *the church of God*." Through faith in the Lord Jesus we become members of the church of God. For those who are not part of His church, God sees such as being either Jews or Gentiles.

(2) THE EXPRESSION OF THE UNITY OF THE BODY

The remembrance of the Lord in the Lord's supper was a further revelation to Paul, as he says in 1 Cor. 11:23-24, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of Me." Note the omission of the word broken, which is not in the original. It tells us that the Lord gave His body for each of us personally. Further it tells us that the loaf of bread, (not individual pieces of wafer) is a statement about the unity of the members into one body. It is the Holy Spirit that unites us into one body. This unity of the Spirit we are to strive to maintain in spite of the disunity seen in Christendom. "Using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace," Eph. 4:3.

When we remember the Lord in His death it is as members of His Body, and we see that expressed in the loaf which also speaks of His own Body given in death for us. 1 Cor. 10:17, "For we being many are one bread (or loaf), and one body: for we all partakers of that one bread (or loaf)."

What a unique privilege we have of gathering together with the Lord's people, as members of His Body, to partake of the loaf and witness to the rest of the world that we are one with Christ!

When the two tribes of Benajamin and Judah were separated from the other tribes in Israel, the table of show bread was maintained in the Temple. On it were twelve loaves, not just two, for under God they were all the children of Jacob. Even so the loaf on the table of remembrance is indicative of the entire body of Christ, though there may be few that actually partake of it.

(3) THE CHANGE

1 Cor. 15:51-52, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The mystery of which Paul speaks is one of God's secrets that was not known but has now been made known to His people.

In the resurrection the saints who had gone to be with the Lord, but whose bodies "sleep", will return with Christ and will be joined to their resurrected bodies, made like Christ's body of glory.

For those of us who remain until his coming we too shall be changed and receive our new bodies. Phil. 3:20, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

(4) THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

1 Thess. 4:15-17, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive (and) remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This further revelation was given to Paul directly from the Lord. What a glorious prospect this is, to know that at the end of life's journey we shall be "with Christ". The Lord graciously has given these truths to us so that we may enjoy them now and have assurance for the future.

(5) THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST OVER ALL

Eph. 1:9 "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." These verses provide us with the key to the Bible.

Here we have the culmination of God's eternal plan revealed to us. Since before the foundation of the world, God's purpose has been the exaltation of His Son as Head over the entire universe. It is true that He is now "by the world rejected" and we share that rejection with Him, however, the enemy has been defeated. He will finally be seen by all as the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

1 Cor. 15:24-25, "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet." And so we enter the eternal state.

* * *

Paul was the man to whom the Lord imparted these wonderful truths. These revelations are intended for our instruction and through them we are given to see beyond our current limited horizons and perceive the final outcome of God's counsels. What a day of rejoicing that will be!

HOME CALL

It is with a sense of sadness that we announce the home call of our dear sister Mrs. E. Hogg, on Saturday, 17th March in her 94th year. For many years she rendered great help to her late husband, John, in the work of this magazine. Even in recent years with failing health and sight she was most anxious to assist in the mailing and distribution of the magazine. She was saved for over 70 years and lived a godly and consistent life, serving God and His people with grace and humility.

Her daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and William Neill continue to serve the Lord in the work of the magazine and prayer for their comfort and sustenance is requested.

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (6)

J. G. Hutchinson (N. Ireland)

I was born at Carryduff, Co. Down in 1920 and my parents were in fellowship in the Lessans assembly from whence my father was commended to the work of the Lord in 1917. When I was one year old we moved to Banbridge.

From earliest days I had desires to be saved. In 1928, while staying with my grandmother at Killynure, I attended meetings conducted by Mr. E. Hughes in Lessans Gospel Hall and would really loved to have been saved but I could not understand it. It was in 1934 that I was saved when Mr. W. Johnston and my father had meetings in a tent at Huntly.

Soon after my conversion the Banbridge assembly took an interest in me and I was baptised and received into the fellowship of the assembly. I well remember Mr. McCabe saying to me, "Jim, we have decided to baptise you and bring you into the assembly. Now this is a big thing for you since it means that from now you will be part and parcel of the assembly, sharing in its privileges and responsibilities."

In 1938 Mr. D. Craig, "Scotch Craig" as he was affectionately known, had ministry meetings in Banbridge. I do not think I will ever forget a Lord's day, when he linked Leviticus 1 with Romans 12. The truth of it reached my heart, The meeting closed that afternoon with singing "What glad returns can I impart for favours so Divine, O take my all, my weary heart and make it only Thine." From that day life was different — I wished to do the will of God, to please and serve Him; but how and where?

In 1941 I went in business to Londonderry city, where the assembly was then large and spiritual. I was made welcome and quickly became involved in its activities, particularly the gospel work in the Sunday School and open air testimony. The conviction was growing with me that God would have me give my life to the work of the gospel. I helped some evangelists and local brethren in meetings in houses, barns and halls and God was pleased to let us see some blessing in salvation. I felt if I was to be engaged in the

Lord's work it was important that I should see His hand working with me.

More than once I was approached by elders in the assembly and asked if I was exercised about full time work but not being sure I was guarded in my reply.

Somehow learning of my thoughts, Mr. James Geddis, who was on furlough from Rhodesia, came to see me and very warmly encouraged me to join him in that land. I gave it much thought and while natural inclinations would have been to go, I had no light or peace of mind about it. My father was very happy about my exercise and encouraged me to consider another field rather than Ireland, but each time I engaged in prayer about the matter Matthew 2.13 came to me in power, "be thou there until I bring thee word". I was convinced then, and still am now, that Ireland should be my field of labour.

Asking for a meeting with the assembly overseers, I put my exercise before them. When I finished I said, "I will leave now and you can discuss the matter." "No," said the oldest man, "the thing proceedeth from the Lord. We will commend you." This they did with the agreement and fellowship of the Banbridge assembly. I would not have been happy to proceed without their approval.

Some days later I went to see the owner of the business where I was local manager, to tell him what I was about to do. Just before entering his office I hesitated and went into a little cloakroom where I pulled out my New Testament and it opened at Acts 16.10, "assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel." Immediately I saw the owner and told him of my decision. "Well," said he, "you have a good position with excellent prospects and there is not much future in what you are going to do." Replying that he and I looked at life from different angles he then said, "yes I know that; if ever you want your job back come to me and you will get it." That was in 1946 and I have not been out of work since! With more to do in the great harvest field, than one will ever accomplish.

When I handed over to the new manager I went home, I'll admit feeling downcast — no job, no money, and my wife expecting our first baby. I went to pray and like balm from heaven came the words of Genesis 15.1, "Fear not, . . . I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." That day in the mid-day mail I received a letter with

five single pound notes and a card to say "a little token of fellowship with you in your new job."

It had been my privilege to labour with quite a number of the Lord's servants, many of them now with the Lord. I treasure their memory and thank God for much I have learned from them. I have travelled a good deal, more than I ever expected to, and I can only speak good of God and His beloved people. In the gospel the Lord has encouraged by blessing the preaching. In six countries abroad, some labour who were saved in meetings I held and others are overseers in local assemblies.

No doubt many feel if they had life to live over again, they would do it differently. If I had the choice I certainly try to do better, but I would by all means do as I did — give my life to the gospel.

Some weeks before he went to be "with Christ," Mr. J. K. Duff said to me, after a gospel meeting, "Jim, if you and I had gone into business and made a million pounds, we would have to leave it all behind. Isn't it nice to have chosen something for God and eternity." That is how I feel still after all these years.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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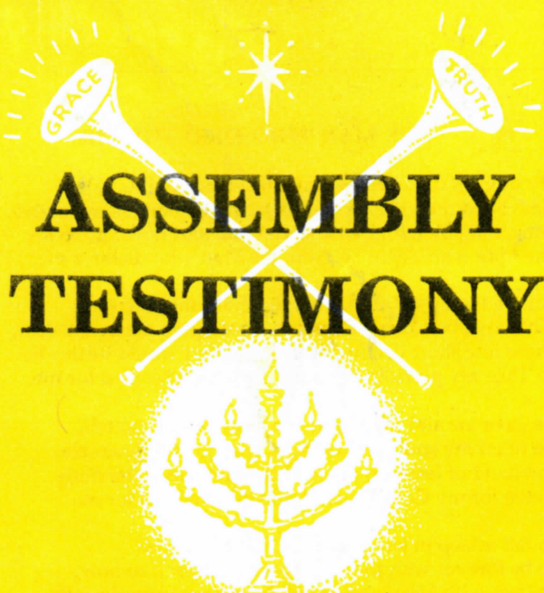
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THE MAN WHO DIED FOR ME

My pilgrim days are waning, the voice of Him I love
Has called me to his presence, to my Father's house above,
Long, long by faith I've known Him, and now I go to see
The Man who sits in Heaven, the Man who died for me.

But ere I left the desert, I longed that I might know
What joy His blessed Presence would give me here below,
These few short fleeting moments, Oh, I would nearer be
To Thee my precious Saviour, the Man who died for me.

He gave me all I asked for; yea more than I can tell,
He filled my soul with rapture, with joy unspeakable,
The hand of Jesus on my soul seemed laid so tenderly,
I have for my Companion the Man who died for me.

To fall asleep in Jesus, 'tis that I think of now,
To be forever with the Lord, before Himself to bow,
Ah! yes with Him who called Zacchaeus from the tree,
With Him who hung upon the cross, the Man who died for me.

To be alone with Jesus Himself to gaze upon;
To see the Man I've read about oft' in the eighth of John,
To leave this scene of sadness my wondrous Lord to see,
The glory of His presence, the Man who died for me.

It is the Man Christ Jesus, with whom I'm going to dwell,
The weary Man of Sychar who sat upon the well,
Whose matchless love filled that poor heart, and gave new eyes
to see
That He was God's anointed One, the Man who died for me.

I'm going to be with Jesus, who in this world of pain
Gave back the widow's only son, outside the gate of Nain,
His heart was moved with pity, His words caused death to flee;
I'm going to see Him as He is, the Man who died for me.

To leave this world that cast Him out and be with Him up
there,
Enjoy His glorious Kingdom where; He the crowns shall wear,
Oh! blessed Man of Sychar, it is Himself to see,
He calls me to His presence, the Man who died for me.

—John McGarvie.

THE BLESSED HOPE

by D. M. MARTIN, Dorset

VII—The Restoration of the Jews

There is nothing more certain from the Word of God than that the Jews, who are now dispersed throughout the world, will be restored to their own land: for, "He that scattered Israel will gather him and keep him" (Jer. 31.10).

Old Testament prophets who prophesied of the Exile, also told of a restoration to Israel. We who are privileged to live in the twentieth century have been privileged also to witness the rebirth of Israel as a nation in 1948. Figures were recently published of the numbers of Jews who returned to Israel from Russia, in recent years the numbers have dwindled from thousands to a few hundred each year. It seems an enigma that the fervour of the first years has lapsed and many Jews have left Israel for other nations.

In the full sense the restoration is yet future. Though the Jews had Jesus' interpretation of the prophecy of Malachi, the disciples asked on the eve of the ascension "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel" (Acts. 1.6) Jesus' answer discourages them from speculation about matters which do not concern them, but, it does not deny that there will be a restoration. The fullest reference come in Acts. 3.19 — Here Peter looks for 'times of refreshing' which he associates with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (verse. 20.) who is in heaven 'until the times of restitution' (that is restoration) of all things! From one point of view the restoration awaits the return of the Lord.

It is true that a small remnant, mainly composed of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin (Ezra. 10.7-9) was permitted to return to Jerusalem during the reign of Cyrus, the account of which we have in Ezra and Nehemiah; but this was in no way a national restoration, nor the full accomplishment of God's purpose, for Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi all prophesied after this period, and speak of the time of national blessings as yet future. (Hag. 2.7-9; Zech. 9-14; Mal.3 & 4.) Indeed from the time of the Zerubbabel return to Jerusalem until the birth of our Lord, so far

from being an independant nation, they were always in subjection to Gentile power. The object of this partial return would seem to have been that Christ might be born among them, according to the predictions of the prophets, and be presented to them as the Messiah. This took place, and the gospel of Matthew, which especially deals with this subject, gives us in full the results. He was utterly rejected. They thus deliberately renounced the hope and glory of their nation, rejected their Messiah in their wicked desire to secure the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth: and from that day to this they have been suffering the consequences of their fearful crime, as outcasts and bye-word, among the nations of the earth.

But God, whatever the sin of His people, cannot deny Himself, and in the death of Him whom His earthly people rejected (for He died for that nation - John. 11.52), He laid the foundation for their future restoration and blessing. The evidence of this is so abundant that it is difficult to know where to begin or end; but a few scriptures may be selected, leaving our readers to trace out the details at their own leisure. (Isa. 11.11,12: 25.6-12: 26: 27.6: 30.15-26: 35.10: 49.8-21: 54: 60: 61. etc..)

The language of Jeremiah is no less distinct; "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgement and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold they shall come, saith the Lord, and they shall no more say, the Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, the Lord liveth which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries where I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." (Jer. 23.7. & 8. Read especially chapters, 30,31 & 33). There is scarcely a prophet, that does not comment upon the subject; and in such plain words that, had not Zion been confounded with the Church, no one could have doubted God's intention towards His earthly people. If, the testimony of the prophets had been less exact, the argument of Paul in Romans 11, should have sufficed to teach us that He will never forgo His purpose of grace and blessing towards the seed of

Abraham, for, after showing that God hath not cast away His people (Israel) He says "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye, should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written. There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Two things, are clear from this scripture; that blessing is reserved for Israel, and that their Deliverer shall come out of Zion; showing that they must be in their own land previously to the blessing here described.

There are, however, several stages in their restoration before this full result spoken of by Paul is reached. A portion will return to Israel in unbelief. This is certain from the fact that Zechariah describes their conversion in the land by the appearing of the Lord. (Zech.12.10-14). While in their unbelief they will build a temple, and seek to restore their sacrificial services; and thereby pave the way for the setting up by the antichrist of the abomination of desolation in the holy place, of which our Lord forewarned His disciples in (Matt. 24.15. See also Rev. 11.1,2. & Isa. 66.1-6) There will be, however, a remnant in the midst of their unbelieving brethren who will stay themselves upon God, who not yet knowing their Messiah, will cry to the Lord in their distress, and will be preserved from the abominations into which the mass of the nation will fall. These are the elect remnant whose experiences are so largely developed in the Psalms, and in some of the prophets.

The ten tribes thus brought back, we are told, that they will be united together with Judah under the happy and glorious sway of their Messiah; "they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more," and that God's servant "David (the true David, Christ) shall be their Prince for ever". (Ezek. 37.21-28) We see that God has not forgotten His covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17.4-8) for while Israel failed in responsibility, and forfeited all claim upon God, yet He in faithfulness to His own word, and in the wonders of His grace, will do all that He has spoken. And the time draws near when Israel, once again restored to their own land, "shall blossom and bud,

and fill the face of the world with fruit". (Isa. 27.6) For "thus saith the Lord: If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then I will cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them". (Jer. 33.25,26).

"THE EPISTLE BY JAMES"

by E. R. Bower.

Chapter Two—A Living Faith PROVED by works.

vv.1-13. "Assembly" (v.2.) - synagogue; "evil thoughts (v.4) - evil reasonings. This rather lengthy section in which we see again a hint of the Pharisee is really self-explanatory. It is faith in practice; faith relative to others; a name to live. The gaudy garments and the partiality shown indicates a superiority in social standing; the "all things common" of Acts 1 has been left behind. The teachings of the Law had been (conveniently?) forgotten. See Lev. 19.15; Col. 3.1-17. The obvious and essential lesson of these verses is that we are all one in our Lord; one body. (John 17). There should be (but there are) no distinctions of any kind other than in function. Where ever we go we see obvious distinctions in our churches - as distinct from the church. Cliques do exist despite the Royal Law (Lev. 19.13). To break the Law is sin. Again we find the hidden warning against the dangers to be found in riches, either in their possession or in the desire. One-upmanship and keeping up with the Jones's is just as much a disease among the believers of this generation, as it is in the worldling. See Matt. 13.19,23; Mark 10.17-23. Do we need reminding of the "Go, and do thou likewise" of Him who is exemplified in the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37)? James is very strong here (v.7). Blasphemy is not always found in words! Respect of persons is sin, and we are convicted already. Blasphemy? Working Sin? Convicted? "Whosoever (and how wide in its application this word is!) shall keep the whole Law, and yet stumble (see 3.2.) in one

point, he is guilty of all" (v.10). See Matt. 5.19. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another," (John 4.11), and love shows no partiality (1 Cor.13). If the Law places a responsibility upon us, how much more the law of liberty (v.12); the perfect or complete law (1.25). "Speak . . . and do, as those ABOUT TO BE JUDGED by the law of freedom." This is the judgement without mercy. James has particularized some essential works and the lessons to be learnt from them, but he now leads on to some reasons why works are so necessary to faith.

v.14. A workless faith shows no profit; faith alone will not save him from judgement by the law of freedom. If faith shows no mercy, judgement will also be without mercy. See Matt. 5.7; 23.23-24;

vv.15-21. Works are proof of faith. James repeats his question, "What profit?". Words unsupported by deeds are valueless; faith unsupported by works is dead; dead for lack of support. Cf. Lev. 19.9-10. James' readers are reminded of their daily prayer, the Schema (Deut. 6.4-5). "You believe that God is One; this is good, but the demons also believe and shudder." (Lit. "their hair stands on end in fear"). The demons believe, but is their 'believing' faith? To express ourselves as believers is vain, empty and unless supported by the outworking of faith. A workless faith is, as some texts have it, idle. How apt! As with the Law, so with faith; it is the DOERS who are just before God (Lev. 19.37; Rom. 2.13). Doing, however, must be activated by love, and not fear. See Rom. 3.27-4.25, where the Apostle speaks of faith outside or part from the Law. "Let us be honest with ourselves. It is easy to humble ourselves before God and use pious phrases in prayer, but humility before other people is the evidence, and the only real evidence of our humility before God." (Alan Redpath). Another writer (C. C. Kerr) says, "Real, practical, working faith included consecration. Consecration and faith may be two ideas separable in thought, but in practice they are both to be embodied in the same individual. Many disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ have never practically reckoned with the fact that Christ is Lord as well as Saviour". "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling".

vv.22-23. Works perfect or complete and complement our faith. Abraham's faith was evidenced by his works. Show me!

vv.24-26. Works quicken or make alive, faith. The two persons named here are illustratives of faith's outworking, but they could not be more apart in their social structure. Abraham, 'friend of God' Rahab the 'harlot'. Works are the kiss of life to a comatose faith. "Belief and action cannot be separated..true faith is always a working faith." In short, works demonstrate the vitality, the practical living out of an inward faith.

VITAL VERITIES (9)

by E. W. ROGERS

The Atonement — Part 1

Under the item of "Atonement" in a famous Encyclopaedia the following remarks appear:—

"Atonement is the name given in (English) Christian theology to the work of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners. The word occurs only once in the New Testament (A. V. Rom. 5.11 and there the more correct rendering is "reconciliation" as in the R. V.); another important Biblical term is propitiation. It is common, however, in the sacrificial language of the Old testament law; and the New Testament looks back to that language when it treats the death of Christ as a sacrifice—and an atoning sacrifice."

This statement is good.

What the "work" is to which the comment refers, whether it is His life, or His death only, or both combined, we shall ascertain later, but whatever the way, the Person who effected atonement is our Lord Jesus Christ.

The passage alluded to, Romans 5.11, is interesting as showing an earlier use of the word "atonement." Actually the word rendered in the A. V. " should read "reconciliation" (as given in the R. V. and all good translations). The matter is not disputable, though it is interesting to enquire why the scholarly translators of the A. V. used the word "atonement" there instead of "reconciliation." When they translated, the word etymologically meant at-

one-ment (a meaning which it does not possess to-day) and it will readily be seen that since "at-one-ment" was equivalent to "reconciliation", the translation then made was correct. The English language has changed in its meaning of this word, as in the case with other words, since the production of the A. V.

In confirmation of this we may cite Archbishop Trench:— ". . . from the fact that the word 'atonement' by which our translators have rendered 'katalage' on one of the four occasions upon which it occurs in the New Testament, namely Rom. 5.11, has gradually shifted its meaning. It has done this so effectually that if the translation were now for the first to be made, and words to be employed in their present sense and not in their past, it is plain that it would be a much fitter rendering of 'Hilamos,' the notion of propitiation which we shall find the central one of this word, always lying in our present use of 'atonement.' It was not so once; when our translation was made it signified, as innumerable examples prove, 'reconciliation,' or the making up of a foregoing enmity; all its uses in our early literature justifying the etymology now sometimes called into question, that 'atonement' is 'at-one-ment' and therefore — reconciliation; and consequently then, although not now, the proper rendering of 'katalage.'"

Indeed, a reference to a good dictionary will show the verb "atone" to be compounded of "at" and "one" often found in such phrases as "to be at one" — "to set at one," and its meaning is given as "to agree or accord; to make reparation, amends, or satisfaction as for an offence or crime; to expiate; to answer or make satisfaction for; to reconcile as parties at variance."

The reader has but to spend a few moments in considering these various meanings in relation to the Cross of Christ to discover that a wondrous work it is: it is the basis of the reconciliation of the sinner to God; it is the means by which the damage of sin has been undone; where satisfaction has been made both for God and for the believer; it is there where expiation for man's guilt was accomplished; and the Sinless Lamb of God answered for, and made satisfaction in respect of, the guilty and condemned sinner.

But it is not from a word dictionary that we can discover the Bible doctrine of the Atonement, though it is ever necessary to be assured that we rightly understand the meaning of any English term we employ.

A comprehensive view of the matter is to be obtained by a consideration of the various Hebrew and Greek words employed, and the way they have been translated into English, and the circumstances of their occurrence.

This we will do, but before embarking thereon it may be observed that, perhaps the

CLEAREST TYPE OF ATONEMENT

is to be found in Gen. 3. where the word is not actually used. The guilty pair has attempted to cover themselves with aprons of fig leaves, which covering was both inadequate and corruptible; but God in His mercy replaced them with coats of skin, which were both sufficient and durable. From whence was the "skin" obtained? Was it not the result of the death of an innocent victim which occurred in the interests of the guilty pair? Here is substitution and atonement.

For the Hebrew word "Kaphar" translated "to make atonement" actually means "to cover," and wherever atonement is found in the Bible a covering of one sort or another is in view. In Genesis 3. the "covering" was of man's nakedness from the searching eye of a holy God, and of the person from the wrath of a righteous God. This covering was provided by death and that the death of the guiltless. Could type of the cross and its wondrous issue be clearer?

But a little closer investigation reveals the fact that this Hebrew word "Kaphar" is used in a variety of ways in the Old Testament.

In Gen. 6. 14 this verb occurs—

TRANSLATED BY THE WORD "PITCH"

and the circumstances are illuminative considered typically. The "windows of the heavens were opened" and "the fountains of the deep were broken up" and the ark was exposed to the fury of both. But Noah and his, inside that which by faith he had "pitched," were effectively covered from both. The "windows of heaven" doubtless tell of the wrath of God, and the "fountains of the deep" speak of the malice of men. The ark speaks of Christ, in Whom all who by faith place themselves are effectively covered. He was exposed to both.

This same verb occurs again in Gen. 32. 20, "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me."

THE VERB "APPEASE" IS

the English translation of the Hebrew word "kaphar." It has been rightly observed that whilst we cannot over-estimate the love of God, oftentimes we have under-estimated the anger of God. He is "angry with the wicked every day," and He looks not indifferently at man's disobedience to His laws, defiance of His claims, and repudiation of His rule. It angers Him. Something of that anger against sin is to be witnessed at the Cross, when He Who was God's greatest delight was forsaken by Him, and His sword was unsheathed against Him. If, then, God is angry at sin, how can the sinner be covered therefrom? Or, how can God be appeased?

What—to use Jacob's word—"present" can we bring? Surely no better "present can be brought than the antitype of that which Abel brought (the word "offering" in Gen. 4. 3 is the same Hebrew word as that rendered "present" in Gen. 32. 20) namely, our Lord Jesus Christ in the efficacy of His death.

Another English translation of

THE WORD "KAPHAR" IS "RANSOM,"

found in such phrases as that of Job, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom," and again, "Because there is wrath beware, lest He take thee away then a great ransom cannot deliver thee," and again, "No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him." It is this word that is used in connection with the half shekel of silver paid by all Israel as a "ransom" for them, calling to mind Peter's famous passage "Ye have not been redeemed with corruptible things such as silver or (even to go on a higher plane) gold, but with blood, the precious blood of Christ." In all of these instances the thought of Judgement obtains and a costly covering against it. So too, the death of Christ who gave Himself a "ransom" for all is an effective covering against the Judgement of God in the case of all who believe.

Light is thrown on this word by considering Exod. 21. 30. In the case of the owner of an ox "which was wont to push with his horns in time past," he is held responsible for the death of a man killed by his ox. The ox is to be stoned and the owner thereof is to be put to death. But "if there be laid upon him a sum of money

(the phrase 'sum of money' representing the Hebrew word Kaphar—covering, or atonement) then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him." That sum of money becomes the covering or protection of his life. It is a ransom or an atonement given to the one who has been wronged in lieu of the life of the one who was guilty.

Then too, this word "kaphar" is frequently translated by the
ENGLISH WORD "ATONEMENT"

Why did the translators translate this word so, since, as we have already seen, when the Authorised Version was produced the word atonement meant at-one-ment? Surely the reason is, that the translators mentally argued that he who was covered from God's judgement must be at-one with God, and in consequence they put the result (at-one-ment) instead of naming the cause (viz. covering). Take but one of a multitude of instances, Lev. 1. 4. "And it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." This might better read "And it shall be accepted for him to cover him." The victim dies in his stead and the offerer is covered. He is at one with God since the substitute offered has been accepted.

Another translation is by

THE WORD "SATISFACTION"

found in Num. 35.31. "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer." Nothing that the criminal might do or pay was to be accepted in lieu of the victim. Life for life. The murderer himself must die. What a contrast when at Calvary Barabbas, a murderer, was spared, the Central Man being accepted for him as a "satisfaction." The passage cited from Numbers is Law. This incident from the Gospels is grace—(to be continued).

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In every desert of calamity God has an oasis of comfort.

We invite defeat by forgetting what we should remember and remembering what we should forget.

Only the fear of God can banish the fear of men.

Quiet hours with God build up resources for future emergencies.

What we call adversity . . . God calls opportunity; What we call tribulation . . . God calls growth.

—Anthony Orsini, Florida, U.S.A.

The Millennium — (7)

by J. E. TODD

The Kingdom

Mankind's greatest affront to their Creator has been the rejection and murder of His Son. 'Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together' (Acts 4:25-27, quoting Psa. 2:1-2). The great purpose of the millennium is to nullify this supreme insult to the majesty of the Father and the Son. 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. 2:9-11). The millennial reign of Christ will ridicule the arrogant rebellion of the human race against their almighty Maker, 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision' (Psa. 2:4, note the context).

In His foreknowledge God promised to Abraham that He would have descendants who would form an earthly nation for the Messiah (Gen. 15:5-6). God promised a land for them to live in (Psa. 105:9-11). Also a king of David's line to rule over them (2 Sam. 7:18-29). The nation of Israel still exists 4,000 years after the promise. They have now, in this generation, returned to that land after an absence of nearly 2,000 years. The King has been raised from the dead and lives in the power of an immortal life for 2,000 years (Heb.7:16). The conditions are fulfilled ready for the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What will be the characteristics of the millennial reign? The prophecies in the Psalms, such as 2, 72, 110 and 132, give us glimpses of its main features.

Firstly, it will be universal in extent. 'Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession' (Psa. 2:8). 'He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth' (Psa. 72:8). The four universal empires of Daniel's visions (chapter 2 and 7), which were Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, were only universal in the limited sense of the then known world. But the Lord's dominion will control the entire globe. 'And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth' (Dan. 2:35, see also verses 44 and 45). It is only in the twentieth century that this world's communication technology would enable the entire globe to be governed from one centre. 'For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation' (Psa. 132:13).

Second, it will be a reign of peace and prosperity. 'In his days shall the righteous flourish; and the abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth' (Psa. 72:7). 'May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruits be like Lebanon; and may men blossom fourth from the cities like the grass of the field!' (Psa. 72:16 R.S.V.). Military forces and wars will be abolished, for the nations of the world will be as one nation under one ruler. 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever' (Rev. 11:15). Satan's rule over the nations will be abolished, 'That he should deceive the nations no more' (Rev. 20:3). The problems of pollution, overpopulation, famine, disease and poverty will be solved by divine wisdom (Psa.72).

Third, it will be a reign of justice. Sin will not be eradicated from the human heart, but the human race will be under an all-wise and all-powerful discipline. 'Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron' (Rev. 12:5, see also Psa. 2:9, Rev. 2:27 and 19:15). Crime and injustice will be severely curbed, but human sin will fuel a final rebellion (Rev. 20: 7-10).

Fourth, the millennial kingdom will endure until the end of the world. The Lord Jesus Christ will rule over the earth until it passes away. 'From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away' (Rev. 20:11 and

21:1, see also Psa. 72:5, Jer. 31:35-36 and Luke 21:33).

In the purpose of God, as defined in scripture, the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ is the climax of the world history, but even that is but the prelude to the Lord's eternal reign over the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1 to 22:5). As the apostle Peter expressed it, 'We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness' (2 Pet. 3:13)—(concluded).

THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAMMON

by the Late W. J. McClure

"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of the unrighteousness; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into eternal tabernacles."—Luke 16. 9, R.V.

We remember when this verse presented a great difficulty to us. We were not able to reconcile what it seemed to imply, with the blood and the blood alone being our title to heaven, for undoubtedly "the eternal tabernacles" and heaven are one and the same thing. Whatever it might mean, we assuredly know that our works had nothing whatever to do with getting to heaven. The help which we got we now seek to pass on to others. Our Lord had just delivered on the parable of the Unjust Steward, and the exhortation to His own is based upon the parable. The steward had just received notice, that his services as a steward were no longer needed. This seemed to be something which he considered as unlikely to happen, and he had not prepared for it, by purchasing an annuity, and now he is in a dilemma and proposes to himself the question, "What shall I do?" A bright thought struck him. He was yet in charge of his master's goods. Why not by means of them make friends who will receive him into their houses when he leaves his present position? So calling one of his master's debtors unto him, he enquired, "How much owest thou my Lord?" The debtor replied, "A hundred measures of oil."

“Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty.” Then another is asked the same question, and he says, “An hundred measures of wheat.” “Take thy bill and write fourscore.” Now for this liberality with what was not his own he counts on them taking him into their homes.

This forms a text, so to speak, from which the Lord speaks to His own people. He uses this man’s action as an illustration of what believers ought to do. Like that steward they are entrusted with what does not belong to them; all belongs to Him. But what was unrighteous in that steward, will be the fruit of grace in the believer now. It was self interest that moved that man, it will require grace to lead the believer to act thus.

But to return to our verse. How can we make friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness. And how do they receive us into eternal tabernacles? We shall just use two illustrations, though many more may suggest themselves to the reader. A district where there has been no simple gospel preaching, is laid on the heart of some servant of Christ. But there will be considerable expense connected with preaching there. Some of the Lord’s steward’s hear of what is on that brother’s heart, and without any appeal on his part, the money necessary is forwarded. The result is that a number get saved. Their joy and gratitude to that brother, for bringing the message of life to them, is unbounded. But he might tell them, “It is not me you have to thank, but so and so; their fellowship made it possible for me to come.” Had they the opportunity, they most surely would thank that one. Take the other case: A child of God, old and infirm, lacks many comforts that a little money could procure, but he has not that little. Some steward of the Lord’s money hears of the case, and ministers to it. Some sunshine has been brought into a drab life, the burden eased, and perhaps no chance has ever occurred of the two meeting. Time passes on and the steward goes home to heaven. Some of those helped have gone before, and as this dear steward arrives, there is a warm greeting for him; the friends made by the unrighteous mammon, are delighted at this, their first opportunity of thanking the one who had been used in bringing blessing to them, and of welcoming them to the mansions of light. Were this not so, then the believer would know less, and be less grateful in heaven than on earth. But, says one, “We shall be so occupied

with Christ, we'll not think of one an other." Who is most grateful to the one whom God has made an instrument of blessing to them? Surely it is the one most occupied with the Lord. We'll ever praise Him as the source, but we'll thank believers who have been the channel of His bounties.

In view of that time, let us ask our hearts, which will in the end yield most joy, squandering it on ourselves, or making friends for eternity by means of it?

The Lord follows up this injunction with three very telling comparisons. First, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (ver. 10). We believe the contrast here is mainly between God's truth and worldly means. Gold is not much in God's sight, though it is the big thing with men. But there is the other in it also. The one who will not be faithful with pence or dimes would not be faithful with pounds or dollars. He who makes poverty an excuse for not giving according to his ability, would not give of his affluence. God's Word is right, and again and again we have seen it confirmed.

2nd. "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches." (the knowledge of God). (ver.11). The low state of intelligence in the knowledge of God, which is so manifest today, is, we believe, explained here. God tests His people in the lesser things, and He certainly will not commit the greater things to those who fail in the lesser.

How are we to understand the words "true riches?" Just this way, the riches of earth, the unrighteous mammon, is not true or real. Take a very old testimony from the wise man. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven" (Prov. 23. 5). Paul speaks of them as "uncertain riches" (1 Tim. 6. 17). If there is one thing that both the church and the world have been learning of recent years, it is the truth of the Word of God as to riches. Many believers regarded themselves as on "easy street," and all at once stocks dropped, the bottom fell out of business, and banks failed. The only solid comfort for the believer who has means is to regard himself and herself as just a

steward of what belongs to God, thus he can look up and say, "My God, all is thine, keep it that it may be used in Thy blessed work." He can guard what is His.

3rd. "And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who will give you that which is your own?" (ver. 12). I think that this is the most solemn of the three comparisons. "Another man's." And who is that man? Jesus. The Lord Jesus holds all by creation right (John 1. 3). Also by redemption right (Matt. 13. 44). No matter what we may possess, whether acquired by our own industry, or coming to us as a legacy, all, all, belongs to the Lord Jesus. It is sometimes in the heart of the child of God to speak like Nabal in 1 Sam. 25. 11, "My bread, my water, my flesh, my shearers.' But when David, who had the right to some of those good things which Nabal holds, asks for a present, his claims are ignored. How very differently David speaks to God, in 1 Chron. 29 14. "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

"Your own," Only the rewards we may win, and which we shall obtain at the Judgement Seat of Christ will be our own, to hold and enjoy forever, in contradistinction to our stewardship, which death or the coming of the Lord must end. And that end may be soon, and the words may be spoken of us, "Give account of thy stewardship." May this thought stir us up to diligence. Surely it were but common honesty to be faithful in its discharge.

It is our thought that the Lord meant most of our stewardship to be transacted while in the body, according to that word in 2 Cor. 5. 10. "Deeds done in the body." But in some cases at least, much will remain to be disposed of by will. I have tried to imagine an angel present at the reading of the will of some departed saint.. He would hear the names of various ones, closely or remotely related, and the amount left to each. At the close he might say, The nearest of kin has been forgotten. The nearest of Kin. Who is that? The Lord Jesus. Oh, but He is not in need. No, not personally, but what about his work? In order to have a church to share His throne, He stooped from glory to the Cross of Calvary. The work of gathering out that church is now engaging Him more than all else in this world. So true is this, that He assures

those he has sent forth on that work, that He is with them all the age, or till the church complete. How it must gladden His heart to see a saint, who has been a fellow helper in that work in life, making provision for its continuance in death. On the other hand, can we doubt that it grieves Him to see one who has tasted of His love, leaving the world, thinking of relatives, near and remote, some of whom are unsaved, and so far as any provision for the work, so dear to his heart, His name is not in the will, to the extent of a penny.

Whether it be during the course of life, or making provision at death to show fellowship in the work of gathering out and ministering to the church, there is a word both glad and solemn in 2 Cor. 9. 6. "But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Take a parable of two farmers. One looks at his seed. He says, "it is good seed, but I'll not put much in the ground, just a few handfuls; of course in the harvest there will be a big increase. I shall have the rest of the seed ground and it will make some nice cakes, which I can enjoy now." So he scatters a few handfuls. The other farmer says, "the harvest is sure, and I want a large crop," so he sows bushels where his neighbour sows handfuls. The harvest comes and he has a large crop; the yield is an hundredfold.

The other man has a crop, but Oh, what a disappointment it is to him. He says it is not worth while putting the reaper in. Just scattering stalks, which from the fact that they were alone, exposed them to the effects of wind and weather, whereas the other man's crop being so heavy, each stalk had mutual protection of the others. Each man got just what he went in for. 2 Cor. 9. 6 is a principle that will always hold good.

Which farmer would you, dear believer, like to imitate? Do you wish to save seed and spoil the harvest? But the seed is not saved when held back. It will be according to that little verse.

"There was a man, though some did count him mad,
The more he gave away, the more he had."

This will be no enigma to the child of God, who has learned the truth, that what is given to God is just "laid up," banked, not lost.—(*Reprinted from Believer's Magazine*).

The Secret of Effectual Service for God

By The late George Muller.

We have, through the Lord's goodness, been permitted to enter upon another year, and the minds amongst us will no doubt be occupied with plans for the future, and the various spheres of service in which, if our lives be spared, we shall be engaged.

The welfare of our families, the prosperity of our business, our work and service for Lord, may be considered the most important matters to be attended to; but, according to my judgement, the most important point to be attended to is this—*Above all things, see it that your souls are happy in the Lord.*

I—Acquaintance.

Other things may press upon you; the Lord's work, even, may have urgent claims upon your attention; but it is of supreme and paramount importance that you should seek, above all other things, to have your souls truly happy in God Himself. Day by day seek to make this the most important business of your life. This has been my firm and settled conviction for the last five-and-thirty years. For the first four years after my conversion I knew not its vast importance; but now, after much experience, I specially commend this point to the notice of my younger brethren and sisters in Christ. The secret of all true effectual service is—joy in God, and having *experimental acquaintance and fellowship with God himself.*

II—The Scriptures.

But in what way shall we attain to this settled happiness of soul? How shall we learn to enjoy God? How obtain such an all-sufficient soul-satisfying portion in Him as shall enable us to let go the things of this world as vain and worthless in comparison? I answer, This happiness is to be obtained through the study of the Holy Scriptures. God has therein revealed Himself unto us in thy face of Jesus Christ.

In the Scriptures, by the power of the Holy Ghost, He makes Himself known unto our souls. Remember, it is not a god of our

thoughts; or our own imaginations, that we need to be acquainted with; but the God of the Bible, our Father, who has given the Lord Jesus to die for us. Him should we seek intimately to know, according to the revelation He has made of Himself in His own most precious Word.

Our souls should feed upon the word. We should read it—not for others, but for ourselves; all the promises, the encouragements, the warnings, the exhortations, the rebukes, should be taken home to our own bosoms. Especially let us remember, not to neglect any portion of the Bible: it should be read regularly *through*. To read favourite portions of the Scriptures, to the exclusion of other parts, is a habit to be avoided. The whole Divine Volume is inspired, and by stages should be read regularly through.

But to read the Bible thus is not enough; we must seek to become intimately and experimentally acquainted with Him whom the Scriptures reveal, with the Lord Jesus, who has given Himself to die in our room and stead. Oh, what an abiding, soul-satisfying portion do we possess in Him!

III—Obedience.

But another point here needs especially to be noticed: it is that we seek habitually to carry out what we know; to act up to the light that we have received; then more will assuredly be given. But if we fail to do this, our light will be turned into darkness. It is of the deepest moment that we walk with a sincere, honest, upright heart before the Lord. If evil be practised, or harboured and connived at, the channel of communication between our souls and God (for the time being) will be cut of. It is all-important to remember this. Infirmities and weaknesses will cleave to us as long as we remain in the body; but this is a different thing from willingly *allowing evil*. I must be able, with a true, honest, upright heart, to look my heavenly Father in the face, to say, "Here I am, blessed Lord; do with me as Thou wilt."

IV—Stewardship.

Then let us remember that we are His stewards. Our time, our health, our strength, our talents, our all, are His, and His alone. Let us seek to remember this, and carry it out this year, and then what happy Christians shall we all be! It is a Divine principle,

“To him that hath shall more be given” (Mark 4.25); and as assuredly as we seek to make good use of that which is confided to us, more will be imparted. We shall be used of the Lord, and shall become increasingly happy in His own most blessed service.

Brethren, we have only one life—one brief life; let us seek, with renewed purpose of heart, to consecrate that one life wholly to the Lord—day by day to live for God, and to serve Him with our body, soul, and spirit, which are His.

Let it be our unceasing prayer, that, as we grow *older*, we may not grow *colder* in the ways of God. As we advance in years, let us not decline in spiritual power; but let us see to it that an increase of spiritual vigour and energy be found in us, that our last days may be our best days.

Our holy faith does not consist in *talking*. “Reality, reality, reality,” is what we want. Let us have *heart-work*; let us be genuine. Brethren, we should live so as to be missed, missed both in the Church and in the world, when we are removed. Oh, how rapidly in time hastening on! We should live in such a manner as that, if we were called hence, our dear brethren and sisters might feel our loss, and from their in most souls exclaim, “Oh that such a one were in our midst again!” We ought to be missed even by the world. Worldly persons should be constrained to say of us, “If ever there was a Christian upon earth, that man was one.”

V—Experience.

In the Scriptures, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, we become acquainted with the character of God. Our eyes are divinely opened to see what a lovely Being God is; and this good, gracious, loving, heavenly Father is ours, our portion for time and for eternity; and our adorable Lord Jesus, who gave Himself for us, is that blessed One to whose image and likeness we shall be conformed; and to serve Him shall be our greatest joy and privilege as long as we remain on earth.

But then, when trial and affliction come, when God deals with us as though He were not the lovely, kind, and gracious Being presented to us in His Word, shall we murmur and despond? Ah, no! Beloved in Christ, let us trust our Heavenly Father; let us, like little children, hang entirely on Him, reposing in the sweet

assurance of His unchangeable, eternal love. Let us remember how He acted towards His saints of old, what His dealings were with them; let us remember what is recorded concerning their history; for now, as He has ever done, God will most surely act according to His word.

This intimate experimental acquaintance with Him will make us truly happy. Nothing else will. If we are not happy Christians (I speak deliberately, I speak advisedly), there is something wrong. If we did not close the past year in a happy frame of spirit, the fault is ours, and ours alone.

In God our Father and the Lord Jesus, our souls have a rich, divine, imperishable, eternal treasure. Let us enter into practical possession of these true riches; yea, let the remaining days of our earthly pilgrimage be spent in an everincreasing, devoted, earnest consecration of our souls to God.

Tried . . .

Found unto Praise

About five or six years ago, when staying in Birmingham for a short time in the service of the gospel, I was asked by some christian friends to go to Dudley, in Worcestershire, to see Robert P., a great invalid, a Christian. I consented to do so, and shall never, I think, forget my visit. It has been my lot in former days to see very much suffering in connection with the most painful diseases; I have seen the poor body tortured and racked by pain and anguish that neither the pen or tongue of man could describe; I have seen limbs distorted and certain organs destroyed or rendered useless in one or other poor patient by painful diseases: but I doubt if I ever saw (save perhaps in one case) such an instance of accumulated sufferings of the most terrific kind in any one person, as I found in R.P. At the time of my visit he was 38 years of age, and had been ill for 18 years. He evidently had been a large, fine man; but to the eye of nature it was pitiable to see the "outward man" as I saw him. He was bent down almost double, his face turned in toward his chest, with his chin pressing hard

upon his breastbone, so that for two years he had seen nothing but the light. His jaws were so locked that he could only take food the thickness of a penny, which had to be slipped in between his teeth. His limbs were not only deformed, but perfectly useless to him. He could only *move* two fingers when I saw him; all the rest of his body was as immoveable as if it had been a wood carving, save his tongue. This his Father was pleased to leave him the full use of, and as he had a heart completely at rest and fully satisfied—for he had CHRIST there—he used the member left him to speak of the love and mercy of that gracious God who gave His Son for sinners, and of that blessed Lord Jesus Christ who had filled his soul with sunshine. Some time after I had seen him, his God and Father, to fill up his cup of sufferings, was pleased to cause even the eyes, which could before see the light, to fail before the ravages of that direful disease, so that, physically, he was to sit in darkness for the rest of his days on earth. Besides this, the two fingers that he had been able to move, became as rigid as the rest of his body. When in this state it was that he called some one to him to write down from his lips the good matter which his heart was inditing, and he spoke as follows:

Once I could see, but ne'er again
Shall I behold the verdant plain,
Jewelled with flowers of colours bright,
Bathed in a flood of golden light.
The birds, the brilliant butterflies,
These all in *thought* before me rise;
The shining rivulet, whose song
Comes sweetly murmuring along;
The sky, the clouds, the grass, the trees,
All waving, glancing in the breeze—
I see them pictured in my mind
But *there alone*, for I am blind.

Blind, did I say? how can that be?
Since I, by faith, my Saviour *see*
Exalted on the throne above,
Beaming with *mercy, grace, and love*.
A view like this is better far
Than sun, or moon, or glittering star,

Or glowing landscape, sunny skies,
Or sight that's *fair to mortal eyes*.
I THANK *my God* that He has put
A veil before mine eyes, and shut
All earthly objects from my sight,
And Christ revealed in glory bright.
Henceforth my word shall ever be—
Once I was blind, but NOW I see.

Dear reader, I need say but little more. R.P., beloved of the Lord, has gone to be for ever with Him whose he was. Converted from the darkness and evil of Unitarianism—chastened, not in wrath, but in love, he enjoyed that which of faith he possessed. HE HAD CHRIST—his heart was satisfied. And are you now unsaved? Then you are unsatisfied; your experience proves to you what the word of God declares in so many ways, that the world is not big enough to fill your heart. Do you know the plague of sin? Then the Saviour, Jesus, whom God sent, is waiting to bless you, and satisfy your heart.

“Only believe”

ELECTION AND THE GOSPEL

by D. M. Clark (Stoney Creek)

There are two truths in Scripture that run parallel with each other, much as the two tracks of a railway line. They are seemingly irreconcilable but as we lift our eyes and look ahead the tracks merge. So it is with God's election of man to salvation and man's responsibility to accept it. These truths appear to be irreconcilable, as well, but in fact are both true. This is called an antinomy. (Antinomy means: conclusions that appear to be discrepant but each is logical.) In this paper we shall consider each of these truths.

Election

Election is that act of God, in Sovereignty, in which, for His own purpose, He elects, from among the condemned of this world, those who are to be saved. The Greek word “eklegomai”

means to "choose out for oneself", e.g. Luke 6:13, "*And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.*"

The new Bible Dictionary (Pg. 316) puts it this way: Paul presents divine election as a gracious, sovereign, eternal choice of individual sinners to be saved and glorified in and through Christ. Election is a sovereign choice prompted by God's good pleasure alone, Eph. 1:5 - "*according to the good pleasure of His will.*" and v.9 - "*according to the good pleasure which he was purposed in Himself,*" - and not by any works of man, accomplished or foreseen, Rom. 9:11, "*For the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,*" - or any human effort to win God's favour (Rom. 9:15-18.)

Man's Position

To understand why God's election alone avails for our salvation we must understand man's ruin. Man's spiritual condition is "dead in trespasses and sin," Eph. 2:1, and "*And ye, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh,*" Col. 2:13. That is a description of the condition of all of Adam's race who are without Christ, for God has said to Adam, regarding the fruit of the tree, "*in the day thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die,*" Gen. 2:17, (Interlinear translation). Rom. 5: 12, "*Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; so death passed upon all men for all have sinned*". Man is seen, therefore, as incapable of doing anything to please God because he is dead towards God. God has judged man as a sinner and has pronounced His judgement, he is "**condemned already**" John 3:18. 2 Cor. 4: 3, 4, "*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*"

We see amongst men, some whom we assess as being "**good**" and some we deem to be "**bad**". In this assessment we are making an evaluation of sinners, some are less sinful than others. Some may even do the things that God commands but since all have a sinful source for these actions then the results will not be pleasing to God.

For example: if you hold a ball in your hand, you overcome the effect of gravity but when you release it it will fall down, not up! Man without Christ is under the influence of sin just as the ball is under the influence of gravity, for although he is free to will his will is not free. Man cannot therefore “will” to be saved but as James 1: 18 says: “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth.” Adam had a free will and could chose to do good or evil, he chose to do evil. Since then man has only been able to do more or less “evil”, but not “good”, in the sight of a holy God. Only the Lord Jesus could will to do only good and not evil, for He had no sinful nature such as you and I have.

Man’s Responsibility

God foresaw the inability of man to work for his own salvation and therefore conceived a means of providing salvation for him, by giving His Son to be the sacrifice for his sin. This salvation is *unto all (but only) upon all them that believe,*” Rom. 3: 22. Thus demonstrating man’s responsibility.

Now we have man pronounced guilty and incapable of doing anything toward extricating himself from the condemnation his sins deserved. On the other hand God has provided a sacrifice to meet man’s need. Now then can man receive this salvation? He must hear the message of the gospel! For those who give out the message there is the assurance that there are some who will be saved because of God’s plan of election.

Man’s responsibility before God varies according to the light he has, *“And that servant, which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes, But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whosoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more,”* Luke 12: 47, 48.

How Can Man be Saved?

It is necessary for God’s Holy Spirit to bring life to man that he may exercise believing faith and accept this salvation, John 3:8, “so is everyone that is born of the spirit.” The gospel is preached to those that are already condemned. By God’s sovereignty and election, under the work of the Holy Spirit, certain of

mankind respond, and are saved by God-given faith. Eph. 2: 8, *For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should* 7

God has shown us what He requires of man if he would earn his salvation, he must keep the law in its entirety. None can attain to the perfection that God requires. Now, however, God places a way before him marked "whosoever", so that entering in he may be saved. He is responsible for the sin that keeps him from entering, for if he entered he would read on the inside of the door: *"elect according to the foreknowledge of God."*

Some Explanations

God will have (i.e. desires — it expresses His preference not his intention) all men to be saved, (1 Tim. 2: 4). He elected, called, justified and glorified people in His sovereign purpose, (Rom. 8: 28-30), so that they might be saved.

Predestination means that God has planned beforehand the destiny of those that trust His Son. This becomes operative upon believing and should not be confused with election. No predestination is involved for those remaining in sin for they are condemned already.

Election is God's choice of individuals, whereas predestination is to a blessing. Believers are predestinated to the adoption of sons according to the purpose of God. Eph. 1: 5 & Gal. 4: 5.

In this connection we should note the difference between God's decretive will and His preceptive or permissive will. In His directive will He decrees those things that will come to pass (sovereignty); in His preceptive will He states the duties that it behooves His creatures to preform (man's responsibility). In our verse in 1 Tim. 2: 4, we have God's mind and willingness stated, not His counsel, nor His decree.

It may be helpful to include a quotation from the book by Arthur Custance entitled, "The Sovereignty of Grace": "While God is sovereign, He does not always exercise His sovereignty in all matters and upon every occasion. Sometimes He permits what

He might otherwise forbid. He thus exercises the sovereignty of His will in two different ways: absolutely overruling the will of man where it does not conform to His own intention or design, but permitting it to express itself when nonconformity to His own intention is of no consequence or is more acceptable than the alternative use of compulsion." He further states: "What God intends, he decrees; what God permits, He has foreseen. And thus by a combination of foreordination and foreknowledge, His will remains sovereign, while man retains sufficient freedom to be held accountable — always for his motive, but sometimes for his actions as well."

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (7)

T. H. Matthews (Brazil)

(My Testimony and Exercise as to serving the Lord)

I was born in Lurgan, N. Ireland, but spent the early years of life in Dublin where my Father was employed. Being reared in a Christian home, I was taught the Scriptures both in the home and in the Sunday School. Almost from infancy I had an interest in the greater matter of Salvation . Sin and Hell were solemn realities to me even as a boy. I professed to be saved in childhood, but as I grew older I had some doubts as to the reality of this. Being a Lurgan family we often visited our relatives there and at such times we attended the meetings in the Gospel hall. Quite often in the Sunday night Gospel meeting, one of the preachers would relate the story of his conversion, and as I listened to such, it sometimes occurred to me that they spoke of an experience to which I was a stranger.

A crisis came on 26th December 1957. That night I attended a meeting in a village called Donacloney where a series of meetings was in progress. The meeting proved unforgettable. Both preachers seemed burdened about the danger of a false profession and as I listened, all that I had seemed to crumble to

dust. God had spoken and I made my way to where I was staying in a deeply troubled state.

In the five difficult months which followed, one thing became established on my mind and heart. I wanted to have what the believers had. I wanted to have their assurance of salvation and their evident joy in it. It was clear to me that until such joy was mine, I could never be truly happy. The world had lost its charm.

One Thursday evening as I thought over these matters, I felt that I could continue no longer without having the great matter settled. Thus before God I resolved to turn to Him and His Word that my difficulties might be solved and my soul truly saved. The following day was 16th May 1958. All events of lesser importance which occurred on that day have long since faded from memory, but the final events leading to the great moment of salvation I clearly remember in detail. At about 7 p.m. I was alone in my bedroom with Isaiah 53 open before me. I felt that there was a message for me in that chapter and I read and re-read it. I was like a thirsty soul coming to a great fountain. I asked myself for whom Christ had suffered, and the thought came to me that it was for me, the sinner, and that all had been done; there was nothing left to do but rest in a living Saviour and His finished work. Never until that blessed moment had I seen so much in the Lord Jesus and in His death. The rest was sweet and the joy deep. It seemed almost unbelievable that at last I too was among the number of the saved and could now sing their hymns and rejoice with them in "mercy obtained".

God's salvation was no disappointment to me. The early joy in salvation was precious indeed. How good it was to drink from the well of water that springs up into everlasting life!

On 6th June 1958 I was baptised and was for some time in fellowship in a small assembly at Ranelagh, Dublin. In October 1958 my loved Father was suddenly called home. His passing brought changes to our family, one of which was our removal to Lurgan in the early part of 1959. Here I perceived that there was much spiritual help available. There were two Bible Readings each week, as well as many conferences throughout the year, and that within travelling distance. As young believer I revelled in it all, and in the company of those fitted to lead me on in the things of God.

I was encouraged to seek God's face as to His plan for my life and this I sought to do over a period of years. Missionaries often visited Lurgan and a number had gone from the assembly to the foreign field. Gradually I became somewhat attached to the small band of missionaries which laboured in the extreme south of Brazil. At the beginning I had no thought of joining them, but took an interest in their labours.

Bye and bye some of these dear brethren made it known that I would have their fellowship should I think of joining them in the work. I was reluctant to take the matter seriously as what little experience I had in Gospel work made me very conscious of inadequacy for such a work, and indeed I can recall moments when I decided quite definitely against ever giving all my time to the Lord's work. Yet an exercise began to take shape within my soul, and a burden was felt as to the matter. One Saturday night in October 1966 as I lay in bed, I mused on what I felt were God's dealings with me over the few years since I was saved. At that moment the links which had been formed with the brethren in Brazil and their work were uppermost in my mind. Just then a verse from Phil. 2:13 seemed very helpful. The verse was: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure". The verse seemed to explain something of the course of events up to that time.

After further exercise in prayer, it appeared to me that the time had come to take steps and thus seek confirmation of the Lord's will in the exercise. Thus early in 1967 I approached the overseeing brethren of the assembly, putting before them something of the exercises of my soul. Within a few weeks they assured me of their fellowship.

As the way began to open up more and more, I was conscious of a change in my approach to the whole matter. Earlier I had considered myself as a sort of volunteer, but now I felt that I had become a conscript. I had to go! This led to deep conflict of soul. In those difficult days one found comfort in the Saviour's words in Matthew 11:29,30: "Take my yoke upon you . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Thus, assuredly gathering that this was the Lord's path, I left for Brazil on 31st July 1967 in company with Mr. and Mrs. John

McCann. The grace vouchsafed in the promises of God during those days of deep exercise has been made good in abundant measure during the years in which it has been my happy portion to serve the best of Masters.

In September 1972 I was married, and my wife and I continue in the Lord's service with an ever increasing appreciation of the goodness of the Lord and of His beloved people who have upheld us over the years.

What powerful, mighty Voice, so near
Calls me from Earth apart,
Reaches, with tones so still, so clear,
From th' unseen world, my heart?
'Tis His. Yes, yes; no other sound
Could move my heart like this—
The voice of Him that earlier bound,
Through grace that heart to His.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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TESTIMONY**



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THE WAYSIDE

I sat along the wayside,
And saw the crowds pass by;
So quickly passing onward
Like wheels of time-they fly.

So careless and indifferent,
Their lives are lived to-day;
No light to guide their footsteps
Dark clouds surround their way.

Along the lonesome valleys;
Dark waters swiftly flow;
Silently passing onward
No moon, no sun to glow,

Oh hear their busy footsteps,
And ask, Oh whither bound?
When time no longer functions
Or grace can ne'er be found.

Lift up your voice my brother,
And sound the warning cry;
Proclaim the gospel message
His coming draweth nigh!

Oh call them in, the wayward,
Bowed down beneath their sin;
Invite them to the Saviour
Compel them to come in.

The harvest, soon be ended,
The summer will be past;
The time of reaping over
What's done for Christ will last.

The Bema lies before us;
When in true light we stand;
Arrayed in deathless bodies
Behold the blood washed band.

Let's then be true and faithful,
Until the Lord appears
To call the faithful labourers
And wipe away all tears.

R. Magill (Belfast)

THE BLESSED HOPE

by D. M. MARTIN, Dorset

Part VIII—The Apostasy and the Antichrist.

In the interval between the rapture of the saints and the appearing, of Christ to reign, the earth will be the scene of some of the most awful events which the world has ever witnessed. Among these will be the Apostasy — the open abandonment of all profession of Christianity, yes, the denial of the Father and the Son and the appearance of the man of sin, the son of perdition, or the antichrist. “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son”. (1. John. 2.22).

Paul has given us distinct and precise instruction upon these subjects. False teachers had sought to disturb the minds of the Thessalonian believers by alleging that the day of the Lord was already come (see, 2 Thess. 2.1-4). We are therefore plainly warned that “the falling away” (the apostasy), and the man of sin, will be seen in the interval between the rapture of the saints and the day of the Lord. As another has explained this scripture: “Their gathering together unto Christ in the air was a demonstration of the impossibility of the day of the Lord being already come.” With regard to this Paul presents two considerations. Firstly, the day could not have already come, since believers were not gathered to the Lord, and they were to come WITH HIM, secondly, the wicked one who was then to be judged had not yet appeared, so that the judgement could not be executed. The apostle proceeds to show that until the Church is caught away this consummation and embodiment of wickedness cannot be reached. (Cf. vv. 6-8). In the light of this and other scriptures we may trace a little both of ‘the falling away’ (Apostasy) and the man of sin (Antichrist).

THE APOSTASY

Apostasy is a continual danger to the Church, and the New Testament contains repeated warnings against it. (1. Tim. 4. 1-3;

2. Thess. 2.3; 2 Pet. 3.17.). Its nature is clear 'departing from the faith' and 'from the living God' (Heb. 3.12). It increases in times of special trial (Matt. 24.9,10. & Luke. 8.13) and is encouraged by false teachers (Matt. 24.11; Gal. 2.4;) who seduce believers from the purity of the Word with 'another gospel' (Gal. 1.6-8; 2. Tim. 4.3,4; 2. Pet. 2.1,2; Jude. 3,4.) The impossibility of restoration after apostasy is solemnly taught. (Heb. 6.4.-6 & 10. 26).

And it is not a little remarkable, as one has said, " that apostasy will develop itself under the three forms in which man has been in relationship to God: NATURE — it is the man of sin unrestrained, who exalts himself. JUDAISM: — he sits in the temple of God. CHRISTIANITY: it is to this that the term apostasy is directly applied in 2 Thess. 2. How fearful the prospect! And how sad it is to notice this mystery of iniquity so plainly working in the present day, boldly rearing its head in the pulpits of Christendom, and proclaiming without let or hindrance, doctrines which subvert the very foundations of revealed truth, and thereby preparing the way, as soon as the Church is gone, for the advent of the man of sin.

THE ANTICHRIST

This expression antichristos is found only in John's epistles. (1. John. 2.18,22; 4.3; 2. John. 7) but the idea behind it is widespread. We should probably understand the force of ANTI as indicating opposition, rather than false claim, that is, the antichrist is one who opposes Christ rather than the one who claims to be the Christ. If this is so, then we should include under the heading antichrist such scriptures as Dan. 7.7,21, 2. Thess. 2, and those parts of the Revelation which deal with the strong opposition that the forces of evil use to resist Christ in the last days.

Paul does not use the term antichrist but the 'man of sin' of whom he writes in 2. Thess. 2.3, clearly refers to the same being. The characteristic of this individual is that he opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped (verse. 4) He claims to be God.

Now it must be distinctly understood that antichrist is not a figurative term for some evil principle or system, but that it indicates an actual person. Whoever will take the trouble to read

the various scriptures in which he is mentioned will at once perceive this not to be a Gentile, but a Jew. Indeed he will present himself as the Messiah in his antagonism to Christ, and thus he is termed 'the king' in Daniel, who speaking of him, says that he will not regard the God of his fathers, plainly pointing out his Jewish lineage as well as his apostate character. He tells us that he will exalt himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished for that is determined shall be done. (Dan. 11. 36-45, et. seq).

If we turn to Revelation, we shall see both his rise and the character of his actions described. Before, however, entering upon this, it will be necessary to recall our attention to the Gentile monarchies; three of which will precede, and the last be contemporaneous with the antichrist. Those of Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece have appeared, and passed away. The fourth, symbolised by the legs of iron, and the feet of iron and clay is the last: for in the vision which Nebuchadnezzar saw 'a stone cut out without hands, which smote the image upon its feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. (Dan. 2.34,35).

This last is the Roman empire — first in its pristine energy and resistless strength, as set forth under the emblem of iron, and then in its final form of ten kingdoms foreshadowed by the ten toes, welded together in one confederation under a supreme head. Now in Revelation 13, we have described first of all the rise of imperial power, of the Roman empire in its final form. John says, "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up from the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns were ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy (Rev. 13.1) To cite the words of another, "The sea sets forth the uniformed mass of the people under a troubled state of the world — people in great agitation, like the restless waves of the deep." And it is out of that mass of anarchy and confusion that the imperial power rises. 'The beast' that appears is characterised by having seven heads and ten horns, which prepares us for the statement that "the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (v.2), as we find the dragon so described in the

previous chapter (12.3) and this transfer of characteristics, marking the source of the 'beasts' power, is subsequent, to Satan's expulsion from heaven. (12.9) This is indicated in another way, "The crowns were upon the heads of the dragon, but upon the horns of the beast; that is, in the imperial empire there is the exercise of the power represented as a matter of fact, but in Satan's case merely as a matter of principle, or the root of the thing. It is a question of source and character, not history. We have, then, here set before us the final form of the Gentile power, animated and energised by Satan, and possessing in itself all the features that marked its three predecessors (v. 2. cf. Dan. 7. 4-6) The seven heads signify the successive forms of power that have existed, but now concentrated in the 'beast'. The ten horns are rulers, and these ten will finally unite under one supreme head. "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have been received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast". (Rev. 17. 9-13). There will be such a display of power as the world has never seen; and since both its source and energy are alike Satanic, it will be directed against God and His people (Cf. Rev. 13. 6-8). It will be a time of open antagonism against God, and therefore of fearful tribulation for all on earth.

In connection with this there arises another 'beast': not out of the sea as was the case with its predecessor, but out of the earth at a time when there is settled government, under the order of the first beast. This is antichrist. He has two horns like a lamb, and spake like a dragon. (v.11) He is thus an imitator of, while in direct antagonism to, Christ; He acts, as will be seen, as a kind of deputy of the first 'beast', exercising his power and causing the earth and them therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed (v.12). He works miracles, or seeming miracles, and deceives the dwellers upon the earth, he causes that they should make an image to the first beast, and worship it. And the more effectually to accomplish his purposes he has power to give breath unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed and he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand,

or in their foreheads. And that no man might but or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name (Rev. 13. 15-17).

There will be a kind of mock trinity, composed of Satan, the first beast, and the false prophet. (Rev. 19.20) and the object of all their strivings will be to exclude God from the earth, and to usurp His place in the minds of men.

The first beast, is the supreme secular power; the second, or antichrist, acting under the first, has his domain in the religious sphere; while Satan is the inspirer and energy of both. We cannot here go into further details, as we shall see more of the actions of antichrist when we consider the great tribulation D. V. in a future article. It is well to remind ourselves that all the works of error and the actions of men's minds, apart from Christ, have only one goal; they all look towards, and will finally be embodied in this hateful antagonist of God and His Christ.

John warns the believers of his day that the spirit of antichrist was already abroad (1 John. 4. 3): and it is necessary therefore, especially at a time when infidelity is ever growing bolder to be on the watch, and to ponder well the descriptions of the coming man of sin, so that we may be preserved, in the grace of our God, from all association with that which is the offspring of Satan, and is also the mark of hostility to Christ. At the present moment it is especially necessary to be vigilant, for there are many indications abroad that Satan is busily employed in marshalling and training his forces are most subtle. Not yet does he avow open antagonism to Christ; but he can, and does, influence the minds of men against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and he uses for this purpose those who are its avowed teachers. Our foes are those of our own household.

But as long as we adhere to the Word of God refusing human wisdom and human reasonings — and look to be guided alone by the Holy Spirit, we shall escape the snare, and be kept true to Christ.

The writer wishes to acknowledge the help given in the composing of this article to:— A.S.W. & L. M. (I. V. F. Bible Dictionary) & E. D., Our Hope, A. S. Rouse, 1984.

VITAL VERITIES (10)

by E. W. ROGERS

The Atonement — Part 2

Yet another English word used to denote the Hebrew word

KAPHAR IS “BE MERCIFUL”

Found e.g. in Deut. 21:8: “Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel,” This prayer is found in the circumstances of the discovery of one slain in the field. An heifer is taken, brought into a rough valley, is slain, and thereupon we read “All the elders of that city that are next unto the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley. And they shall answer and say, ‘Our hands have not shed this blood neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel whom thou hast redeemed and lay not innocent blood unto thy people.’” In fact it is—the heifer has been slain—spare us! the heifer has suffered the wrath: be merciful to us! the heifer was exposed, cover us.

It is the Greek equivalent of this word which the publican used when, standing afar off conscious of guilt and deserving God’s wrath, he smites his breast and says “God be merciful to me the sinner.” Cover me.

Now these are some of the shades of meaning of the word used to denote Atonement: a covering, security against a storm, an appeasing of anger, a ransom to deliver from liability, a satisfaction to both God and man, and the righteous ground whereby mercy can be dispensed to the underserving.

It has sometimes been rashly asserted that seeing that the word “atonement” is not rightly found in the New Testament the doctrine is not there, but that it is a distinctly Old Testament doctrine.

But this assertion falls on two counts at least.

First, the absence of a specific word does not prove the non-

existence of a thing in the New Testament. For example, the word "trinity" is not found there, but surely the doctrine is there.

Secondly, the basis for the conclusion is erroneous. It is supposed that in the Old Testament days God merely covered sins, but did not remove forever our sins. But this is not so. Equally in Old Testament days as now God forgave, removed, and finally freed the sinner who was forgiven from his sins. Psalm 32.1 is a case in point where both the words "cover" and "forgive" are employed. The literal meaning of the Hebrew word "to forgive" is "to take away" In Old Testament times God blotted out as with a thick cloud man's sins; He cast them behind His back, and with Him is no shadow of turning; He cast them into the depth of the sea; and removed them as far as the east is from the west. It is true that he covered them, but the thought is not that they were merely out of sight though in fact existent, but that they were put out of sight by being put far away.

There is a vital difference in this respect that, in Old Testament days God forgave a sinner anticipating the Cross, but in the present days He does so because of the Cross. Then He looked forward to it, now He looks back upon it. But the deed done in forgiveness was the same. It was complete, final and indeed not repetition.

Therefore we may come to the New Testament confident that we shall discover therein not only the doctrine of the atonement but this doctrine set in a clearer light.

In the LXX and in the New Testament the equivalent of the Hebrew word "kaphar" is the Greek word "hilasteerion" or "hilasmos" or its cognate words. There are four notable occasions on which it occurs.

In 1 John. 2.2. "He is the propitiation for our sins." Here the word "propitiation" is hilasmos.

In Heb. 2.17. "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people," here the word is hilakesthai.

In Rom. 3.25. "God set forth a propitiatory"—here the word in Hilasteerion.

In Luke 18.13. "God be merciful to me the sinner" here the word is Hilastheti.

Now it will be apparent that all these four words are cognate, related to each other by a common root.

It is as though the four passages answer four questions:—

(a) To whose offering do all the Old testament sacrifices point? John answers: *Christ*, is the atoning offering.

(b) Who is the priest set forth in Old Testament days who made atonement? The answer is the same. *Christ* makes atonement for the sins of people.

(c) Who is the person who is set forth by the ancient seat? The answer is the same. *Christ* is the mercy-seat, predetermined to be so by God, upon whom God looks and is satisfied, and on whom man also may look and be satisfied.

(d) For whom does that person who is Offering, Offering Priest and Mercy-seat act? The answer is, any one who will take the place which the publican took.

Thus the publican's cry which preceded the Cross was amply responded to in the provision God made.

One cannot fail to notice that under the old economy atonement was made for the most part by blood. There was the exception of the "atonement money," but Peter settles that once and for all when he rules out "silver and gold" as a means of redemption and insists on blood. And it is clearly emphasised in Hebrews that "without shedding of blood there is no remission."

NOW WHY WAS THIS SO?

Surely it lies just here, that "the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls." Man had forfeited his life by reason of sin; "The wages of sin is death." "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." If then man is to be spared another must die, and that other must be a valid substitute. Blood must be shed. As another has written "It is not the warm life-blood coursing through the veins, but the life poured out unto death that effects propitiation. The death of the offering represents the forfeited life of the offerer. He lays his hand upon the victim's head (see Lev. 4. 29) and by this typical action (answering to faith) he transfers his guilt to his substitute, and its death is accounted to be his, as with his own hand he slays it."

It is that shed blood which is represented by the wine on the Lord's table—blood apart from the body—which denotes death.

But if in the Old Testament it is clear that atonement is solely by blood, in the New Testament it is equally clear that atonement is solely by the death of Christ. Let us reverently ask

WHY SHOULD IT HAVE BEEN HE?

Why not another?

Surely the answer is that, whoever makes atonement must be One who possesses moral capability, and personal authority. Since it involves substitution for the guilty, the substitute clearly must be guiltless. Since it involves voluntary self-sacrifice, by death, clearly the substitute must possess authority to lay down his own life. Now who else possesses these two qualifications other than Christ?

Certainly He was sinless: He is declared to be the "one who knew no sin"; "who did no sin:" "in whom is no sin"; and positively He is announced as the "Holy One of God." He alone among men was sinless, being Himself more than man. Thus He answers one qualification.

Furthermore, He plainly stated "No man taketh life from Me; I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again"—and, were the source of such authority asked for, the answer is "This commandment have I received of my Father." All other men have forfeited their life by reason of sin and they do not possess authority to lay it down. Suicide is but a crowning sin to a life of sin. But He was sinless had authority to lay down His life for the sinful, and this He did. He thus fulfils the second qualification.

Neither angel nor man possessed these two features of sinlessness and authority. Christ alone did, hence He alone could make atonement for man.

Accordingly all the Old Testament types of atonement by blood may be re-read with that Person in view, and His death may therein be discerned to be foreshadowed. The various offerings afforded types of different aspects of that sacrifice, each one having its own distinctive feature.

For His death was unique, both as to the fact itself and as to its

efficacy. No other death incurred such activities all at once as did His. No other death solved so many otherwise insoluble problems nor had such momentous and lasting issues.

There are at least four ways of regarding the event itself, namely,

(a) As a foul murder on the part of wicked men.

(b) As a conflict between Himself and Satan.

(c) As the infliction of Divine wrath upon an innocent substitute.

(d) As a willing self-sacrifice on His own part in the interests of others.

Consider these seriatim:—

That it was

A FOUL MURDER

on the part of men is apparent from Peter's words to the Jewish people whom he addressed in Acts chapters 2 and 3, wherein he charges home their guilt and their crime. "Ye with wicked hands, took Him and slew Him" and again in chap. 10, referring to the same fact "Whom they slew and hanged on a tree." Blindly and thoughtlessly did they cry "His blood be on us and on our children." Although they may have supposed He had blasphemously and wrongly claimed to be the Son of God, yet their clamour for His death was against all sane judgement. "Away with Him, crucify Him, we will not have this man to reign over us" was the adopted attitude, irrespective of the conviction expressed by Pilate, "I find nothing worthy of death in Him." The record read without bias must inevitably lead the reader to the conclusion that is stated by Stephen "The Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." (Acts 7.52).

Let the reader peruse Psalm 22 and then observe what another has written. "In this passage the Lord compares His murderers by whom He was at the moment surrounded to those wild animals in whom are combined all the most strongly developed qualities of violence, brutality, blood-thirst and uncleanness." And again "The Cross of Christ thus revealed in hideous reality the true extent of human depravity. The veil of civilisation drops. The mask of social refinement is removed, and man in his highest natural estate of Roman civilisation and Jewish religion is

exposed in naked brutality, the murderer of his Benefactor,—untried, unconvicted, uncondemned.”

Secondly, it was a

CONFLICT BETWEEN HIMSELF AND SATAN

That Satan was the dark instigator of the foul deed is evidenced in that “He entered into Judas.” Playing on his hitherto encouraged greed he prompted him to betray the Lord Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. It was the crowning act of an enmity and hostility of long duration. Prior to and throughout the Lord’s earthly course Satan had been his bitter foe, but finding himself hitherto thwarted in every attempt, at length in sheer desperation he succeeds through a man in securing His murder. That appeared to be his triumph. But less than three full days have to run their course for proof to be furnished that Christ “arose a victor o’er the dark domain.” The tables had been turned; Satan and his hosts were conquered and Christ was gloriously triumphant.

His own ascension far above all principalities and powers demonstrated it, for then it was that “He led captivity captive” and “He made a show of them openly, leading them in triumph” (Eph. 4 and Col. 2).

The fact of this conflict between Satan and Christ had early been foreshadowed by God, and had long stood on the page of Holy Writ. It was in the garden of Eden, where the tragic introduction of sin into this world occurred, that God Himself furnished the one gleam of hope that, though the Serpent would bruise the heel of the Woman’s seed, yet that seed would bruise his head. In other words, that while some injury would be inflicted on the seed yet a final defeat would simultaneously be dealt to the serpent.

Doubtless it was with the view of defeating this purpose that he all along sought first to prevent the advent of the Coming One, and having therein failed, sought secondly to turn Him aside from the path of uprightness, and having therein further failed, he thirdly sought and succeeded in obtaining His death.

But it was in that very occurrence that his own defeat was achieved. “By death He destroyed him who had the power of

death, that is the evil.” The only Man Who trod this earth who could legitimately claim exemption from death, willingly experienced it that by so doing He might effectively grapple with him who had its power, and wrest it from Him. Resurrection tells the tale of the magnificent victory.

Hark to His words of anticipated success: “The prince of this world is judged”—words uttered before He died though just about as He was to do so . It is the confidence of the triumph of Right over Might ; Truth over evil; Light over darkness, and life over death. —*To be continued.*

“THE EPISTLE BY JAMES”

by E. R. Bower.

Chapter Three. A Living Faith EVIDENCED by Conduct.

Do not take a leaf out of the Pharisee’s book (Matt. 23.1-10). There are works which may, or may not, be seen of men, but James speaks of those works that can be seen. (Matt. 5.16). See John 9.34 and cf. Matt. 5.17-22. Was there, in those early days of the church, evidence already to be seen in the attitudes of the local churches? Did not our Lord call the Pharisees, “Blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.” (Matt. 23. 24)? Claiming to be a teacher and showing no example, brings the greater condemnation. (see 2.13).

· vv. 3-6. In many we are all prone to stumble (2.10), and no one has yet attained to perfection — other than our blessed Lord. James places his finger upon the source and the channel of bad conduct —hell and the tongue. The bit controls the horse; the helmsman, the ship; the tongue ‘great things’. A no-consequence fire will soon desolate a forest. The tongue though small, set on by the everlastingly burning fires of Gehenna, is a world of unrighteousness, and defiles the whole body. It even sets on fire the course of nature—the whole world aflame! And nations, communities—and churches—perish in the flames. Churches die because their conduct belies their faith. Vain religion indeed

(1.26). Very, very true. What harm has been done in the name of religion; what bitterness has come from a Bible reading. We note that the Greek word for 'nature' (v.6) is that used in 1.23 'his natural face'. Faces aflame with passion! "The course of nature" has been defined as "the orb of creation". Gehenna is spoken of by Jews as the place of torment, and it was there that the rich man of our Lord's parable found himself seeking one drop of water to cool his tongue. (Luke 16.24). How often do we scorch our fellows by words spoken unadvisedly, just as Moses did. (Ps. 106.32-33). Breathing fire and brimstone brings, all too often, suffering and misery to others—and to self.

vv. 7-10. "Kind" (v.7) - nature; "mankind" (v.7.) - nature of man; "unruly" (v.8.) -restless. What was ordained in Gen. 1.26-28, came to pass; but the tongue in man himself, the tongue of the 'master' nature remains untamed; a restless evil. How vividly James depicts the tongue; a small member capable of great things and full of dead poison. cf. Ps. 5, 9; 50.16-23; 140.1-3; Rom. 3. 13. To bless God is right; to curse those who are made after the image of the Creator is evil. Peter may be seen as an example of the 'double tongue', but the nearer example is - oneself. Cursing is not just 'bad' language; it is to wish evil upon; to detest; loath; abhor. "THESE THINGS OUGHT NOT TO BE."

vv. 11-14. "Sweet and bitter" (v.11) - fresh and salt; "conversation" (v.13) - conduct; "envying" (v.14) - emulation, zeal, strife, contention, party spirit; "glory" (v.14) - boasting. James now probes somewhat deeper than the tongue. Our Lord said, "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart and defile the man" (Matt. 15.18-20. cf. here, Matt. 7. 15-20.

Spiritual lepers - unclean. Notice the contrast of meekness out of wisdom with lies out of boasting. An excess of zeal may not always be good behaviour.

vv. 15-18. Demonstrating the need for wisdom in our way of life, i.e. in our conduct, James prods again; into the source of good - and bad - behaviour. The contrasts of vv. 11-14 are amplified. The wisdom of v.14 - envy and strife in the heart accompanied by boasting is earthly, natural, devilish (with all that 'devilish' means) and leads to confusion (and God is not the

Author of confusion) and every evil work. The wisdom of v. 13 is from above (1. 17) and is pure, peaceable, gentle, yielding, merciful, impartial and unfeigned - seven attributes of good behaviour. And we are back to 1.5, "if any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God." The first objective of this perfect wisdom is a perfect patience in the face of trial or temptation. The second objective is the bringing forth of the fruits of righteousness from the seed plot of peace. (See Matt. 5. 9). God given wisdom is a gift that comes with the new birth (1. 16-18), but it is a neglected gift.

The Ministry of the Risen Lord

by The Late J. B. Hewitt, Chesterfield

INTRODUCTION

The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is an essential of the Christian faith. It is the most important fact of history, and the best attested fact of history. "Seen of above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. 15.6). "Seen" not "Appeared" as the RSV needlessly and wrongly substitutes (1 Cor. 15.3-8).

It is the Gibraltar of Christian evidences, the Waterloo of infidelity. The resurrection is not a question of His spiritual survival, nor of His physical resuscitation, but of His conquest of death and His resurrection to a new plane of existence altogether (Rev. 1. 18). If the evidence of the Resurrection of Christ is sifted and weighed honestly, it will be found to be convincing and conclusive. The Lord Himself never predicted His passion without adding that He would rise, and described His coming resurrection as a sign (Matt. 12.39,40; John 2.18-22; Luke 18.33; Rom. 1.4.)

There are four evidences of His resurrection:- (1) the empty tomb (Mark 16.4-6,11); (2) the graveclothes were undisturbed (John 20.5-7); (3) the Lord was seen (Matt. 28.9; John 20.16-18; (4) the disciples were changed. The death of Christ left them despondent, disillusioned and near to despair. The resurrection

and the gift of the Holy Spirit transformed doubt into faith, fear into courage and tears into gladness (1 Cor. 15.7; John 20.19, 20).

May we rejoice in the great Christian affirmation, "the Lord is risen indeed" (Luke 24.34; Matt. 28.6).

THE MORNING OF RESURRECTION

All four Evangelists record the resurrection, agreeing that it took place on the first day of the week, as befitting a new life, a new era. It is interesting and important to compare their records. John begins earliest in time, "When it was yet dark"(20.1); It is night when John records. Matthew begins, "As it began to dawn" (28.1) - that is the first faint flush of the new day is appearing in the sky. Luke says, "At early dawn", with the dawn overspreading the sky; dawn complete. Mark distinctly states that "the sun has risen (16.2. R. V.). John tells us the stone was literally "lifted out of" the sepulchre and Mary is horrified.

THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY (Mark 16.1,2; John 20.1)

The Jewish Sabbath passed in gloom and doubt and sorrow, the Lord's day followed with death robbed of its prey and its power. The stone rolled away proclaimed death's power broken, the tomb was empty. The resurrection of Christ is a fact, a force and a factor beyond dispute. It is the centre of all truth (1 Cor. 15. 1-5); the channel of blessing for all the saved (1 Peter 1.3,4); the confession of our faith (Rom. 10.9; 1 Pet. 3.21,22); the communication of Divine power (Eph. 1.19,20); proves Christ is our choice Head unifying the Church (Col. 1.18); the continued inspiration of our service (Matt. 28.18-20); the certain pledge of our own resurrection (1 Cor. 15.20); and the complete sample of our great change by and by (1 Cor. 15.53).

A MORNING OF DEVOTION (John 20.1)

Mary loved the Lord and affection for Him brought her to the tomb.

Her Salvation (Luke 8.2) Her terrible affliction, total possession by demons was completely healed by spiritual regeneration. Her blessings like ours are due to three things; the Saviour's loving pity, His infinite mercy and His Divine power (Eph. 2.4,5).

Her Service was expressed in fellowship (Luke 8.12) and by

consecration (Luke 8.3). Her life and substance belonged to Him who had done so much for her. (Rom. 12.1).

Her Sorrow She saw her Lord die and watched by His tomb (Matt. 27.55,56). The gratitude shown (Mark 16.1), the grief experienced (John 20.1). Her Master's death must have been a profound mystery and a great loss. Mary possibly went round to all the women followers of Jesus, and got them to go to the sepulchre.

A MORNING OF DIFFICULTY (Mark 16.3)

"Who shall roll us away the stone?" The barrier dreaded was the first thought in the women's mind because of great weight for feeble strength. The barrier was removed (v. 4), God works for those He loves and leads. He ever goes before, and they find the way made ready beyond expectation.

A MORNING OF DISCOVERY (Mark 16.4,5; Luke 24.2,3)

The stone removed, rolled away. It was a round disc placed against the door; it was rolled along a groove, leaving the entrance of the tomb clear.

It was not rolled away to let Jesus out, but that they, and we, might look in to see He had gone. John says, "taken away" and literally "lifted out of" the sepulchre. Mary's one horror was that somebody would get into the tomb and take away the body of the Lord. Think of His cruel death. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead, but the centurion assured him that it was so. (Mark 14, 44, 45). This gives the death knell to the swoon theory. Could the Lord survive thirty-six hours in a stone sepulchre after the flogging and crucifixion? The theory is perverse and the evidence entirely contradicts it. The careful watch, the seal, the guard made all things sure (Matt. 27.64-66). Another notion is that thieves of some kind stole the body. There is no shred of evidence for this conjecture. W. H. Griffith Thomas has well stated, "only two alternative explanations: human or supernatural. If human, friends or foes. If friends - could they?; if foes - would they? Therefore, supernatural power removed the Body of Christ". It was supernatural (Matt. 28.2). The illustrious visitor reveals the power of light. A shining, mighty, overpowering light from heaven (v.3). This mighty power opened the grave,

scattered the darkness and brought the light of hope to every true believer.

THE DYNAMIC DECLARATION (Matt. 28.5-7)

A word of encouragement. "Fear not ye"; they were reassured by the angel. A word of assurance "I know that ye seek Jesus". Just as at the Lord's birth (Luke 1.30; 2.10), so here the first word from heaven was "fear not".

A word of revelation "He is not here, for He is risen". Only those who know the Crucified One found the Risen One. Resurrection is assured, by the absence of the Body, "not here". The cause "He is risen as He said", yet they still did not realize. The slow heart to believe are blinded with the glory of the light.

A word of invitation "Come see the place where the Lord lay" (v. 6). For them and us this is the place of instruction, life, comfort and hope. Here is the power of life, the greatest evidence of Christ's mighty power; the power of an endless life (John 2. 20-22; 10.18; Heb. 7.25).

A word commission - "go quickly and tell". The liberty and privilege of every saved soul, to go forth and tell of a risen, living, loving Saviour, who has conquered every foe, overcome death, and lives to save to the uttermost. The first appearances of Jesus to His own were evidential. They were necessary to convince them that He was still victoriously alive. We need to come and see it, and know the power of it; then go and tell it out, and go quickly, for the need is great. Yes, "He is risen" - risen to save - be entreated. He is risen to intercede - be comforted. He is risen to judge - be warned.

THE DISCIPLE'S VISIT (John 20.2-10)

The Search (v.3,4) Peter and John set out to see for themselves. Peter is outrun by John. Perhaps guilty conscience made the going hard for him, he remembered his denial.

The Satisfaction (v.5-8). Mary's word was confirmed, the tomb was empty. They saw the winding shrouds exactly and precisely as they were when He was buried. The body was not there. John saw that and believed (v.8).

The different words for "seeing" are very interesting and illuminating. "Stooping down and looking in", the same word in

v.11 and Luke 24.12, literally means “bending down to look carefully at” used in a figurative sense in 1 Pet. 1.12, and James 1.25. “Saw” v.5, seeth at a glance, Mary and John merely saw the facts; Peter went in and he “beheld them” (RV) which means he saw and he thought carefully about them. Then John “saw”, perceived what it meant “and believed”, and from that moment John was convinced that Jesus was alive. John did not need a manifestation of the Lord. Now they go back home, John understanding, Peter all bewildered (Luke 24.12) and they leave Mary at the tomb, weeping - not just crying but convulsed with sobs. Mary was marked by perplexity and sorrow (v. 2,10), she did not expect a resurrection morning. John is marked by love and was first in the race and first to believe (v. 8). Peter known for his zeal and impetuosity went right into the sepulchre. He defiles himself by entering the tomb but is rewarded by an amazing sight, grace clothes left behind by death’s Victor (Rev. 1.18).

On this resurrection morning may we look into the tomb and rejoice for “He is risen as He said”; listen to the angelic message and respond - “go quickly and tell” and remember

“We face a task unfinished that drives us to our knees;
A need, that undiminished, rebukes our slothful ease.
We, who rejoice to know Thee, renew before Thy throne
The solemn pledge we owe Thee to go and make Thee
known”.

—*Frank Houghton.*

THE STRENGTH AND LOVE OF JESUS

We never know the strength and the love of Jesus until we lean on Him with the heavy burden of our sins, temptations, doubts and sorrows; until in confidence trust, and humble candour, we speak to Him of all that oppresses and perplexes us. In His true presence, helps and guides us through the wilderness, and sends us down all blessings from His heavenly sanctuary. And then we experience His wonderful tenderness, the compassionate love, the perfect sympathy of Him who is not ashamed to call us brethren; who is afflicted in all our afflictions. Who is constantly interceding for us in heaven, while He constantly sustaining our inner life by His spirit. He alone knows what is in man the sorrow which lies too deep for human ministry. He is able to understand and heal. — *Anthony Orsini (USA)*

God Unrecognised and Unwanted

By the Late W. W. Fereday

Jerusalem, when our Lord was born, was the hub of the religious world. The only religion that ever had divine authority was centred there. All other religions were diabolical, both in origin and character, and ruinous to all who lived under their dark spell. Among other privileges known in Jerusalem was the possession of the Sacred Oracles (Rom. 3.1-2). In the Scriptures of the Old Testament was enshrined all that a beneficent Creator had ever communicated to men from the world's foundation.

Yet a strange thing happened! Certain travellers from the East, evidently possessed of scientific knowledge, arrived in Jerusalem inquiring where the King of the Jews had been born, having judged from astronomical observations that such an event had taken place. To a few humble Jews, men in covenant relationship with Jehovah, the birth had already been divinely made known by means of angels (Luke 2.9); to the Gentile magi, God testified by means of a star in the heavens (Psa. 19.1-6).

We are not surprised to read in Matt. 2.3. that when Herod the King heard these things he was troubled. This man, although of Edomite descent, and a type of the latter-day Antichrist, was Himself King of Jews, and accordingly could brook no rival. But does it not make strange reading that "all Jerusalem" was troubled with him?

The coming of the Wise Men appears to have been several months after the birth of the wondrous Babe, and during the interval there had been the report of the shepherds, who "made known abroad the saying that was told them concerning the child" (Luke 2.17), and the outburst of Simeon in the temple, with Anna's testimony to many (Luke 2.25-38). Yet Jerusalem was not only not interested, but was positively troubled when the Wise Men came.

Worse still, Herod, in his anxiety, called in the Jewish clergy. Not a mere individual, nor even two or three persons, "he gathered *all* the chief priests and scribes of the people together," believing that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety"

(Prov. 11.14). These men promptly remembered Micah 5.2, although they rather paraphrased than quoted the passage to the King.

(Those were not days of pocket Bibles, which every Christian should now carry). Now Micah 5.2 tells us that it was no mere King for David's throne who was to be born in Bethlehem but *God Himself*. "Thou, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, though thou be little amongst the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Fearful Conclusion! The eternal God has deigned to visit this little world, and was not wanted! Neither the testimony of the shepherds in Luke 2, nor the Scripture cited by the priests in Matt. 2, sent worshipping crowds to Bethlehem! God not wanted in His own world!

More than thirty years pass away, and we are again in Jerusalem. Our Lord's hearers would stone Him because He said: "I and the Father are one!" But He asked them: "Many good works have I showed you from My Father; for which of these do ye stone Me?" The Jews answered Him: "For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God" (John 10.30-33).

A little later the High Priest with the council around him, challenged Him: "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said: "I am" (Mark 14.61-62). Forward now to Pilate's Judgment Hall. Hear His accusers: "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John 18. 7).

The issue thus was quite clear. God was on earth in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and men were determined to get rid of Him at any cost.

The cost has been terrific in blood and treasure, in broken hearts and countless graves. Neither the Jews nor the nations knew the time of their visitation (Luke 19.44). The world did not recognise its Creator, and His own special people refused to receive Him (John 1.10-11). "They have sown the wind and they reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8.7). Nineteen centuries of grief and pain have been men's experience as the terrible fruit of their

rejection of Him who came in grace, and the end is not yet. Dark clouds hang over the nations and nothing will dispel them, for the day of reckoning hastens on. The passions of men will be divinely let loose, and men will themselves destroy all that they have built up and loved (Rev. 6).

But the Rejected One will come again. Three thousand years ago, the Psalmist wrote: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence" (Psa. 50.3). Israel will welcome Him then. "It shall be said on that day: "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us, this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. 25.9). A mighty work of the Holy Spirit is necessary ere Israel can speak thus.

The "appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2.13) will revolutionise everything here. With overwhelming power He will sweep the earth clean of all that is offensive in His sight. Then, when the last of the dispensations has run its course (the thousand years glorious reign) all evil having been subdued, God will be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15.28). Never again through the eternal ages will the divine supremacy be challenged, neither in Heaven above, nor in earth beneath. Result—"there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21.4).

CHRIST OUR BURNT OFFERING

D. M. Clark (Stoney Creek)

Of the five offerings mentioned in Leviticus the one that speaks of the Father's satisfaction with Christ's offering of Himself is the Burnt Offering, the details are given in chapter one.

For we who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ the logical sequence of the offerings begins in the reverse order in which they are recorded. We sense the activity of sin in the Trespass Offering and then realize in the Sin Offering that it is sin working within us. In the peace offering we learn that Christ has made peace with God for us, this offering is a bridge between

our former standing as sinners and our present standing as accepted in the Beloved. In the Meat or Meal Offering we learn of the glories of the Person who accomplished our Salvation but in the Burnt Offering we observe Christ, the Son giving Himself wholly and absolutely unto the Father. Sin is not in question in this offering.

The sequence of the offerings begins from God's perspective. This is most instructive for us, for while we rejoice in the work that Christ has done in removing our sins, we must also enter into the total value of Christ's sacrifice from God's point of view.

Christ, in all the perfection of His Person, gave Himself wholly to God in the absolute and utter devotion of His heart. He could say in John 10:17: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." We can only stand in amazement and marvel at such an expression of love. There the Lord Jesus, with absolute perfection, fulfilled all the Father's will.

As we consider this aspect of Christ's sacrifice we can enter more fully into the meaning of Eph. 5.2, ". . . Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." This speaks of the Burnt Offering aspect of Christ's death.

And again in Hebrews 10: 5-9, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." What complete submission to the eternal counsels of God are witnessed in these verses. This should cause us to render worship and praise which will ascend as sweet incense to the Father.

Although Jesus was forsaken of God, while on the cross, His communion with the Father was never affected. At that time the Father found absolute satisfaction in that the Son was wholly

devoted to fulfilling His will and the Son in that His action wholly delighted the Father. During His life on earth He could say in John 1:18, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” That Father-Son relationship could only be deepened by the perfection of Christ’s sacrifice.

The Burnt Offering is spoken of as a “sweet savour offering” in Lev. 1:9. This suggests the delight that God found in the offering. This cannot be said of the Sin Offering for God could find no delight in having to cover the entire scene in darkness while the Lord Jesus was made sin for us.

In the Sin Offering the one presenting the sacrifice placed his hand on the head of the victim which then became his substitute by dying in his stead. In the Burnt Offering, once again, the person offering the sacrifice placed his hand on the head of the victim, but in this instance all of the virtue and value of the sacrifice was transferred to the person offering it. For the believer, Christ as our Burnt Offering, brings us into all the favour and standing that He has before God so that we are “accepted in the Beloved”.

Except for the skin of the Burnt Offering all of the sacrifice was totally consumed on the altar. The total consumption of the sacrifice shows that it was offered wholly to God, even as Christ offered Himself wholly to God. It is a witness to the devotion of the Lord Jesus in fulfilling God’s will.

The priest was to have the skin of the Burnt Offering, Lev. 7:8. Although the priest could only be a witness to the sacrifice the skin was given to him as a constant reminder of what he had seen. Similarly the Lord Jesus has given us the remembrance service as a constant reminder of His death.

We see in the emblems of bread and wine the entire compass of the work of Christ as typified in the five offerings. However, that which corresponds to the Burnt Offering aspect of Christ’s death expresses our greatest appreciation for Christ’s work. In it Christ is presented to God. Our occupation will be with the value and worth of the sacrifice as seen in God’s eyes. What could rejoice the heart of God more than to hear the praise of His people in honouring and exalting His Son?

The Believer's Present Possessions

By the Late Walter Scott.

The Word “hath,” indicating present possession, is often repeated in the New Testament. It forms an interesting study to look at some of these.

I. We begin with a grand atatement: God

“Hath Saved us”

(2 Tim. 1. 9). Here our salvation—the salvation of all who simply believe on the Lord Jesus—is regarded as present, finished, and complete.

II. Next, a very present possession: “He that believeth on the Son

“Hath Everlasting Life”

(John 3. 36). The gift of eternal life to the believer, simply as such (Rom. 6. 23), is never recalled. Its continued possession to us is not dependent upon our walk as believers, although its enjoyment is. Our *enjoyment* ought to be up to the measure of what we possess; but the most godly on earth hold numerous blessings which they do not fully enjoy. Distinguish between possessing and enjoying.

III. Looking ahead, we say God

“Hath Called You

unto His Kingdom and Glory” (1 Thess. 2. 12). Here the question is a simple one. Can the power of Satan or the difficulty and trial of the wilderness frustrate the call of God? It is His settled purpose to have us, believers, in His Kingdom and Glory, and this “calling of God is without repentance” or recall. The calling is *present*, the fulfilment *future*.

IV. Wondering as to our fitness for that Kingdom and Glory, we rejoice that the Father

“Hath Made us Meet

to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1. 12). This is an exceedingly glorious declaration. Every believer should know that he is not *being* fitted for the light. We are now

made meet. It is done. Because of the value of the shed Blood of Jesus, we are already fit for the company of Paul, of John, of Abraham—of the saints in light.

Ours is not a growing meetness, or improvement in our title to be in the light. It is no question whatever as to our state, or walk, which we can all sorrowfully and truthfully say is not what it ought to be; but the verse refers to what we *are*—”hath made us meet.”

V. Then we have the “blessings” of God. He

“Hath Blessed Us

with all spiritual blessings in Heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1. 3). What a magnificent, unlimited fortune God has bestowed upon every heir of glory!

Zechariah speaks of believers as “men wondered at” (Zech. 3. 8), and truly the Christian is a wonderful person. You will find the extreme of worldly poverty, yet of spiritual wealth—”having nothing, yet possessing all things” (2. Cor. 6. 10), combined in the child of God.

There is a general inventory of your vast stores of wealth—of your fortune—contained in 1 Cor. 3. 21-23. “All things” are freely given to God’s justified ones (Rom. 8. 32); and “all things” are yours—twice repeated—was said to the Corinthians, whose actions and general conduct were a public scandal and disgrace (1 Cor. 3. 21, 22). Then all spiritual blessings are heaped for us in Heavenly places. We have the best of blessings (“spiritual”); the best of society (“Christ”); and the best of places (“the Heavens”). We ought to live up to our vast income; be free, open-handed, generous, Godlike givers. We can never exhaust our fortune. Our cup is ever full and overflowing. It “runneth over.”

VI. Even at the present, it is true that Christ

“Hath Made Us Kings

and priests unto God and His Father” (Rev. 1. 6).

Believers are not wealthy commoners merely. Our ranks and dignity correspond to our means. God has not conferred upon us nobility, but *royalty*; and priestly place and nearness to Himself. In ourselves we are simply Hell-deserving sinners; to Him we are kings and priests. *Who* has done this? GOD. *Why* all this? Because of his grace, and that alone.

VII. Lastly, a past, present, and permanent truth: "We have known and believed

The Love that God Hath to Us"

(1 John 4. 16). There is a present and unchangeable love towards us, *i.e.*, God's love towards His own. Clouds may come between and the love. But just as the sun ever shines, although earth's clouds and mists obscure it at all times, so God's love to us is as deep as ever, as fervent as ever, as independent of our varying moods and fancies and changes as the sun is of all that flits across the sky.

It is a love which never knows check or chill or disappointment. It never pauses in its blessed work. No sin or failure on our part can lead to cessation in its activity. God's love is eternal. Many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it; it is as strong as death, and jealous as the grave (Song of Sol. 8. 6. 7).

It is a *present* love from which no power in creation can separate the weakest believer (Rom. 7. 38, 39). It is a *triumphant* love. In Eternity God's love to us will never cease. Faith and hope will pass away; earth is their native sphere, but love is eternal.

CHRIST THE ESSENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

How I wish for myself, and desire to fix it on the consciences of others, that the one thing needful is the knowledge of Christ (John 17.3). Many seem to think that when they believe in Jesus, and are resting in His atoning death, they know everything; but joy and peace are to be multiplied through a growing acquaintance with Christ (1 Peter 1.2). Every leaf of the Bible testifies of Christ: it is like a rose that is just opening under the genial warmth of the sun; each separate leaf emits the fragrance of the rose. The rose is not perfect without each leaf, and each leaf has fragrance only as being a part of the whole rose; so with the Bible, it is the testimony of Jesus in every leaf. He is the essence of the written word. It has no value, no savour, apart from Him; and when our hearts are really alive to discover Christ, to learn Christ, then, through the Spirit's teaching, each chapter will be fragrant with the perfume of His name.—Selected.

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (8)

James B. Currie (Japan)

'WE HAVE RECEIVED GRACE' (Romans 1.5)

Preparation

The side streets of Belfast's east end hardly seem a suitable introduction for a lifetime of service for God. Nor do the years of the second world war, when hatred against the Germans and the Japanese was rampant and expected. Yet, when God works, His ways are beyond human imaginings. It was in just such an unpromising area and period of time that God began to work in the heart of a fourteen year old brought up in a home where the practical power of the Gospel was as unknown as it is in the idolatrous of the Orient.

As was common at that time among the people of the 'Newtownards Road' lip service was paid to what was known of the Bible's teaching but as far as our home was concerned it meant only that we were sent to Sunday School in the parish church but it made absolutely no difference to the heavy drinking which ate up a large portion of my father's earnings and was the continual bane of my mother's life.

With the damage by bombing done to so many houses, including our own, we were sent to live out near Lisburn in 1941 and stayed there for a little over a year. It was some 4 miles to the nearest church of our denomination and, by this time, Sunday School had little appeal to me, especially if it meant an hour's walk to the church and back. The result was lapsed membership.

Returning to the city the family across from us encouraged our attendance at Parkgate Gospel Hall, which, at the time, we knew nothing about. The kindness of the believers and the fact that 'no collections' was the rule

made a big impression. Further, applying for work in the Aircraft Factory I, much to my chagrin, ended up in the Drawing Office at low wages instead of in the factory where attractive war time salaries were paid. God was in this since in about one month's time I mistook a noon hour Testimony Meeting for one to select the juniors' football team. God spoke most clearly that Tuesday at lunch time as those young men told of their conversion to Christ and urged others to accept Him as Saviour.

Until the following Lord's Day evening neither football nor the usual cinema going had any appeal to me at all and, as two policemen made known the Gospel of Christ in the Parkgate Hall the conviction of sin and judgement was made all the stronger. On my knees in the quiet of my bedroom that Sunday night I passed from death to life through faith in Christ our Lord though unaware of what really happened then. The next morning, on the way to the office as I rode my bicycle down Sydenham Road the words of John 5.24 came home in power to give a full assurance of the work God had done in my young soul.

Almost immediately a desire to reach out in the Gospel was begotten within. Helping in the Sunday School, taking part in the Open Air meetings, joining godly men in the 'East End Village Work' and having opportunity to accompany the older brethren to assemblies in and around the city to help a little in the Sunday evening meetings was grist for the mill in God's hands as a little experience of His ways was obtained. All the while there was a deep seated desire which could only be expressed in Paul's words 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?'

No doubt the events of the day had much to do with an increasingly strong feeling that Japan was the place God of God's purpose. No special revelation was granted but one very timid step at a time was taken. First of all in learning all I could about the 'mysterious land of the Rising Sun' then contacting Mr. T. A. Hay in Canada who in turn put me in touch with the redoubtable Mr. 'Bobbie' Wright. This led to a regular gathering with some others equally

interested in Japan in order to start elementary studies in the language. These meetings took place in the home of our good brother Mr. Leonard Mullan. Indirectly resulting from these meetings an opportunity was given to go to Vancouver, Canada where visas etc. necessary to enter post-war Japan could be more readily obtained. Almost two years of living in the home of Mr. Hay and further exercised waiting upon God only increased the deep conviction that Japan was the place of God's choice. All the while there was work to be done in the assemblies on the west coast of Canada. My first series of Gospel meetings, lasting 6 weeks, in a small but rough paper mill town which could only be accessed by small passenger boat took place before my twentieth birthday. The period of waiting and of training was to prove beneficial in later years.

THRUST FORTH

The 12 day trip across the Pacific on a freighter in 1949 was to a land but recently devastated by the horrors of war and one where there was little in the way of gospel testimony as far as the assemblies of the saints were concerned. Three very small meetings had, more or less, survived the strain of wartime persecution. With the return of brethren Hay and Wright they were just beginning to find their feet once again. Along with others arriving at that time the first order of business was a two year stint at the School of Japanese Language. Long weeks and months had to be given to these studies before the number of a hymn even could be given out in public. The first hesitant attempts to make Christ known on the street corners must have filled the listeners with mirth and taxed the patience of our Japanese brethren. Still, from that very small beginning progress has been made by the grace and help of God so that to-day a wide sphere of service has been granted in ministering the Word to the saints of the assemblies around the countryside and in the writing, translating and publishing of literature meant to strengthen the hands of our brethren and sisters in assembly testimony.

The simple principles involved were those experienced

by practically all who have a deep desire to know God's will. First of all, stemming from a devotion to the Person and cause of Christ, there must be a willingness to be used just when and where the Lord would lead. Then too, a quiet waiting upon the Lord so that His way might be made known. The well used illustration is still very apt. A young man discussing the 'call of God to service' said, 'but I have never heard God's call'. The answer given by the older servant of Christ was, 'young man are you sure you are within calling distance'! Sadly, the affluence of this latter part of the Twentieth Century, and with it the widespread desire for 'financial security', seem to cause so much static in the souls of many that 'the still small voice' saying 'son, go work in my vineyard' is unable to make itself heard. The resulting loss of present joy and future reward is something which cannot be calculated this side of the Judgement Seat of Christ.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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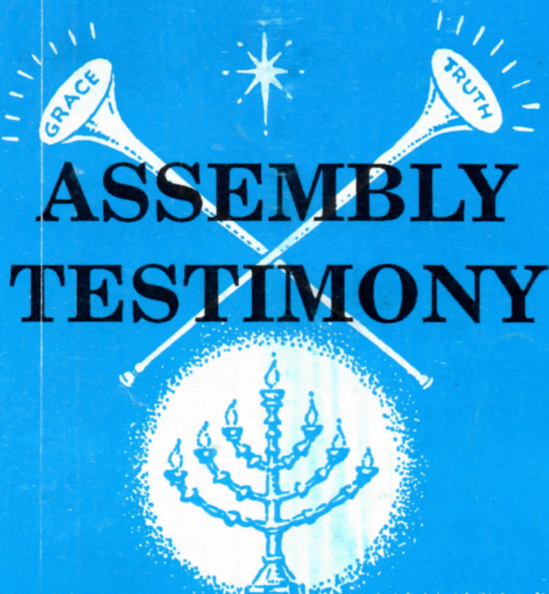
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by S. H. Moore

The Tree of Life

8.7.8.7.

*Lord in Thee we taste the sweetness
Of the Tree of Life above;
Taste its own eternal meetness
For the heav'nly land we love.*

*In eternal counsels purposed,
Food of heav'nly life to be;
Fresh and ever new are yielded
Fruits of life on that blest Tree.*

*Varied fruits of richest flavour
Offers still the Tree divine;
One itself, the same for ever,
Every precious fruit is Thine;*

*Fruits that now our souls have tasted
By the Spirit from above,
While through desert lands we've hasted;
Fruits of perfect, endless love.*

- J.N.D.

THE BLESSED HOPE

by D. M. MARTIN, Dorset

Part IX. — The Great Tribulation.

Having noted in the previous article the sway of the antichrist, we now shall consider another event of transcendent importance. Notices of it are found in the prophets, as well as parts of the New Testament scriptures. It is generally designated as the great tribulation; but if the subject is closely examined it will be seen that this is but one feature of this fearful time of trial through which those upon the earth in that period will have to pass. In fact there will be a time of unexampled trouble, both for the Jews and the Gentiles: and we propose in this article to collect some of the information which scripture affords upon this subject, as well as to show who are the saints that will have to pass through this burning fiery furnace.

1. Jeremiah 30 v 2 - 9 when read in context, shows that the time of trouble is for the Jews. Three things are evident from this scripture. First, that Israel (as we have seen in a previous article) will yet be restored to their own land; secondly, after this - - or after the restoration of many - - there will be a time of unparalleled trouble; and thirdly, that then will be their final deliverance and blessing. The connection of these three things fixes the period of their tribulation, and shows that it will be after their return to their own land, and before the appearing of the Lord. If we now turn to the prophet Daniel we find a similar testimony, *i.e.* after speaking of the actions of the antichrist (Dan. 11. 36-45) in chapter 12. verse 1 he speaks of this coming time of trouble. Again we find that, when in their own land, and in connection with the works of the antichrist, and after the Lord has raptured the church, and before His appearing, the Jews will pass through a time of trouble such as never before.

The Lord speaks of the same thing. Forewarning His disciples, in answer to their question, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" He says, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desola-

tion, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house", etc. "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened". (Matt. 24. 15-22; Mark. 13. 14-20.) This scripture is extremely important on many accounts. It connects the tribulation spoken of with an event foretold by Daniel, and with the antichrist, and also reveals the cause as well as the period of this unexampled trouble. (See Daniel 12. 11 with 9. 27.) Now connecting the several scriptures given, we learn that after the restoration of the Jews, exposed again, as in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes (See Dan. 11. 21-31), to the hostility of the king of the north (Syria), the Jews for protection enter into a covenant with the first "beast" - the head of the revived Roman empire. It is to this Daniel refers when he says, "And he" (i.e. the Roman prince) "shall confirm a" (not the, but a) "covenant with many for one week;" i.e. for a week of years - seven years. But we are further told that "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease". (Dan. 9. 27) By the covenant which this prince had entered into with the Jews, it is evident that he had undertaken to protect them in their religious observances; but now, in association with the antichrist, he is false to his treaty - orders the daily sacrifice to be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate to be set up (Dan. 12. 11) in the holy place. That is, an idol is set up in the temple (Read 2 Thess. 2. 4. and compare Rev. 13. 11-17.) It is to this our Lord refers in the passage we have given; and He gives the setting up of this "abomination of desolation" as the signal of flight for the godly remnant who will be found at that time in Jerusalem. Thereon a decree will be issued to the effect that all are to worship the image that has usurped the place of God, and together with this the time of tribulation will commence - raging with unheard of fury against all who refuse to obey this decree, and indeed against the Jews as such, and extending, as we may see further on, through out the whole world.

In the mercy of God this fiery trial is limited to the half week, and will therefore last three years and a half. This is the forty and two months, or the twelve hundred and sixty days, so constantly mentioned in Revelation. This coincides with the testimony of the two witnesses (Rev. 11.) and the divine judgments—the woes—therewith connected; and during this period also the devil cast down to earth, vomits out his great wrath against the remnant of the woman's seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus. (Rev. 12. 9-17.) And it is he, the dragon that gives power unto the "beast" that inspires all the actions of the head of the Roman empire, and of the antichrist against the people of God. Combining these things some idea may be formed of the unequalled character of this tribulation. It is satanic both in its source and energy, containing every element of suffering which Satan's malignant hate can invent and compound; but it is used by God to chasten the Jewish nation for their crowning sin in the rejection of their Messiah. If we add, that even the godly subjects of it will have no sense of God's favour, though His Spirit is working in their hearts, we shall in some degree understand the words of our Lord. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be". This tribulation, as already said, specially affects the Jews. The passages cited from Jeremiah and Daniel apply to them, and the reference of our Lord to Daniel, besides other indications in His discourse, leaves no room for doubt that He also had the same people in view. The past history of the nation, and the awful guilt they incurred in crucifying their Messiah, will help us to understand both its reason and object, while at the same time it is a consolation to remember that in every instance where it is spoken of, it is speedily followed by the deliverance and blessing of God's elect remnant.

2. Besides "Jacob's trouble", we read also of THE great tribulation. This is recorded in Revelation seven (Read. vv 1-3.) Accordingly one hundred and forty-four thousand are sealed out of the twelve tribes. God's spared remnant of Israel. Thereon we read "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud

voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb". (vv 9 & 10.) It is concerning this multitude that one of the twentyfour elders asked John, "Who are these arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which come out of Great Tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (VV. 13, 14.) Now we are only stating what everyone acquainted with the original readily admits, when we say that it should be read, "out of THE great tribulation". This immense multitude have been brought through it, and are in the scene before us a saved and rejoicing host. We have consequently a plain proof that there will be not only unparalleled trouble for the Jewish nation, but also, and probably about the same time (it may be a little before) a similar period of tribulation for the Gentiles — "all nations, kindreds, and people, and tongues". This would seem to be the same event as that of which our Lord speaks as "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth (Rev. 3. 10.)

As to its source and character, little if anything is revealed; but it is sufficiently accounted for by the fearful state into which the world will be plunged after the removal of the Body, the Church, and by the fact that the "beast", who will open "his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven", will have power 'over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". (Rev. 13. 5-8.)

3. The question now occurs, whether the church will be found in the tribulation? If not, who are the saints that are seen in it? Those who have read the earlier articles in this series will be already furnished with the answer; but as the subject is important, and there may be some who will only see this present article, it maybe advisable to recall the Scripture teaching on this point. In the first place it is abundantly clear, that the church will be raptured before this period. Thus we find in Rev. 19. that the beast and the false prophet (the antichrist) are taken and destroyed at the Lord's appearing (vv. 11-21) In 2 Thess. we learn that the

Lord will consume that wicked one (the antichrist) “with the brightness of His coming”. But we are taught in Colossians that “when Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory”. (Col. 3. 4.) In the Scripture (Rev. 19.) it is also said that “the armies which were in heaven followed Him” (the Word of God) “upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean”. (v. 14) and verse eight states that the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. The saints (the church) in both of these Scriptures are represented as coming WITH Christ, and it is undeniable that they must have been caught up to be with Him previously. The structure of the book of Revelation shows the same thing. “Write”, said the Lord to John, “the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter” — after these. (Rev. 1. 19) The first chapter contains what he saw; the second and third, the things which are — the church dispensation; and the rest of the book deals with the things after the church period has closed. Immediately after the third chapter, the twenty-four elders are seen in heaven sitting upon thrones, clothed in white raiment, and with crowns of gold on their head (Chap. 4. 4.) Who are these? Their crowns speak of kings, as their dress reveals their priestly, character, and points back to Rev. 1. 6. They are therefore saints, and are translated to heaven BEFORE the commencement of the tribulation.

But it maybe asked, Who are the great multitude which no man could number of Rev. 7., who are distinctly said to come out of the great tribulation? Now if the elders symbolize the church — not excluding the saints of past dispensations — it is clear that this multitude cannot point to the same class. The elders are in heaven, and this redeemed multitude are upon the earth; and this distinction helps us understand who they are. They are, as described, a vast number of Gentiles brought through the tribulation into blessing, and will therefore enter with Christ upon the glories and blessings of His millennial kingdom; no, they are to have a special place under His sway. “Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst

of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes". (vv 15-17.) The other branch of the question remains, Who are the saints seen in the tribulation? They are God's elect remnant from among Jews. This is readily seen from Matthew. 24. It is of those in Judaea our Lord speaks (v. 16.) They are to pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath (the seventh) day (v. 20.) — a direction that would have no significance except for a godly Jew under law; they are warned against false Christs (vv. 23, 24) — a warning which would scarcely be understood by Christians who know that Christ is at the right hand of God; and finally, the elect are not gathered until after the tribulation, &c., and the appearing, as we have seen the church will appear WITH Christ. Indications of the same character could be collected if necessary from Revelation; but we have already shown that the elders in heaven prove that the church could not be on the earth during the tribulation. There is abundant evidence to show that they are godly Jews, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who will be cast into this burning fiery furnace, which is to be heated "seven times more than it was wont to be heated". Their sorrows and cries during this time of unequalled anguish are traced and expressed in many of the Psalms. Believers of this dispensation are "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God: and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come". (1. Thess. 1. 9, 10) For it is to them that our Lord addresses these words, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth". (Rev. 3. 10.)

NEVER LONELY

Never lonely, never lonely while the Saviour's by my side,
Never lonely, never lonely while the Shepherd is my Guide,
All the journey He is with me in His presence I abide,
Every day my heart is singing with the blessings He is bringing,
I am never, never lonely when the Lord is by my side.

—(Anonymous).

VITAL VERITIES (11)

by E. W. ROGERS

The Atonement — Part 3

Yet thirdly, it was the

INFLICTION OF DIVINE WRATH

upon an innocent substitute. If the contemplation of man's crimes makes us abhor ourselves who once were among them who concurred in that foulest of deeds, and if the contemplation of the devil's malice with its resultant defeat fills our hearts with mingled indignation and boasting, surely this aspect of the Cross must melt our hearts and moisten our eyes. For He who was the object of that wrath, forsaken of God, and on Whom fell the sword of judgment was none other than His only Son, the Man who was His equal, the darling of His heart, His chiefest joy.

What it cost God to inflict the punishment on Him none can tell, nor indeed can any tell what it was for Him to bear it.

Listen to the words: "The Lord caused to meet on Him the iniquity of us all"—or as an alternative reading "The Lord caused to fall on Him the punishment of us all." He became surety for another, and in result "smarted for it." Against Him were the words uttered "Awake, O Sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is mine equal, smite the shepherd."

The Psalmist had said "I have been young and now am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken." Here, however, is the only perfectly righteous man that ever lived "forsaken of God." Well may the cry be raised "Why"?

Note such passages as these; "It pleased the *Lord* to bruise Him, *He* hath put Him to grief: when *Thou* shalt make His soul an offering for sin, etc." "*Thou* hast laid me in the lowest pit in darkness, in the deeps. *Thy* wrath lieth hard upon me, and *Thou* hast afflicted me with all *Thy* waves. *Thy* fierce wrath goeth over me; *Thy* terrors have cut me off. *My God, My God*, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And yet once more: "The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord

and against His Christ to do whatsoever *Thy* hand and *Thy* counsel had determined before to be done.”

Why was this? Because the Lord Jesus had voluntarily taken the place as substitute, and God had certain irrevocable claims against the sinner which justice demanded should be met. As substitute, therefore, He met those claims. It was in the heart of God to spare the sinner, and therefore He accepted the Substitute and poured on His only Begotten Son what the sinner deserved that he might go free.

That “God so loved the world that He gave His Son” is a truth only to be surpassed by this that He loved the sinner sufficiently to give *Up* (Rom. 4. 25; 8. 32) His Son. There is much difference in GIVING and GIVING UP.

Such a theme might well occupy space and pen much longer, but we must forbear.

Yet there is the fourth aspect of the matter. In certain circumstances the infliction of punishment upon a substitute is not proper, but grant that

THE SUBSTITUTE IS PERFECTLY WILLING

and desirous that it should be so, it is a glorious example of self-sacrifice and disinterested devotion to the welfare of others. Such was the case with our Lord Jesus.

Frequently do we read in the New Testament “He gave Himself”—a voluntary self-surrender. Behold Him enquiring of the mob “Whom seek ye?” Having obtained their answer, He says “If ye seek me let these go their way.” What is that but self-surrender? Note His loud cry on the cross; not the groan of a weak, dying man but the triumphant cry of a victor followed by a voluntary yielding up of the ghost. Witness His deliberate bowing of His head when the work was accomplished. All this tells of a definitely intended, purposed, voluntary act.

It was the accomplishment of the words before uttered: “I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” He saw the wolf coming, and, rather than allow the sheep to fall victim. He met the wolf, and laid down His own life for the sheep. Not that He was overpowered. “No one taketh it from me: I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down: I have authority to take it again: this commandment have I received of my Father.”

There are, however, other features which should not pass unnoticed. And first we may notice that the death of Christ was the subject of

ETERNAL DIVINE COUNSELS.

Peter speaks of "the lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." Early believers were saying "Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Seeing that the Church was elect before the foundation of the world it follows as a necessary corollary that the death of Christ must also have been a thing predetermined before the world's foundation, since apart from it there could have been no church.

The introduction of sin into Eden did not take God unawares. No sooner was it brought in, that God revealed that He had in mind and in store the Man who would effectively remedy the damage wrought, and that in such a way as to glorify Himself and to secure for man far greater blessings than those he lost.

Further, the death of the Lord Jesus was

IMPERATIVE

It was a necessary course. There was no other way by which the end in view could be reached. "He *must* die" stands as the first of four imperatives concerning Him who "*must* be raised," and Whom the "heavens *must* receive" and Who later "*Must* reign." If to Nicodemus the Lord had said "Ye must be born again" it was necessary further to emphasise that, in order to the accomplishment of this, "The Son of Man must be lifted up." Let the reader take note of such words in Luke 24. as "behoved," "ought" and "must" and recall that they represent but one Greek word which simply translated is MUST.

Yet we may ask wherein lay the necessity? Why "must"?

One answer may be given, viz.: Sin, but this answer when analysed divides itself into three parts.

(a) Plainly He must die *because of God's character*—He is holy—He cannot by any means clear the guilty—He cannot wink at sin. It is an outrage of His law and government, and

punishment *must* be brought upon the evil doer, or His substitute for *He CANNOT ignore sin.*

Again: *because also of His word.* Types and prophecy had all foreshadowed the death of the coming one, as the remedy for earth's disorder, and apart from this historical counterpart the types would have been meaningless and the prophecy would have had no proven validity. But God had forecast that so it should be, and for that reason He **MUST** die.

And yet again: because also of His heart. In His heart was golden love, warm and constant for His rebellious creatures, and He longed for their good to be established on a righteous basis. "He loved the world." "He wished all men to be saved." And if the flood-gates of that love within His heart were to be opened, and the rivers of mercy were to flow free and boundless to whosoever will, His Son **MUST** die. There was no alternative.

Oh! wondrous necessity, which brings us to yet another feature.

The death of the

LORD JESUS WAS SUBSTITUTIONARY

This is so well known that it is hardly necessary to emphasise it, but perhaps the eye of an unsaved person will peruse this page, and in case it should be so we may be permitted to emphasise it: the fact is that Christ died, and the explanation of the fact is that it was for the good and eternal blessing of sinners. "Christ died for the ungodly" said the evangelist. "Christ died for our sins" explains the teacher. "Christ loved me and gave HIMSELF for me" says the individual believer. The word "for" is the keyword of all.

This is not the place to speak at length of the various Greek prepositions which are used to denote specific aspects of the death of the Lord Jesus as a substitutionary sacrifice, but the reader may examine Romans 8. 32; Matt. 20. 28; 1 John 2. 2, and Rom. 4. 25 to discover there are in each of these verses different prepositions employed, each with its own distinctive shade of meaning, a careful study of which will be well repaid.

Remark further that the death of Christ is

UNIVERSAL IN ITS SCOPE THOUGH RESTRICTED IN ITS APPLICATION

The evangelist may intelligently preach "Christ died for the ungodly." That there is efficacy to cover the needs of all is true; that it is only applied in the case of each believer is equally true, else how is it that the doom of unbelievers is to experience eternal punishment themselves in Hell?

FAITH INDEED IS THE ONE CONDITION

It is the reversal of man's distrustful attitude in Eden. God requires that man shall change for He has not changed. Man at the beginning disbelieved and distrusted God, and thereupon brought in the ruin which now prevails. God says, if that condition for the individual is to be altered his attitude of unbelief and distrust must be abandoned, and be replaced by faith and trust.

This is the sole condition.

IT IS THE DEATH OF CHRIST WHICH EFFECTS ATONEMENT, AND NOT HIS LIFE.

Had that Sinless man lived here a spotless life and returned to heaven minus death He would have left the world, not as He found it, but the awful added responsibility of having given evidence of what man's life here should be, yet affording no power to man to achieve the ideal, nor making any provision for the failure which He thereby threw into relief. His life would have been as the Tabernacle's Veil, keeping man from God and God from man.

JESUS IS GOD (John 1.1)

"In the beginning was the Word"—eternal existence. "And the Word was with God"—distinct personality. "And the Word was God"—absolute Deity.

There is a divine Person—One who is God. He has become flesh, and the writer, associating others with himself says, "and dwelt among us." In that lovely little parenthesis he further states: "and we have contemplated his glory."

What a wonderful thing incarnation is! It brought a glory within the range of human contemplation that had never been seen before.

He is the brightness, or effulgence, outshining of God's glory.—*Selected*

“THE EPISTLE BY JAMES”

by E. R. Bower.

Chapter Four. A Living Faith Evidenced by conduct

(continued)

vv. 1-10. “lusts” (v. 1) — pleasures; “desire” (v. 2) — covet earnestly; “cannot obtain” (v. 2) — are not able to obtain; “ye ask amiss” (v. 3) — ye ask with evil intent; “consume” (v. 3) — gratify; “ye adulterers” — omit; “will be a friend” (v. 4) — wills to be a friend; “dwelleth in us lusteth” (v. 5) — abides in us eagerly longs after you; “lift you up” (v. 10) — exalt you. James is inveighing against things which were already all too evident to him. He saw how little the boasted fruit was evidenced in general behaviour. His readers were running both with the hare and with the hounds. Note the parallel of 1. 5-11 with 3. 15-4. 10; 1. 5 with 3. 17; 1. 6 with 4. 3; 1. 7 with 4. 3; 1. 8 with 4. 8; 1. 9 with 4. 10. In 1. 5-11 there is perfection in temptation through the prayer of faith; followed by humility in temptation. Here we see the contrast—imperfection through faithless prayer; followed by pride and its resultant war, sin, double-mindedness etc., James might well be of the O. T. prophets as he thunders, “Ye adulteresses” cf. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Dr. F. B. Meyer wrote, “I used to think that God’s gifts were on shelves one above the other; and that the taller we grew in Christian character the easier we could reach them. I now find that God’s gifts are on shelves one beneath the other; and that it is not a question of growing taller but of stooping lower; and that we have to go down always to get His best gifts.” “God . . . giveth grace to the humble.” What a field for the reflective mind! Dr. Andrew Murray says of the double mind, “There is no pride so dangerous, because none so subtle and insidious, as the pride of holiness. The chief mark of counterfeit holiness is its lack of humility.”

vv. 11-12. See Matt. 6. 21-24; 7. 1-5; Lev. 19. 16-17. The Scriptures are censorious in their view of the backbiting, gossiping, tongue, and yet we suffer this diabolical sin in ourselves as

individuals and within our church life. See Ps. 15. 1-3; Prov. 11. 9; 2 Cor. 12. 20; 1 Pet. 2. 1-3 and many more Scriptures that are condemnatory of the irresponsible tongue. Again James expands a former word, "Be ye doers of the word (1. 22) and this leads us on to vv. 11-17, "To him that KNOWETH to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" — and James again is very forthright. Works is a doing; doing is a matter of relationships within two spheres — that of the 'world' and that of the church; a submission of everything to the will of God. Prov. 27. 1 is seen here — "Boast not thyself of tomorrow"

Chapter Five. A living Faith EXERCISED by Persecution.

James, looking about him, sees the 'would-be rich' among the brethren and uses the familiar O. T. phrase, "Go to now" (4. 13) — and did his readers think of Gen. 11. 3, 4, and of the 'cities' that they themselves were building? Did they remember how God answered their "Go to" with His own? Widening his vision, James saw the oppression of the poor by the rich. Already he had warned against the dangers inherent in riches (1. 9-11) and had condemned the obvious partiality shown to those who were wealthy or, as we might say today, a cut above them. (2. 1-4); he saw, as we see, the allure of 'money' — not only by the 'world', but also by those who professed the Name of Christ. The apostle Paul also say this inordinate love of money as the root of all evil. (1 Tim. 6. 17-19). James says again, "Go to now, ye rich men . . .". Did he recall the words of our Lord in Luke 21. 20, and anticipate the horrors of A. D. 70?

vv. 1-6. The tenor of these verses is against 'stored-up' and ill-used wealth, and the Jewish reader was reminded of his duty under the Law (Lev. 19. 13), accused of self-indulgence and self-gratification; of looking after No. 1 first; and then of the 'last days'. See Matt. 6. 19-34, "No man can serve two masters . . . ye cannot serve God and mammon" is a verse conveniently overlooked by many, but its precept remains true, and the behaviour of a so-called affluent society endorses it. The Pharisees 'who were covetous' — blind leaders of the blind — did not, or could not, see the impossibility spoken of by the Lord. (Luke 16. 14). See 1 Cor. 6. 10; 2 Tim. 3. 2; Luke 12.15 etc.,

vv. 7-9. In 1. 3, James said, "The trying of your faith worketh

patience” and here also he stresses the need for endurance for the Lord was coming, indeed His coming was very near. How much more so today! James emphasises the truth since 4. 11-12 is repeated in thought—“Speak not against one another” for the judge standeth before the door”—the unseen Listener. See Matt. 7. 1-5.

vv. 10-11. Opening his letter with an exhortation to endure under trial and temptation, James now refers to the prophets as examples of those who endured. Cf. Heb. 11. 32-40. Job is cited as an example of patience rewarded; he saw the “end of the Lord” that He is very pitiful and of tender mercy. In the words of a hymn, “Jesus knows about our struggles.” The crown of life is promise to the overcomer (1. 12; Rev. 2. 10; 3. 11.)

Our Lord and our Redeemer is coming again. “He has left us here for one purpose — the purpose is not to get us ready for heaven; our readiness is Christ — but to witness to the world that Christ offers salvation, and to witness against the world that rejection brings judgement”, As with those who, when judgement threatened, remained outside the ark (Matt. 24. 36-39), just so the coming of the Lord is for many not a present expectation.

vv. 12-15. How James must have saturated himself with the words of his Lord! Time and again he has referred to the Sermon on the mount, and here it is to Matt. 5. 33-37. See also Lev. 19. 12. A plain ‘yes’ or a plain ‘no’ is indicative of a certainty of mind. There is no double-mindedness in this kind of answer. Prayer is the antidote to the trouble (affliction, hardship) we experience. See v. 10 and 2 Tim. 2. 3. Singing is the corollary to cheerfulness, or being of good courage, e.g. Acts 27. 25. Prayer and anointing heals the sick and the weary. See Mark 6. 13; Luke 7. 36-50; John 12. 3-9. Vvs. 14 and 15 have been subjected to much perversion on which we need not dwell here. The passage can be paraphrased, “Is anyone sick? He should call for the elders of the church (assembly) and they should pray over him, and pour a little oil over him, calling on the Lord to heal him. And their prayer, IF OFFERED IN FAITH, will heal him, for the Lord will make him well: and if his sickness was caused by some sin, the Lord will forgive him.” Our Lord Himself set the precedent for the forgiveness of the sins of the sick when He was called upon to heal them. How often is it that we hear our Lord say,

“Thy sins be forgiven thee.” Anointing with oil is not the cure; the energized prayer of a righteous man is the channel but it is our Lord who heals. The oil is, perhaps, a symbol, although in the story of the Good Samaritan it seems that the oil was used to alleviate the pain of the wounds and bruises. We know, of course, that oil is usually associated with the Holy Spirit, and with consecration or dedication. We see this in the Law, particularly in connection with the anointing of the priests, kings and prophets. There are two essentials here. Firstly the sick person must have the faith to be healed; secondly, the elders must offer prayer in the certainty of faith.

vv. 16-18. Not ‘faults’, but transgressions; a stumbling aside (see. v. 19). “Open confessions” it is said, “are good for the soul”. On the face of it, this prayer for one another is communal or assembly prayer — all for each, and each for all. “Energized prayer, effectual because it is fervent, is operative for physical and spiritual healing. Instancing Elijah as an example of effectual fervent prayer, James brings such prayer within the grasp or the ability of the ordinary man, woman or child. What Elijah did, we can do — “He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also . . . whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in Me.” (John 14. 12-13). “Fervent prayer creates and strengthens the faith required for divine power to be granted to us.”

vv. 19-20. Physical sickness has been covered by the prayer of faith, but what of spiritual sickness? The answer is not much communal or assembly prayer, although that is still necessary, but rather that of an individual concern and a face to face confrontation. This is the work of the shepherd. But what is “saving a soul from death”? (Cf. Heb. 10. 38-39). Within the context of 1.1 where the twelve tribes are addressed, James is speaking to his brethren as Jews; within the context of 2.1 he is speaking to his brethren in Christ. Thus in these early days when the letters from the apostles were addressed to the synagogues, *i.e.* Acts 13.5; 14.1; 18.4; James 2.2. the possibility is that the letters were heard by the converted and by the unconverted. Another point of view is that James was upholding the Law for a restored Israel. See Deut. 32. 46-47. Hebrews 3.12 reads, “Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. . .” and goes on to

speak of those who died in the wilderness. The Apostle Paul, quoting Isa. 6. 9-10, says, "The heart of this people is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing . . . they . . . understood . . . and shall be converted, and I should heal them." Israel had wandered far from the truth. Such conversion would indeed hide a multitude of sins and bring the sinner back from his wandering.

The theme of this forthright epistle is undoubtedly that of works, but only to the proving of faith, for without works faith is lifeless. Works are the manifestation of what faith is all about. To know how to do good, and yet fail to use that knowledge is sin.

"Be ye doers of the Word, and hearers only, deceiving your own selves" for the coming of the Lord draweth night."

—concluded

The Ministry of the Risen Lord

by The Late J. B. Hewitt, Chesterfield

2—THE MINISTRY OF RESURRECTION

John 20. v. 11-18

The Revelation to Devout Love

The writers of the Gospels present the truth of the Resurrection of Christ not only to confirm faith but to cheer the heart. There is progress in the development of truth in the "order" of the Gospels. Matthew closes with the account of the *Resurrection*, to emphasize His Sovereignty; Mark, the *Ascension*, to establish His Sinlessness; Luke the promise of the *Spirit*, the Lord effects our Salvation; John the *Second Coming*, to encourage His Saints.

John 20 portrays the Day of His Power; demonstrated (v. 1-10); venerated (v. 11-18); communicated (v. 19-23); appreciated (v. 24-29), and propagated in the Gospel message (v. 30, 31).

Here is the revelation of the Living Lord (v. 1-10) as All Supreme; to the Loving Heart (v.11-18) as always sympathetic; to His Longing Church (v. 19-23), as always Sufficient, to His

Lapsing Followers (v. 24-29) as an Assuring Friend, and in the life giving message (v. 30, 31) as an Almighty Saviour.

The supreme proof of the Resurrection, the thing that makes it not only credible but inevitable, is the person of Jesus Himself. The risen Lord by His appearances banished the sorrow of death, sanctified the home, consecrated work and defeated despair.

“The Revelation to Love” (v. 11)

Mary had a sorrowful heart and she knew the tenderness of the Lord and her sorrow was turned into joy. In Mary is personified the love and devotion of one who owed everything to her Lord, and who knew it.

“I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me early shall find Me” (Prov. 8. 17).

Love’s Affection (v. 11a) “she stood without weeping”. Forlorn, forsaken and desolate, Mary weeps. Her all had gone into the tomb with Jesus and He was gone. Earlier she said “They have taken away THE Lord” but now she says “My Lord”. How she adored Jesus, do you?

Her weeping was intense and audible; and even the sight of angels in the tomb did not check it.

Love’s Attention (v. 11b) “she stooped down and looked in” and “seeth” or “beholdeth” as in v. 6, a long contemplative gaze. Mary had nothing in all this world, but the Saviour, and she thought Him dead. She gazes in bewilderment and sees “two angels, one at the head, one at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain”. They remind us of the Cherubim on the Mercy Seat (Ex. 37. 8, 9). Later she saw Jesus as the gardener (v. 15), and then as the Saviour (v. 16). Her devotion is simple and beautifully expressed by the words she used of Him — “my Lord” (v. 13). It was that love first sought the lost Lord; and in answer to love He also first revealed Himself (Mark 16. 9).

Love’s Anxiety (v. 13) The vision and the inquiry of angels were unable to surprise or to rouse her. In reply she says, “they have taken away my Lord”. She pays no further regard to their presence; she makes no petition for their help. They don’t satisfy her, she wants her Lord.

This was the one burden of her thoughts, to all else she is

blind and deaf. She turned with arrested, lingering gaze, there was Jesus standing.

Love's Attraction (v. 14, 15) Her tears and sense of loss might explain her mistaken identity— the gardener. Jesus understood her tears, “why weepest thou” and would undertake to meet her need. She sought for a Person and not for a thing, seeking for some relief to her suspense. She is rewarded and soon her sorrow will be dispelled. She hears the voice of the Good Shepherd, her own name pronounced in a familiar tone. Joyfully she exclaims “Master”. But Mary’s faith was immature. What she craved was her Lord’s body, if need be, dead (v. 13-15).

Love's Assurance (v.16,17) Her request (v.15) brought a full revelation of her lover and her Lord. In v.15 the Lord sympathises with her, now He satisfies her heart — “Mary”. He awakens her true self, as in former days. The blinding veil of a self-chosen grief is torn off, and she expresses her new-born faith, with the accent of Galilee — “my master”. She thinks that she can now enjoy His restored Presence as in times past, but there is a prohibition (v. 17). Now she would “cling” to His body to His physical presence. She is entrusted with a message and assured of a new relationship. Fellowship towards which Mary reached would be established as abiding by His Ascension. The Resurrection appearances of the Lord brought the disciples assurance. John was convinced by His clothes, (v. 1-10); Mary was convinced by His voice (v. 11-18), the disciples were convinced by His wounds (v. 19-23), and Thomas was convinced by His grace (v. 24-29). May we join in his adoration “My Lord and My God”. The message is not “I have risen”, but “I ascend”. The revelation was in part a promise as well as a fulfilment. The Lord’s work was done; but its import had to be progressively apprehended by men. Mary learned that day something of His Priestly Sympathy — “Why weep”. His victory, “I ascend”. Our dignity — “His brethren”, and His Deity, and Authority, “My Father, My God”.

Love's Announcement (v. 18) Mary was the first to see Jesus after His death (Mark 16. 9), a humble obscure woman who had nothing to distinguish her but her forgiven heart, and no claim at all but her love. She is commissioned and signally honoured at first messenger of His resurrection, she joyfully obeyed. She must have been thrilled that once again she was engaged in serv-

ice for her Lord, and the beginning of far higher service that would not cease.

Have we lost the thrill of the Victorious Lord and His soul emancipating message. W. H. Griffith Thomas writes, "Armed with a threefold message — (a) To a world under condemnation, we proclaim the atonement of Christ; and (b) To a world in bondage to fear, we proclaim the resurrection of Christ; and (c) To a world at enmity with God, we proclaim the ascension, intercession and return of Christ. This is the full and glorious gospel!" In times of depression and despondency may we like Mary turn ourselves (v. 14) and see our Lord as the Conqueror of Death — His victory (v. 1-10); the Comforter of Hearts — His Sympathy (v.11-18); Calming our Fears — His Centrality (v. 19-23); Confirming our Faith — His Authority (v. 24-29) and the Communicator of Life — His Ability (v. 30, 31).

The Revelation to Penitence (Luke 24.34; Mark 16.7; 1 Cor. 15.5).

As far as we can work it out, the second appearance of the Lord Jesus was to Peter. The Lord meets the yearning heart of this penitent defeated apostle.

Sincere Repentance (Mark 14. 72) Did he recall and use the words of Psa. 130. 1-4? What would he give to unsay those words of denial. He would have loved to hear one word of pardon from His Lord. The word and the look of the Master broke his heart and he wept bitterly (Matt. 26. 75).

Thought, sorrow and action were seen in his change of life See him running (John 20. 4), in contrast to following afar off and sitting at the world's fire (Matt. 26. 58; Mark 14. 54). Peter never expected the Resurrection and the sight of his Master again.

The Saviour's Remembrance (Mark 16. 7) The Lord was not content with a passing look of sorrow upon the wanderer. He had a personal interest in him and a special message for him "and Peter" (Mark 16. 7). That message would assure him of the unchanging love of his Master.

Sweet Restoration (Luke 24. 34; 1 Cor. 15. 5). A veil is drawn over the third appearance of the Risen Lord. He saw His erring and sorrowing servant alone first and saved him much embarrassment (Psa. 32. 5). We have no record of Peter's deep contrition

for it is too sacred to mention, but he was graciously restored (Psa. 23. 3). There is a jubilant note in the message of the two who returned with the good news to the saints (Luke 24. 34). Peter is restored privately as a disciple then publicly as an apostle (John 21. 15-19). Like Peter we can know the forgiveness of the Lord for our failure.

SIGNS OF THE END (1)

By The late W. J. M'Clure.

*(These articles appeared in 1918 in the Believers' Magazine.
How much more relevant now!)*

All attempts to fix dates for the second coming of the Lord Jesus have resulted in failure, bringing that precious truth into reproach. The time set by such calculations came and passed, but the Lord did not come. This has led some to regard a truth which, of all others, should be dear to the believer, as if it were purely a matter of speculation, and they therefore leave it alone. Very likely this was the very thing at which Satan aimed, in the setting of dates for the Lord's coming again.

Now, while many have gone astray in this respect, care is needed lest we go to the opposite extreme, and fail to see the signs, which are multiplying on every hand, which indicate the nearness of His appearing. To read aright such signs as God may give regarding the nearness of the end of this age, and to fix a date for it, are as different as truth and error. Some ninety years ago*, the Lord was pleased to restore to the church the longlost truth of the personal return of His Son as His people's hope (I Thess.1.10). Then, like the midnight cry, it awakened, as out of a sleep, many of the people of God, so that they began to look for the speedy coming of Christ, as promised in the Word. Could we have talked with any of those dear men, and asked them if they thought that ninety years would elapse ere the Lord would come, we cannot imagine their answer being in the affirmative. No; they truly expected that His coming was very near. It may be said by some, "If these Christians thought that His coming was imminent ninety years ago, may it not be that others, fifty or more years hence, will still be waiting for the realisation of the hope?" This is most unlikely. We now have clear evidences of the nearness of the end of the age, that they did not

possess. The signs which we desire to point out had not materialised, when the precious truth of the Lord's coming first opened up to us. Our object in these Short Papers is, to briefly point out some of these signs so that we might be stirred up to look for His return—which must precede their fulfilment—not as an event of the distant future, but as something near at hand.

We get a word in Matt. 24.33, which has literally to do with God's earthly people Israel, after the church has been caught away, but the principle of it we can apply to our own case. "Even so also, when ye see all these things, know that He is nigh, even at the doors" (R.V.). So, as we read the conditions described in the Epistles, as marking the end, and find them prevailing all around us, may we read aright their meaning, and be taught to act as God would have us amid such conditions .

SIGN I.—THE APOSTASY OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH.—In the seven letters to the Churches in Rev. ii. and iii., we have an inspired chart of the church's testimony on earth, from the days of the apostles until the coming of the Lord. Just as the mariner, sailing along the coast, consults his chart, on which are marked the lighthouses, capes, headlands, and bays, and learns thereby just where he is, so the Christian, who has learned to read aright the Lord's messages to the seven churches, can approximate as to where he is, in regard to the progress of the dispensation.

The Philadelphian stage was reached when the Lord restored the truth of His return and the simple gathering to His Name. Now, surely the Laodicean, or closing stage, is reached. Laodicea is not charged with the gross things named against Thyatira. The professing church of the present, makes much of Morality, Temperance, Civic Righteousness, National Righteousness, etc. It is self-complacent; its language is, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (ver. 17). Surely in respect of material things, it has reason to speak thus. In no period of its existence has the professing church been so rich in societies, associations, guilds, leagues, and circles for carrying on its work, as now. Indeed, its wealth of machinery enables it to get along without God, for when it is saying that it has "need of nothing," the One it professes to serve, is seen standing OUTSIDE the closed door. And those inside don't seem to miss Him. Indeed, His presence would be disconcerting, for there is too much among them that He would have to deal with and to judge.—*to be continued.*

(* *i.e.* the 1820's. — Ed.)

The Threefold Secret of Blessing

by the Late Thomas Newberry (of the Newberry Bible)

There are three great principles of realised blessing and of manifested glory as set forth in the dedication of the House of God in 2 Chronicles 5. 6-14 (which please read before reading this article).

I. All our spiritual Blessings for Time and for Eternity are Founded on Atonement.

V. 6: "Solomon, and those "that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude."

As though all were too few and small to show forth the inestimable value of the sacrifice of Christ which those offerings forshadowed! Indeed, its priceless value is beyond all human estimate. No mind but the mind of God, no heart but the heart of the eternal Father, will ever be able to fathom its boundless depths, and reach its wondrous heights.

Hence, too, we begin each fresh portion of time, in imitation of the spirit-taught disciples, by meeting together on the first day of the week in remembrance of it, and of Him that offered it.

II. Giving the Lord Jesus His own proper place—central and pre-eminent.

"JESUS IN THE MIDST."

V. 7: "The priests brought in the ark of the covenant unto His place."

In time and in eternity, the place which the Father gives to the Son is the centre. In the bosom of the Father, as the centre of Divine affections; in the midst of the throne, as the centre of universal empire; and in the midst of the Church, as His proper and rightful place on earth.

In the midst of the Church universal as walking in the

midst of the seven golden lampstands; and in the midst of the Assembly of disciples gathered to His name. Not *in* His Name merely, but TO or UNTO His Name; that is, *to His person*.

When the Lordship of Christ is owned, every question is easily settled as to the Church and its discipline; and when the Lordship of Christ is recognised and submitted to in the Assembly, the blessing is unbounded.

When none lifts hand or foot without Him. Not only not acting contrary to His will, but not acting without his will. None daring to give out a hymn, read a chapter, speak or pray, with out having first caught His eye, and obtained direction or permission from Him.

Now that the Lord Jesus is away, the Holy Ghost is not setting up a democracy, but maintaining the Lordship of Christ, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Him.

Some seem to act as if they thought that having got rid of the "one man ministry," every one is at liberty to do what is right in his own eyes. Hence the spiritual poverty of many Assemblies. Better be under the tyranny of one man than of a dozen or a hundred or a million. As a remedy for all this, let the ark be brought into this place. let the Lordship of Jesus be owned. "Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all."

III. Harmony and fellowship in the Spirit.

V. 13: "As the trumpeters and the singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah . . . then the house was filled with a cloud, even the House of Jehovah."

Thus was it also at Penetcost. A solemn responsibility rests on those who profess to lead the worship of God's saints, that no chord of discord should be struck, but that all should be harmony and unity; that every word should be so distinctly uttered that all may hear, and that no sentence should be spoken but such as all might have fellowship with.

Where there is unity in the Spirit the glory comes in, and there is no room for the flesh; but where the flesh has its place the glory is shut out, and the Spirit is quenched. Then the more fleshly are the more prominent.

The Three Great Principles.

The *first* principle is represented by **Calvary**, where the Sacrifice was offered to God.

The *second* by the **Mount of Olives**, whence the SON ascended to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high.

The *third* is **Pentecost**, when the SPIRIT descended to baptize into one body the members of the risen and exalted Lord, and to form them into an holy habitation for God and for the manifestation of His glory.

May grace be granted to each of us to own "the Lordship of Christ."

The Joy of the Lord (1)

by The Late William Hoste

Perverseness has ever been a characteristic of man. In the beginnings of Judah's judgements we read, "In that day did the Lord of Hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness and to girding with sackcloth: and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: let us eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die." (Isa. 22. 12, 13). But the unless men will turn to God with true repentance, how can He cause His judgements to cease?

Later, when the restored remnant of Nehemiah's day were called to joy and feasting: behold, sorrow and mourning. Does God say weep? men feast! Does He call to feasting? they weep! But the Levites exhorted the people to take comfort. "This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep..... for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8. 10). There is much to depress God's people to-day,

as then. There are weaknesses and failures, the Sanballats and Tobiahs to oppose, besides the peculiar circumstances of the hour. But, amid all, "the joy of the Lord is our strength." This is usually taken to mean that joy in the Lord makes us strong. And that is surely true. We are indeed commanded to "rejoice in the Lord alway" (Phil. 4. 4). But we need strength to do it. It is only as we enter into "the joy of the Lord," that the joy of the Lord enters into us. It was precisely with his disciples' joy in view, that our Lord desired to communicate His own joy to His disciples. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15. 11).

When the good shepherd was carrying the lost sheep on His shoulder rejoicing, it might have been slaughter or sacrifice. But animals are quick to catch the tone of a human voice, and the glad note of the shepherd's joy would inform its instinct, that all was well. And had it understood the meaning of "Rejoice with Me, I have found My sheep which was lost," it could have argued, "Since my shepherd sets such store by me, as to invite others to rejoice with him on my account, and he calls me his sheep. Certainly he never will let me perish."

To the prodigal, the father's kiss meant forgiveness; and the best robe and fatted calf supplied his immediate needs. But the father's joy went further still, and assured him of permanent restoration to all the privileges of the home. He was no mere passing guest, but a son of the house. It gives great assurance and comfort to each forgiven sinner to learn, that he is the subject of "joy in the presence of the angels of God." Yes, the Father has prepared a feast up there, on our account. They have "begun to be merry" in the Father's house over us. Surely, then, we can well be merry too. And the joy of heaven thus shared by us will prove our strength indeed, even amid depressing scenes.

"How deep, how full, the joy of Him
Who sits upon the throne!
The joy, the gladness of His heart,
In calling us His own."

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (9)

by the Late S. H. Moore

"Testimony and early experiences"

I count it a privilege to be able to share with you a little of my experiences regarding the Lord's dealings with me in earlier life, Which I trust will be a blessing to all who read.

Although labouring for the Lord in S. Africa for over 51 years, I was born in N. Ireland, one of a family of eight and brought up in a Christian home.

Our parents sought to bring us up in the admonition and fear of the Lord, so I knew from my earliest days that my greatest need was God's salvation. As a result of constant attendance at Sunday School and Gospel meetings I heard the Gospel regularly until the great truths of, Ruin by the fall, Redemption by the Blood and Regeneration by the Holy Spirit became familiar to me. I didn't know then that the Good seed of the Word thus being sown in my young heart was to bring forth an abundant harvest in days and years to come.

For sometime it was evident to me that a work of grace was going on in my youthful heart, but as well, an intense conflict.

In my own bedroom on the 23rd November 1923 at the age of 17, after returning from a Gospel meeting the awful struggle came to an end. Just then, the Holy Spirit, through the truth of John 5 v 24 revealed the finished work of Christ to my soul. "He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life". From God's blessed Word I had the assurance that I had "passed from death unto life".

My immediate desire was to share my newfound joy with others — often I put tracts in my pocket intending to pass them on but I'm afraid very often I carried them home again, so I decided if I was going to engage in this work, I would need to carry them in my hand, which I did.

About two years after my conversion the Late Mr. John Hutchinson asked me to open the Gospel meeting for him one evening, I said, "Oh Mr. Hutchinson I couldn't do that, ask my Uncle Henry, he could do it well". He said to me, "I didn't ask your Uncle Henry, I asked you". So although most reluctant to do so, grace was given. From this simple beginning I had the urge to take part in the public proclamation of the Gospel, at the same time, carrying on with my secular employment, which at that time was with my brother who was in the Transport Haulage business.

After some time this proved unsatisfactory as very often when I had arranged to take a Gospel meeting, I was perhaps 30 or 40 miles away. So in due course I changed to the oil business and was in charge of Munster Simms Depot in Newry—my home town. So having fixed hours I was able on many occasions to share in series of Gospel meetings with others.

The district around my own home was continually on my heart. In the early 1930's I built a hall for Sunday School and Gospel work. A number of the leading brethren in our own Assembly helped me with the erection of this hall which was a great joy to me, many heard the Gospel and trusted Christ.

On a number of occasions I was approached by older Full-time Workers-Godly men — Dr. Matthews, Mr. John Hutchinson, Mr. John Hagan etc., if I wouldn't think of quitting my job and go full time into the Lord's work. My answer to each was the same — "I have an exercise, but I don't know where".

At that time there were about 40 full time workers in the North of Ireland and I did not want to add to the burden of having to be supported. So I continued working while my heart burned with the passion to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, longing to warn and exhort men and women to flee from the wrath to come.

Around this time Bro. Bertie Douglas with his wife arrived home from Venezuela. I heard him a few times giving a report of his work there, I was interested and felt perhaps this was where the Lord would have me go. I mentioned to

Bertie what was on my mind, he gave me every encouragement, however God had other plans. Bertie had been asked to speak at a Sunday School tea meeting, but in the meantime he got flu. However he did not want to disappoint so he spoke at that meeting, got a relapse and in a short time went to be with the Lord. Needless to say this was a great blow to me, but I continued working and preaching. As I look back now, how wise the Lord was! I perhaps, in my inexperience was looking to man and not depending alone upon the Lord, however He knew my exercise, so as I've said I continued waiting upon Him in prayer, preaching and working.

The chairman of Munster Simms, Mr. Frederick Greaves was a Godly gentleman and gave me a free hand if I wanted a few hours off work for anything. I did not abuse this privilege, but as the late Mr. John Hutchinson to whom I have referred did not have a car I often drove him around to wherever he wanted to go. He was one man who gave me great encouragement—a true friend and Spiritual guide. On one particular day we were going to a funeral together, as we were driving along, he said to me, "I had a letter from Willie Bunting in S. Africa, when we come home again I will show it to you" which he did. After mentioning different matters regarding the country, its need etc., Willie finished his letter by saying, "Have you no young men there that you could spare"? That one statement seemed to come straight to my heart. I folded the letter, gave it back to him and said nothing. He later showed it to Mr. John Hagan, an elder in the Newry Assembly, his comment was, there's the door open for Sam now if he would only go.

A short time later I asked Mr. Hutchinson if he had replied to brother Bunting's letter yet, he said he had not and asked me if I had any thoughts about it, I said, yes, I was having serious thoughts. He told me if I was sure it was the Lord's will for me to go to S. Africa that he would go with me to see the elders of a number of Assemblies (5 in all). We did this, and when we explained matters there was not one dissenting voice. When leaving for S. Africa I got the right hand of fellowship, and was commended by these five Assemblies—Gransha, Newry, Banbridge, Shanaghan and

Drumlough. Mr. Hutchinson's word to me at that time was—in my leaving, he would be loosing one of his best friends, but at the same time encouraged me in every way to go.

Well after that, as one would expect, things started moving. First of all I felt I should try and find someone suitable to take over my job. The Lord directed me to a young Christian man who was quite happy to take over and who turned out to be very satisfactory. Mr. Greaves letter when I was leaving, was a great encouragement to me also, among other things, he said he was very sorry loosing me but as he had this interest at heart too he could not stand in my way from serving a Higher Master.

When news got around of my going to serve the Lord in S. Africa, that year at the Easter Conference in Belfast, Captain Hill who was the acting Chairman mentioned it publicly to an audience of around three to four thousand people, He also asked me to rise to my feet so that all could see who Sam Moore was.

Later that year I got married — another big step — to Norah Mabel, who was also at that time exercised about going into the Lord's work. By that time preparations for leaving were well in hand. We eventually left the Homeland towards the end of August 1936 and spent two weeks in England before leaving London on the Union Castle Ship. After 18 days at sea we duly arrived in Cape Town, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to serve Him there.

We were met by Mr. Bunting and Mr. Young who fixed us up with accommodation. After having been shown around the Peninsula, we soon got started into the Good Work.

Our first long series of Gospel work in the tent lasted two months, from there we moved a little further for another two months, during these fruitful four months over 60 professed to be saved — truly it was a time of visitation. One evening I baptized 27, three weeks later another 17 and at intervals, more. Our work has been mainly among the Non—European community.

The first 10 years in the country we saw ten new Assemblies established. The Lord was working, we were only the instruments He choose to use. My practice was, open up a new district with the Gospel—see souls saved—teach the new converts—plant an Assembly, then move onto another area and start again. The Assemblies planted in those early days, we are thankful to say, are still functioning, some quite large, with well over 100 in fellowship.

It gives me great joy to look back over the past 51 years in this country and others such as the Rhodesias, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, America, England, Scotland and of course Ireland in service for, and with the Lord—the best of Masters. — The record is on High.

I urge upon all who read these lines to go in for serving the Lord with all purpose of heart, there's is no higher ambition.

—Jan. 1988.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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The Paradise of God

8.7.87

*Where the saints in glory thronging,
Where they feed on life's blest tree—
There is stilled each earnest longing
Satisfied our souls shall be.*

*Safety— where no foe approaches;
Rest— where toil shall be no more;
Joy— whereon no grief encroaches;
Peace— where strife shall all be o'er:*

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

*Drink of life's perennial river,
Feed on life's perennial food,
Christ, the Fruit of Life, and Giver—
Safe through His redeeming blood.*

*Object of eternal pleasure,
Perfect in Thy work divine!
Lord of glory! without measure
Worship, joy and praise are Thine.*

—J.N.D

THE BLESSED HOPE

by D. M. MARTIN, Dorset

Part X—The Appearing of Christ

A major difference between the Lord's coming and His appearing is, that in the former case He comes FOR His saints and in the latter WITH his saints. The kingdom therefore is always connected with His appearing as it is then that He will assume His power, and 'have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth! (Psa. 72. 8).

This event will be somewhat unexpected. Buried in profound slumber, and deaf to all warning, the world under strong delusion which has been sent upon it, will have believed the lie, Satan's falsehood, and trusted his masterpiece, the antichrist. Men will have found their happiness in forgetting God; and will be "as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be! (Matt. 24. 38, 39) So sudden will it be, bursting upon an astonished and careless world that "as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day" (Luke 17. 24)

We need a more intelligent idea of this great and wonderful event. Towards the close of the tribulation described in the last article, there will be a coalition of hostile powers against the Jews, spoken of in Psalm 83. 3, 4. The chief actors in this confederacy would seem to be the Assyrian, so often spoken of by Isaiah. (See Isa. 10. 24-27 & 14. 25, etc.,) otherwise the king of the north, or the little horn of Daniel. 8v9: the first "beast" i.e. the head of the revived Roman empire, and the false prophet — the antichrist (Rev.13 &19). Zechariah refers to this when he cries in the name of the Lord (Zech. 12. 2, 3) It is Satan, as ever, who inspires the minds of the enemies of Israel, but the Lord uses them to chastise the apostate nation, and as a result Zechariah also says, "Behold the day of the Lord cometh and thy spoil shall

be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle. (14. 1, 2) In Revelation we find other actors in the scene, though their hostility is described as against the Lamb and against His saints, and we have there a later development of their schemes, occasioned by the appearing of Christ (Rev. 19v19). In Zechariah, the order of events may be indicated. All nations are gathered to battle against Jerusalem, and, the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city (Zech. 14. 2). It is at this point, when they are wreaking their vengeance upon these unhappy people, when the malignant purposes of Satan are near their completion, "then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle." (Zech. 14. 3).

However, Satan's allies are not to be robbed of their prey, and goaded on to the crowning act of their impious course, led by the 'beast' and the false prophet, (who have been seeking to wipe out the name of God and His Christ from the earth, and to erase their memory from the hearts of men) they dare now to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army! They rush to their doom (See Rev. 19. 19-21). Isaiah speaks of this when he says "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked (One)" (Isa. 11. 4): Paul adds, "And then shall that wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2. 8). God arises, and His enemies are scattered. Other details are described by the Lord. (See Matt. 24. 29, 30 also Joel. 2. 30, 31).

There will be signs above and below to herald the appearing of Christ, when He comes with ten thousand of His saints, when every eye shall see Him, and they (also) which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him (Rev. 1. 7). It will be a scene of awful and impressive grandeur; for it will be the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus. 2. 13).

Having touched upon the fact and manner of His appearing, we may indicate some of its accompanying events. One of these

has already been noted — the destruction of His foes. Then follows the conversion of Israel (See Zech. 12. 9-14 & 13. 1).

After the church has been removed, God will begin to act by His Spirit in the hearts of His ancient people — the remnant so constantly mentioned in the Psalms and prophets; and these, as may be gathered from the Psalms and portions of Isaiah, will be bowed to the dust, under the sense of God's holy indignation against His people Israel on account of their apostasy; and it is this feeling, combined with their fearful trouble, that gives character to their cries as there recorded. At this moment, when the furnace of affliction into which they have been cast burns most fiercely, that the Lord appears for them, and they recognize and look upon Him whom they have pierced. The true Joseph reveals Himself to His brethren, they are plunged into bitter sorrow and humiliation on account of their, and their nation's sin. But provision is made for this also in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and their cry is "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation". It is not only the remnant in Jerusalem that will be affected; for we find in connection with His appearing "He shall send his angels with a great sound of trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Wherever they are found not one will escape the notice of His eye, but all will be brought to share in the blessings of the kingdom which He comes to establish. As we read in Isa. 11,12. It is probable that it will not be completely established until after the commencement of His reign; for after the display of His power and glory, after the Lord has come 'with fire and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire! some of the saved are sent forth to declare His glory among the Gentiles; and it is said that they (the Gentiles) "shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." There is another event of importance to be noted in connection with and preparatory to, the establishment of the kingdom. That is the destruction of the

'beast' and the 'false prophet', and the slaughter of their followers, (Read Rev. 20. 1-3). Thus the Lord asserts His power in judgement upon the trinity of evil — Satan, the 'beast' and the false prophet — which had risen up against Him, and blasphemously usurped His authority. At this time He delivers His people — the elect of Israel — clearing the way and laying the foundation of His millennial reign. Leaving the consideration of the kingdom itself to the next article, we ask the readers' attention to those with whom Christ will associate Himself in His reign. There are several distinct classes that will have this honour. Everyone understands that believers of this dispensation of grace will reign with Christ. This is too plainly asserted to leave a single doubt, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him". (2. Tim. 2. 12) But it is not so generally apprehended that there are others to be singled out for this special exaltation; yet this is distinctly stated in the Scriptures. (Read Rev. 20. 4-6). The group sitting on thrones to whom judgement is given is composed of the armies that followed Christ out of heaven (Rev. 19. 14), i.e. the saints who had been caught up previously to meet the Lord in the air, in a word the church and perhaps the saints of previous dispensations. But there are two other classes; first, those who were martyred during the power of antichrist — those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God; and secondly, those who stood aloof from his seductions, and, unmoved by his threats, refused to receive his distinguishing sign. As a special mark of the Lord's approbation, and in recompense for their loyalty amid the general unfaithfulness they are made partakers of the first resurrection, and consequently of association with Christ in His kingdom. They share both the priestly and kingly dignity, the honour they inherit through the grace of Him who saw their sufferings, and rejoiced in their constancy and testimony to His name. This passage has sometimes been explained away by the contention that the resurrection here spoken of is figurative. If so, the resurrection and judgement described in the latter part of the chapter will also be figurative, and therefore the whole truth of a final judgement will be frittered away. NO: words so plain cannot be robbed of their significance, to say nothing of their perfect agreement with other portions of God's word. Blessed prospect for the saints of God! And how they will

rejoice, in their association with Christ in the splendour of His kingdom, unspeakable as will be the honour, but in the fact of His receiving the place belonging to Him both by title and purchase! There are even greater voices in heaven to celebrate the event. (Read Rev. 11. 15-17) With what terror will this poor world be filled, when they behold the One whom they refused and rejected coming in great power and glory, to judge everything now according to the standard of His immutable righteousness! And He will come as a thief in the night unexpected and finding many unprepared. When the world feels secure in its peace proposals and agreements. On Friday, 30th October 1987, President Regan commenting on the forth-coming agreement on the reduction of intermediate nuclear missiles said "This agreement would be the commencement of Peace and Safety in the world."

VITAL VERITIES (12)

by E. W. ROGERS

The Resurrection of Christ

Christ is alive! This is not only the basic item of the Christian faith; it is the essential factor to proper Christian living.

As a tenet it is well known and acknowledged: as a vital force, has it full sway with us?

Christ is alive! The Holy Spirit's presence on earth attests His presence in heaven. The grave supply is empty. Hades no longer holds Him. The Spirit of Christ indwells every believer linking each effectually by a living bond, even while on earth, to the Risen Head in heaven. His risen life is imparted to all who believe. Because He lives, we also live also. He is much more than Hero and Exemplar. He is Head.

Christ is alive! Therefore His interest in us did not cease when He died: it is continued now: it is operative although in another sphere.

His resurrection opened up the way for the full accomplish-

ment of all the foreshadowings of God concerning His Son. His promises too which seemed doomed to failure by His death, are now assured. His resurrection proved once and for all that the bonds of death which appeared to be unbreakable could be torn away. It furnishes comfort to the bereaved, and hope to the dying saint. It promises peace and blessing to the war-stricken earth. All nations are to benefit under the righteous rule of the Risen King. Creation itself will be delivered from its bondage of corruption. The ruin of the fall is undone by the resurrection-triumph of the Cross. The removal of sin and the complete justification of the believing sinner are guaranteed by it. It affects everything.

It is incontrovertibly true. *Christ IS risen!* His Apostles saw Him. His voice was heard. His scars were seen. At morning, noon and night He appeared to His own, either singly or in small companies, or to a throng of some hundreds. Tangible, visible, audible. The same as He was hitherto known, yet manifesting Himself in ways not to hitherto employed. It is surpassing strange that any should doubt. Yet in Paul's day there were such. For which cause he devotes a long chapter to discussing the general topic of resurrection. The resurrection of Christ out from the dead is his evidence: its evidences, its implications, and its glorious final result (1 Cor. 15). Scientists may read that chapter and find food for thought: doubters may read it and find a basis for their faith. The bereaved may read it and find balm for their wounds. All may read it and find hope despite the hopelessness of all else. The manifestation of this Risen Man converted Paul. His appearances emboldened the erstwhile timid Peter. It made the fearful band of eleven men a mighty host for God.

The fear of His possible resurrection disturbed the religious leaders of His day. Vainly, however, did they employ the means proposed to keep Him in the grave. Seal the tomb they may: His resurrection ensures that He will later seal the Devil himself under eternal doom. His resurrection turned the tables. It was God's reversal of man's decision. It was God's approval of Him Whom men "disapproved" and "rejection."

The rulers may try to spread a false explanation of the unusual phenomenon, but their credulity must have been immense. Did they really suppose they would get away with that incriminating statement? If the disciples actually stole the body they were in-

deed extraordinary men. Some strange emboldenment must have come over them who, a very little time before, were fleeing for fear. Why not have the matter settled once and for all if their theory were true? Make them produce the body if they had stolen it. The authorities alleged they knew who were the thieves. Then make them forfeit the body. Why did they not insist on their so doing, unless it be they knew the falsity of their "explanation." Yet to this day men do not believe that *Christ is alive!* Some still believe the false report. How easy it is to foist a lie on a gullible and unbelieving public!

Over five hundred saw Him on earth after He was raised: three men, Stephen, Paul and John saw Him in heavenly glory, and left on record in inspired writ what they saw. Could evidence be stronger? He Who wrought physical miracles when here below, is the same Who after His death, from above, wrought similar miracles on earth through His Apostles. *Christ is alive!*

The evangelists all record it: the early preachers without exception preached it: the inspired Apostles erect their doctrinal structures upon it: the Seer in his Unveiling begins with it (Rev. 1. 5-7). It is central: basic: essential.

The resurrection of Christ made a new book of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. It reconciled otherwise unreconcilable passages. It bridged gaps which seemed to be unbridgable. It explained statements which manifestly were not true of the actual speaker, but were true of Him that was to come (e.g. Psa. 16). It shed its light on the meaning of ancient Jewish history. Such events as the sparing of Abraham's son (Gen. 22) receive new significance. The strains of the prophets, which misled interpreters to postulate two Messiahs, by the resurrection are all seen to refer One.

By His resurrection the darkness of the night had passed: the dawn of a new era synchronised with the dawn of a *new day*. Old Covenant things had passed away. An era of New Covenant blessings commenced with the commencement of the *new week*. Many a solitary soul like Mary have, since her, heard His voice calling them by name. Many gathered companies of the saints, besides the first band of fearful disciples, have realised His presence in the midst. To Israel will yet be given the manifestation of

His wounds, calling from them as from Thomas of Old, the exclamation of reverent worship.

He still feeds His people with sweet and nourishing dainties (John 21). He still entrusts to His special friends the care of His sheep. He still walks with His own. He opens the Scriptures even now, and He warms the believing heart of the traveller on life's chilly road. All His bygone activities on earth He continues now from heaven.

The promise of salvation is contingent on belief of the fact that *Christ is risen!* God hath raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10. 9). Unbelief is the despairing admission of the eternal triumph of sin and death. By His resurrection His claim to deity was justified. By it He was inaugurated into the office of High Priest on behalf of His people. By it He was made Head over all things on behalf of the Church.

Christ is risen! This was one of a series of necessities. He must die: He did. He must be raised: He was. The heavens must receive Him: they have. He must reign: without doubt He will. Heaven would be empty and earth would be hopeless had He not been raised. Death would have triumphed. His prophetic claim would have been falsified. His promises would have been void. In a word, all would have failed had Death conquered Him. But this Good Shepherd of the Sheep, Who laid down His life in their interests, took it again. For that He had His Father's authority. His Father, Whom He had pleased (never more than in early life and death) signified His pleasure by raising Him from dead.

And what shall I more say? Space forbids a more elaborate statement. Human thought cannot fully apprehend all the bearings of this wondrous event. Not until we are in the presence of the Risen Lord shall we be able fully to apprehend the heights and depths, the breadth and length of the wrought-out scheme which seemed to be thwarted by His death, but was given an irresistible impetus by His resurrection.

Opposers may argue, dispute and deny. The evidence of history and Scripture may be rejected, but personal experience is undeniable. Millions there are who have such an experience: their lives manifest it.

“You ask me how I know *He lives? He lives* within my heart.”

PSALM SIXTY-EIGHT

by E. R. BOWER

“THE BURDEN BEARER”

Even a cursory reading of this Psalm will show that it is a processional Psalm; a song that celebrates, not one single victory, but the victories of the past, of the present and of the future. Most of the commentators agree that it was probably composed upon the occasion of the ascent of the Ark of the Covenant from the house of Obed-Edom to the house of David in Zion. (2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 15;). It will be remembered that during the wilderness journey of Israel, they did not go forward until the pillar of cloud and of fire moved, and the Ark of the Lord set forward with this prayer, “Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered: and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee.” (Numb. 10.33-36;). This Psalm begins, “Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered.” and it recalls the outgoings of God on behalf of His people. It is a Psalm of the “Then”; the “Now” and the “will be”. It has been described by various writers as “a masterpiece among the world’s lyrics”; as the “Marching song of the Mighty Monarch”; as “a record of the goings of God.” The writer of these notes sees it as the victory of the Burden Bearer. Learned theologians have described it as the “cross of the critics” and the “reproach of interpreters”, but it would seem that they miss the spiritual in their search for the historical. They treat as ‘man-breathed that which is ‘God-breathed’; overlooking, that just as Abraham “looked for a city whose Builder and Maker is God” (Heb. 11,10;); and as Moses erected a Tabernacle that was patterned after things in the heavens, so David also prepared for a Temple, the plans of which had been given him by the Spirit of God. (Ex. 25.39; 26.30; 27.8; 1 Chron. 28.19;). Notice that the chronicler describes it as given “in writing, by His hand upon me”. If the hand of God was upon David to describe the Temple before it was built, then why not accept that his Psalms were also by the hand of God?

We have said that this Psalm is ‘processional’, but David sees more than just a procession up to the Temple. He sees, as it were, the procession of the centuries, the leading of God from the Exo-

due to the Kingdom. The Psalm commences with the thought of the pillar of cloud and of the Ark of the Covenant, not unlike 1 Cor. 10. 1-4. Did David, in his musings in the Law and as he saw the goings forth of God in redemption, some of which were not so far removed from his own time, ponder upon that mysterious Angel in the cloud? The Angel of the Lord, the Angel of the Covenant, the Angel of the Presence who is believed to be none other than the second Person of the Trinity, or Triunity, of God, the Word of, and the Son of God, our Lord, Jesus Christ. (Ex. 14. 19-25; 23.20-25;) "My Name" said God, "is in Him", that is, the Angel. See, too, Ex. 32.31—33.17;). This is the Person Whom David saw by faith. The fulfilment of a great promise — see 2 Sam. 7.16; Ps. 132.8-11; note ref. to Num. 10.35, and to "the Anointed"—the Messiah, or Christ; Ps. 84.9; Luke 1.32; Rom. 1.3; etc.

The tenor of the Psalm is set for us in the introductory verses, 1-6 especially in the clause (v.6), "He bringeth out those which are bound with chains". (Is. 42.1-7; Luke 4.17-21).

David now draws upon three songs—two from the Law; one from the history of the Judges of Israel—for his own song of victory. The first song was the Song of Redemption sang by Moses and the children of Israel as they saw their oppressors in Egypt dead upon the sea shore. (Ex. 15.1-21;). The second was the Song of Witness (Deut. 31.28—32.44;), and the third song, The Song of the Willing Offerings (Jud. 5.1-35;). These songs are songs of redemption, of blessing, of the inheritance, and of the future glory for Israel and the nations. It will be noticed that a phrase in the song of Deborah: "Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive" is taken up by David. For David, Barak's victory over Sisera and his nine hundred chariots of iron was a picture of the "many thousand" of chariots that were in the service of his God in leading captivity captive (v.18). Did these thoughts of past battles bring to David's mind the Redeeming Angel that led Jacob in the way that he should go (Gen. 28. 10-22; 48.16;); or the Captain of the Lord's host standing before Jericho (Josh. 5.13-15;); or the Angel in the cloud, and those other theophanic appearances of the Son of God? If so, then here is the answer to the "Thou" of v.18 of Psalm 68. "Thou hast led captivity captive. "David had received a promise from God that "of the fruit of his

lions, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (see Acts 2. 22-36;) and to him had been revealed something of the Sufferings of Christ and of His resurrection. See also Acts 13. 26-41;.

Thus we come to what may be termed the key text of the Psalm, "Thou has ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captives thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the church at Ephesus quotes this verse 18 of the Psalm, saying (4. 8-10), "wherefore He saith, 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' Now this, He ascended', what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things." Various translations show the word 'captivity as 'a body of captives' or similar, but the A.V. 'captivity' means (according to an old dictionary), "bondage, slavery, wholly at the power of another". Not only a setting free of prisoners, but a breaking of the power that held, or holds, them. "He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free." By the Apostle's adaptation of the Psalm we notice that not only are gifts received, but they are passed on or given. The Apostle Peter preaching his wonderful Pentecostal sermon said, (Acts 2. 24;) "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." The house of the strong man (Matt. 12. 29) had been entered and the strong man overcome. This is the Gospel message, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15. 3-4;) and 'we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.' (Heb. 2. 9). Ascending on high, our Lord, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2. 33;). The Holy Spirit had come, and His gifts were now passed on to the sons of men.

We must pass on to that which heads these notes — the Burden Bearer.

Verses 19 and 20 have been translated in various ways, and the Grail version is rather appropriate — “May the Lord be blessed day after day. He bears our burdens, God our Saviour. This God of ours is a God who saves. The Lord our God holds the keys of death and God will smite the head of his foes, the crown of those who persist in their sins”. Four things stand out in these verses — It is God who bear our burdens; He is a Saviour; He holds the keys of death; He is the Righteous Judge; and these four points bridge the history of Israel. How often did Israel forget (how often do we?) the promises of God? About to enter the land Israel heard these words, “When thou art in tribulation, and all these are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient to His voice; (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them.” (Deut 4. 30-31;). The sins and the sorrows of Israel, His people, “He made them His very Own” — “Hearken unto Me, O house of Jacob . . . which are borne by Me from the belly, which are carried from the womb . . . I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” (Is. 46. 3-4;)

Deliverance was not come to, however, from victories gained by a mighty conqueror over the enemies of earth, but by the defeat of the spiritual enemies of Israel. There had to be “one offering for sin for ever”, and hence the promise of the coming of the Servant of Jehovah, the Sin Bearer.

Isaiah chap. 53, is a well known and well-beloved Scripture; it tells of the Suffering Servant of God — a despised and rejected Man of sorrows; “Surely,” writes the prophet, “He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

“Burdens are lifted at Calvary,
Jesus is very near”

Our blessed Lord who, because “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15. 50;) “took part of the same, that through death He might destroy Him that had the

power of death, that is, the devil.” (Heb. 2. 14;); “He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” (1 Cor. 15. 26;); The burden has been lifted, the victory won. And our Lord says of Himself (Rev. 1. 18;); “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15. 55-57;)

The great triumphal procession that David saw for Israel is just a picture for the Christian today. We, too, shall take part in a victory over sin and death and hell — not from anything that we have done or can do, but by virtue of that “Surely” of Isaiah 53, and we think of another “Surely” — Psalm 23 — “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” And this links up with Psalm 84.11, “No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

In the Psalm of the unfaithful friend (Ps. 44) David was full of complaints; everything was, or seemed to be, against him; even his “best friend” had betrayed; his spiritual life was being shaken to its core. Then there comes a message (v.22) “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Someone has paraphrased this verse thus, “Roll what has been given thee upon the Lord for He shall hold thee up. He can bear thee and thy burden. He will not allow the righteous one to be moved.”

Says Peter, “Christ also suffered for us . . . Who His Own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes we are healed.” (1 Pet. 2. 15-24;). Thank God for every believer who has taken the burden of their sin to Calvary and left it there, but like David, the believer has to meet daily difficulties — burdens which he can cast upon the Lord, but as has been said, if we regard our burdens as His, then the burden becomes a blessing. He Who permits the load is able to sustain us.

The Ministry of the Risen Lord

by The Late J. B. Hewitt, Chesterfield

3 — THE REVELATION TO DELIBERATE THOUGHT

Luke 24.13-35; Mark 16.12f.

The message of the Easter morning — HE LIVES; of the Easter afternoon — HE LOVES; HE LISTENS, HE LEADS! George Elliot calls the Emmaus walk, "The loveliest story in the world". It certainly is homely, thrilling and romantic and that makes it beautiful. The Resurrection Gospel is incontestable because of the amazing transformation of the disciples themselves. The complete change in these men from absolute despair and futility to absolute radiance and mastery of life, the only explanation credible — Christ was risen indeed.

The value of the story is (1) Evidential — a proof of Christ's Resurrection by the fellowship enjoyed by these two disciples; (2) Preparatory — such an experience to prepare them for His bodily absence and their future life of faith (2 Cor. 5. 7, 16); (3) Symbolic — for when to walk together and talk of Christ He draws near to cheer the heart (Mal. 3. 16).

This is the road of glad surprise. In their depression Christ appeared (v. 13-16); in their discussion — Christ assured (v. 17-27); and in their dwelling — Christ abode (v. 28-32).

One of them was Cleopas, if the same person as mentioned in John 19. 25, then Mary his wife would be his companion? Most scholars are not agreed in this matter.

The first appearance was to a loving woman, the elevation of personal devotion, to Peter the restored saint, the satisfaction of personal forgiveness, the third appearance to reasoning men, was the confirmation of social hope. They cover a large part of the experience of Christians.

They were bound together (v.13a).

They shared a common loss and were drawn together by their

love for the Saviour (Amos 3.3; Mal. 3. 16). They travelled on an important day — His Resurrection. Important to Christ it vindicated, His character (Acts 2. 26, 27); His claims (John 2. 19; 10. 17, 18); and His crosswork (Rom. 4. 25), an important day for the Church, through this it was founded, furnished and fitted for universal propagation of the Gospel. For the Christian, our past is eliminated (Acts 3. 19); our purity assured (John 13. 10; 1 Cor. 6. 11) and our power guaranteed (Matt. 28. 18).

Their Beautiful Topic (v. 14a) “the things which happened”.

What eventful tragic days they had been. They discussed their difficulties and talked together of those awful happenings in our life, your home, your church, that are worthy of discussion. They were helped that day by the Priestly Care and Companionship of their Lord.

Their Blessed Companion (v. 15)

“Jesus Himself”, Their conversation and investigation was all about HIM. The Stranger who joined them none other than Subject of their talk. Literally it was while they communed and while they were reasoning, that Jesus drew near and went with them. He was interested in them and this intrusion into their lives proved most beneficial. Remember that when things are going wrong and you are bewildered, when tragedy strikes for which there seems to be no explanation (v. 14-21).

Their Blinded Eyes (v. 16)

They failed to observe that there was Someone walking by their side. He was there and He was going with them before they knew that anybody had joined them. The mystery of God’s ways, some-things are hidden from us (Psa. 103. 7). The mercy of God’s dealings; Christ is often nearest when men think Him gone for ever, and He knows just how much we can take. (1 cor. 10. 12). He chose to remain unrecognized.

Their Burdened Faces (v. 17)

“and they stood still, looking sad” RV. The look of despair, “sad” means “dreary”. It is the downcast look of settled grief, suggesting — I’ll never smile again”. This word only occurs twice in the N. T., here and in Matt. 6. 16. How often have you felt like two disillusioned and desolate saints? The Lord showed

interest, sympathy, love, when they needed it most. Shattered their world might be, but somewhere at the heart of it there was still this Jesus; He was and is quite unforgettable. He came that He might be known; yet He could only be known by the faith which He purposed to quicken.

They were arrested by His questions and He drew out of their hearts their burden of sorrow. There is astonishment yet no resentment; "Art thou only a Stranger" "hast not known". The sorrowful think their cloud enwraps everyone, anything else impossible.

Their Bright Testimony (v. 19b -20)

They gave a noble description of a Man accursed because He has hung on a tree.

It reveals what the disciples thought of Jesus at that time.

His Testimony. A Prophet with character and ability, "mighty in deed", and approved by God and the people. *His Treatment* They had a clear picture of His arrest, condemnation and agony on the tree, this was the end of all their hopes. They hoped that He might have turned out to be the Messiah, but He was just a Prophet.

Their Blasted Hopes (v. 21-23)

They were not ashamed to reckon themselves still followers of the Crucified. They are disappointed — "this is the third day", and their doubts are increased. The latest report brought another difficulty, the absence of the body, and the vision of angels who said "He was alive", rather than "risen". Their hopes are shattered, "Him they saw not". The Lord patiently listened to their explanation of the events and knew the condition of their hearts. They were unashamed in their affection for their Saviour and told Him all that was in their heart (1 Kings 10. 2).

Their Blundering Minds (24-27).

The Lord chides them, they were "slow at the uptake", or without perception. They had read their Bibles without understanding. They had failed to believe the prophets from lack of intelligence and from lack of sympathy. He is gently rebuking them, "you ought not to have been astonished and so dismayed after all that the prophets have spoken". If they had believed

them, they would have expected His resurrection, and accepted the witness.

The Lord led them to a fuller view of God's ways, and make clear that the Crucifixion was an essential part of the counsel of God (v. 26). The Lord was not only interested in them but interpreted the scriptures to them. What a revelation they had of the meaning and message of scripture, "Himself", associated with their pilgrimage (v. 15), as announced by the prophets (v. 27), the abiding attraction of His saints (v. 36).

Their Beckoning Voices (v. 28-31)

They have reached home, "He made as though He would have gone further". They invited Him in and Jesus accepted, for He loves to be invited (10. 38; 19. 6). Dr. Maclaren says, "The Christ who is asked to come in order to receive, abides in order to bestow". As they sat at meat, the greatest wonder of all happened — they discovered Who He was; their Saviour. That changed defeat into victory.

Their Burning Hearts (v. 32-35).

Their burdened hearts (v. 13-17) are now burning hearts (v.25-32 and as they rose, returned and rehearsed they had buoyant hearts (v. 33-35). This was a day of good tidings and they went to tell the good tidings (2 Kings 7. 9). Their enjoyment was shared with other saints who were talking about the wonderful experience Peter had had that day with his Lord. He is still journeying with us, sympathizing with us, ever willing to expound the Scriptures to us and reveal Himself causing us to rejoice in His love and grace and enable us to witness for Him.

Saints still travel the Emmaus road to learn more about Himself:—

E — Engulfed with grief	v. 17.
M — Missed their Lord	v. 18.
M — Mentioned His Fame	v. 19.
A — Aware of His Presence	v. 31.
U — Unfolding of the Scriptures	v. 27.
S — Satisfied Always with the Lord	v. 32,33.

SIGNS OF THE END (2)

By The late W. J. M'Clure.

*(These articles appeared in 1918 in the Believers' Magazine.
How much more relevant now!)*

Another distinctive mark of the time of the end is given in 1 Tim. 4.1, "Now the Spirit Speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons." This, we believe, does not so much take account of the rise of the many anti-scriptural and soul-destroying systems, as it does of the departure from the truth of those who once held it. This is clearly seen in some of the Scottish Churches. Take, for example, that church, once so sound on the great fundamentals of Christianity, the Church of M'Cheyne, of Burns, and of the Bonars. Who could have conceived forty years ago, that men would be tolerated in the pulpits of that Church to-day, and elected to sit in the chairs of its Professors who have given up all that is vital to Christianity, denying the doctrines they vowed at their ordination to uphold and preach.

In the Spring of the present year (1918), we read in a New Orleans daily paper, a letter from the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church, in which they gave their reasons why they did not see their way to unite organically with the Northern Presbyterian Church. Among the reasons given was, that one of the Synods under the jurisdiction of the Northern General Assembly — the Synod of New York — was in the habit of ordaining men to the ministry who denied the Virgin Birth of Christ, disbelieved His miracles, rejected the inspiration of the Bible, and denied eternal punishment. And the same is true in many such churches. A few days after this appeared, we were present at a conference meeting in Chicago, and mentioned this incident. At the close, a minister of that very church, who was present, told us he was one of a committee who had to examine a recent candidate for the ministry. In course of his examination, this prospective preacher and teacher flatly denied the Lord's Virgin Birth, and yet, in spite of the protest of this aged minister, that young man was ordained. This is an illustration of what 1 Tim. 4.1 predicts as one of the signs of the end. Toleration of

almost anything except God's truth, mark the times in which we live.

SPIRITISM.—This ominous sign has developed of recent years in such a way that it is difficult to see how any can fail to be deeply impressed by it. At the first advent of our Lord, there was great activity amongst demons, as any one reading the New Testament may gather. With the going forth of the Gospel demonism received a great check, and in the mercy of God, in spite of all the failure of the Church, it is only lately, at least in so-called Christian lands, that it is coming to the front again. It would seem that Satan knows his rule over the world will soon be challenged, and he is seeking through demons, to maintain that rule over men by deception and mis-representation. It is not so long since this revival began, but what strides it has made! What a change from the rude spirit-rapping, in the home of the Fox sisters, in the State of New York, to the elaborate display now seen all over the land! Beautiful temples, built by so-called Christian Scientists, Spiritual Churches, great offices in first class streets, where clairvoyants, thought-readers, palmists, etc., exercise their devilish arts and become rich on money of the men and women who consult them, without fear of prosecution by the state. This mighty increase from that small beginning, speaks in unmistakable language that the time of the end is surely with us.

THE TEN KINGDOMS—Those who have learned some little of the events of prophecy know, that the Roman Empire is to be resuscitated, as a confederacy of ten kingdoms under one head. This blasphemous personality cannot be revealed until true Church is caught away to heaven, but the empire itself may come into existence before its head is revealed, and most likely will be an accomplished fact, before the Lord comes to take His own from the scene.

At this moment, the greater part of that empire is already brought together in the nations which we speak of as "The Allies." And out of this terrible war, we may see the work of resuscitation completed. To many, the thought that ten nations, among which will be Britain, France, and Italy, could so far rise above their mutual pride and jealousy, as to vest supreme power in the hands of a representative of any one of them, seems impossible. But we only need to remember that God has said it, and what He has spoken shall and must come to pass, however unlikely, or how contrary to the reasonings of man.

The Joy of the Lord (2)

by The Late William Hoste

The Joy of the Lord is His people's strength. Thus it will be in the last days of Israel's chequered history. Restored once more to their land and to their God, they will hear His tender assurance, "Fear thou not: let not thy hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3. 16, 17). "Everlasting joy" will dawn on their heads, when they find themselves the subjects of Jehovah's care and rejoicing. If the question be asked; Why should Jehovah rejoice on the occasion referred to in Nehemiah 7? The answer may be found in the day of gathering, the manner of the gathering, and the people gathered. The day was the first day of the seventh month, one of the three great annual feasts of Jehovah, that of trumpets or of the ingathering. It was "a holy convocation unto the Lord," a harvest home, and naturally a day of gladness. When Jehovah appoints a feast, He will not make it a fast for our unbelief. Therefore "let us keep the feast," for it is a feast for and with Him. The trumpets were sounded to call attention to the special sacrifices of the day; the nine burnt offerings, with their appropriate meal offerings and their sin offerings, that they should be "a memorial before Jehovah" (Num. 10. 10). These sacrifices were so many joys to the heart of God, as with divine prescience He translated them into terms of Calvary. The Son was daily His delight in a past eternity (Prov. 8. 30). During His earthly ministry He was "Jehovah's elect, in whom His souls delighted," and that delight can only be the greater now, since His "obedience unto death, even the death of the cross." Then again, the people who gathered round His Word that day, were His redeemed people in whom He took pleasure—loved for the Father's sake, and called out of the nations to be His "peculiar treasure." They represented, moreover, the faithful remnant who had left the comfortable surroundings and worldly advantages of Babylon, to return to what commonsense would have judged a ruined and hopeless cause. They had set up the altar of Jehovah,

rebuilt the temple on a modest scale, re-established the feasts according to the law of Moses, and rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem—at best only an amateur patchwork affair, for priests, merchants, goldsmiths, and women are not usually expert masons (see Neh. 3). But their work had a special interest and was a joy to Jehovah. They had a little strength, they had kept His word, and had not denied His name (Rev. 3. 8). The joy of Paul over Philemon's love to the saints and that of John when he wrote—"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth," were only echoes of the Spirit's joy in them. Small wonder then that we read later of this same remnant. "They rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy," for obedience always brings joy to the obeyed and also to the obedient. May it be ours to prove it happy daily experience, that "the joy of the Lord is our strength."—(*reprinted from Believers' Magazine*).

Gathering Together Unto Him

by D. WARD (Birmingham)

In a remarkable verse in 2 Thess 2. 1 the apostle writes, "Now we beseech you, brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him". What a momentous event it will be when the Lord Jesus comes in fulfilment of His promise in John 14. 3 . "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also," All believers will then be gathered together unto Him. "The dead in Christ shall rise first then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess 4. 16—17).

Let us now consider the significance of the expression "our gathering together unto Him". The Greek word "epi-sun-agoqe" means "a gathering together unto", not merely "a gathering together". The word "Synagogue" is derived from the same Greek word and denotes a gathering together or an assembly but the

word in 2 Thess. 2. 1 implies a gathering together unto a *person* and that Person is our Lord Jesus Christ. Though it occurs several times as a verb in the N. T. this word is found only twice as a noun the other occurrence being Heb. 10. 25: where saints are exhorted not to forsake the assembling (or the gathering together unto Him) of themselves, as the manner is with some. This scripture is a solemn warning not to neglect the precious opportunity of gathering ourselves together unto our Lord Jesus Christ in this present day.

No true believer will miss the gathering together in the air. At His coming not one saint will be left behind—all will be gathered unto their Lord. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout: the rallying call for all the redeemed. The trump of God will sound, and the voice of the archangel will be heard thus assuring adequate heavenly protection for the redeemed host as they pass triumphantly through the domain of the “prince of the power of the air”. Thus will the glorified Redeemer gather His aim unto Himself, and they shall be forever with the Lord.

Let us challenge our hearts, who would wish to miss that great assemblage in the heavens, supposing it were possible to do so? Who would wish to be absent from the gathering together unto the One who loves us and has given Himself for us?

Surely our hearts recoil from such a thought! How then can we think lightly of the inestimable privileges of being gathered unto Him in this present day of His rejection? How can we forsake the assembling of ourselves together unto Him when He is so worthy? How can we absent ourselves without legitimate cause, from the feast of remembrance which He Himself instituted when here on earth, and which means so much to Him now as He sees His own responding in answering affection to His loving request made on the night of His betrayal?

I would emphasize that it is not a gathering together to a creed, or even to a doctrine such as baptism, neither is it gathering to a great Christian Leader such as Wesley or Luther, nor do we gather as a national church, let us remember that we are gathered unto a Person, and that Person is our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to notice the first mention of the Greek word

“epi-sun-agoge” as a verb. This is in Matt 23. 37: “O Jerusalem Jerusalem how often would I have gathered thy children together unto (myself) even as a hen gathers together her chickens unto (herself) under her wings, and ye would not.”

This scripture illustrates the beauty and significance of the word we are considering.

Let us ask ourselves, do we value as we should the immense privilege of being together unto our Lord Jesus Christ? What a precious truth is enshrined in our Lord’s own words in Matthew 18-20. “For where two or three are gathered together unto My name there am I in the midst of them”. As it is His pleasure to take His place in the midst of His own, so should it be ours to be found where He is, gathered unto the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no obligation put upon us to be there, no commandment that we must obey, no compulsion save the compulsion of answering affection to His own immeasurable love in laying down His life for us. It was otherwise with the children of Israel. for under the law it was strictly laid down. "But unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there even unto His habitation shall ye seek and thither shalt thou come" (Deuteronomy 12. 5:) Thus we see that the people were not to choose for themselves, the Lord would choose for them and they were to obey. If the place of His choice was to be His habitation, His dwelling place, it indicated that it was His desire to be found in the midst of His people, so now our Lord and Saviour loves to gather us around Himself and to engage our hearts with His precious love. Should we not value such a privilege for it is when gathered together unto Himself that we most appreciate the glory and beauty of His person and the perfect efficiency of His atoning work?

It is a striking fact that the Holy Spirit chooses exactly the same word both for the gathering together unto Him in the air at His coming and for the gathering together unto His Name in the present day. Just as truly as the glorified Lord will be the centre of the raptured assembly, the Church caught up to be with Himself for ever, so is He today the centre of the two or three gathered to His Name for He pledges His word, there am I in the

midst of them. It will be seen from the context that this verse Matt 18. 20: refers primarily to assembly prayer for the Lord is saying "if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask it shall be done for them of My Father who is in heaven for where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them". How important therefore, is the assembly prayer meeting, when we are gathered together unto the Lord's Name to beseech His power and His grace. As one has said "God honours the Name of His Son and sends down His omnipotent power to united prayer." Let us see to it then that we do not neglect the opportunity the prayer meeting affords to receive power from on high to sustain us in our pilgrimage here.

May we appreciate more and more the privilege of gathering ourselves together unto our risen and glorified Lord for prayer and worship, and above all for the remembrance of Himself in His suffering and death. Let us be characterized by the diligence and perseverances of the early believers who continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers (Acts 2. 42).

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MY CONVERSION AND CALL (10)

by T. McNeill (Ballymena)

As I begin to write this story I would like to assure all who read that I have no great, thrilling, exciting story of conversion but just a simple story of how a young boy of thirteen years old was brought to Christ and saved for eternity.

I was the eldest of a family of four and our parents were in fellowship in the small assembly at Ballyvaddy (twelve miles east from Ballymena, Co Antrim). The holy Scriptures were read daily in the home and the family was prayed for that in early life they would be saved. I was sent to Sunday School from an early age and was taken along to all the gospel meetings held in and around the area. I can truly say like Timothy that in my childhood days I was taught the holy Scriptures and no other doctrine, for which I am most thankful.

I was continually reminded about the soul and its value, sin and the seriousness of it, the shortness of time, the return of the Lord, heaven for all who were saved and hell for all who died without salvation. All of this made such lasting impressions on my young mind that I cannot really look back to a time when I did not want to be saved.

My first thoughts about eternal matters were as a boy of seven years and from that early age there was nothing else I really wanted but to be saved and be sure of a place in heaven. God spoke to me on many occasions through the deaths of both old and young. I also feared the Lord's return and I knew only too well that my sins were bringing me down to hell. While I thank God I was never in the world in any way, I knew that I was a guilty sinner before God.

In the year of 1947 Mr. D L Craig came to Buckna Gospel Hall for gospel meetings. I was sent along again to hear the same story of salvation and I got into deep concern about my soul, particularly when I learned of others getting saved. On a Friday night 12th December the preacher announced his closing week of meetings and stated his disappointment that some, for whom he had

high hopes, had not been saved. As I sat on the seat this spoke very loudly to me. This was possibly my last opportunity to be saved and there that night I made up my mind that I was going to get salvation — it is now or never! Deeply burdened about my sin and my soul I left the meeting and went home, greatly concerned about how I could be saved. All day Saturday I longed and prayed for salvation but the more concerned I got, the darker things seemed to be.

I returned to the gospel meeting on the Lord's day evening and the hall was well filled with people but there was no preacher to be seen — what could have happened? To my surprise two of the local brethren went up to the front of the hall. Our late brother Mr J T Logan and Mr James Moore (who is a member of the committee of this magazine). Brother Moore spoke first and told how he was saved. He told us that through the words of Isaiah 53. 5 he found the Saviour and that everyone else interested in salvation could do the same. While it was most interesting to listen to his story and it all appeared so simple, I was still a sinner in my sins on the road to hell and dark despair. I made my way home as quickly as possible, up into my own bedroom and got down by the bedside and cried to God to save me. I read and pondered all the well known verses of Scripture, read tracts and even the hymn book, tried to feel saved, but was still in my sins. Around midnight, about to give up the whole matter of seeking for salvation, I lifted my Bible and it fell open at John 3: - verses 35 and 36 were underlined with red ink and I read there, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him". I believed every word I read, but I was not saved. Then I started to think of what I was reading and got occupied with the Son and what He had done. What I heard earlier in the evening came again to my mind, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with his stripes we are healed", Isaiah 53. 5. There and then the truth dawned upon me — I do believe on the Son — He took my place — He died for me, and God says "hath everlasting life". My burden was gone, and from a very simple heart I bowed before God, and thanked Him that His Son died for me and I never

would be lost in hell. I could have sung,

“Wounded for me, wounded for me,
There on the cross He was wounded for me,
Gone my transgressions, now I am free,
All because Jesus was wounded for me”.

I fully intended not to tell anyone I had got saved since I wanted to make absolutely sure about it, but the next day I had it told. Soon the brethren at Buckna heard and they waited for me the next night to learn how I got saved. In a very few words I told them and they looked as though they were rejoicing in what they heard.

I now began to read the Bible, attend all the assembly meetings, and loved to be in the company of the Christians. Two and one half years later I was baptised and received into the fellowship of the assembly at Ballyvaddy. Mr David Craig who baptised me spoke words of encouragement to me and exhorted me to live and please God.

Later the family left Ballyvaddy, moved to the Ballymena district and we were commended to the newly formed assembly at Harryville. I was greatly concerned as to what I should do for the Lord. In my spare time, in the company of other young brethren, we would give out gospel tracts and preach in the open air. By the age of eighteen I was often accompanying older brethren on Lord’s day evenings helping them in gospel meetings in different parts of Co Antrim and Co Londonderry. At twenty one years I had my first series of gospel meetings and on occasions was asked to help with a series of meetings, mostly in company with Mr J Martin (evangelist).

Often the brethren encouraged me to go into full time service. Hearing this was one thing but hearing the call of God was quite another. Many anxious years were spent lest we should make a wrong move or go to the wrong place. Many times I prayed as did Paul, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

God blessed me in my secular employment and in 1967 I was faced with a very solemn choice. My employers were not pleased because I was spending so much of my time preaching the gospel and on a few occasions spoke to me about it. The fact that my sales figures were very good likely spared me from dismissal.

However in April, following a sales conference, I was told that I had to stop preaching. My immediate reply was, "if it is a matter of choice, the choice is already made, it will be the gospel first". Immediately I was put on three months notice and I accepted this very agreeably from them. This led me to think possibly the time had come to part with secular employment. I prayed much about it, and God heard and answered those prayers in a way I had never thought possible. Without going into detail, I was offered, without making application, a really good position with better salary and conditions, with a much larger firm. For the next six and one half years I learned and proved God in a way I had never known Him before, and today would be very much the poorer without those years of experience. I did not lose one days pay in all this transaction and at the same time was preaching the gospel every night while working my notice to quit.

Although I was sent by new employer to work in Armagh, particularly in the southern part of the County, I still had concern about the gospel. I well remember my first visits to Newtownhamilton, Crossmaglen and other border areas. I remember standing in Crossmaglen, praying and telling God if this is where I am to work and make a living, He alone would have to help. It is with joy I record that God did, and I spent three very happy years in that area and made many friends. Three years later I was promoted and sent back to Co Antrim to be based in the Larne area. The story here would be long, but again God was good to me, in spite of some very serious difficulties within the Company. In 1973, September, I was again offered promotion and if I accepted this as from January 1974, I would have a substantial increase in salary, more responsibility, but would have no time for the gospel. This gave me much concern, and shortly after this Mr J Martin asked me to help in a series of meetings at Drumnahare, Banbridge. After prayer and waiting upon the Lord I agreed and then discovered that Drumnahare was some fifty miles from where I lived! Still uncertain, concerning full time service I concluded that a number of things would have to happen and God would have to open up the way. The meetings began on Lord's day 14th October, and it was evident right from the opening night that God was in the meetings, and soon some of the things I had prayed for began to happen. This gave greater concern than ever,

with result I could neither eat nor sleep. A few souls were getting saved, the meetings were increasing in number nightly, and soon we had to move into a larger hall. By this time, things were opening up in a way that I could never have predicted. My brethren at Craigyhill had spoken to me, relative to my exercise, and they were quite happy to commend me to the grace of God. I insisted that since most of my life had been spent in the assembly at Harryville, they should contact them, and if they were agreeable, I would be willing to go to the work, but if not I would accept that as guidance not to go. This they did, and in a short time had a reply from the Harryville assembly, to say they were very pleased, and that I would have their fellowship.

Still I wanted to be convinced that the Lord was really calling me all I wanted was assurance from the Lord. This caused me great concern: how will I really know and be sure? While continuing with the meetings in Drumnahare, where quite a number professed salvation, I was invited for tea to a home of a dear sister in the Lord, in company with Mr J Martin. Realising, that the following morning, I had to meet with my boss regarding the promotion, I was sitting in that home greatly burdened. I lifted my eyes and looked on a text I had not noticed before. The words were: "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me", Isaiah 44 v 21, and "Beware lest thou forget the Lord". Deut. 6 v 12 . As I read these words it was as if a voice distinctly spoke to me and I bowed my head and said, "Lord, that will do. On the strength of those words I will go".

I met with my boss the following morning, and told him of my intentions. It was with great reluctance that my employers would accept my notice terminating employment with them, pointing out they had a letter in the post for me, with a substantial increase in salary, and that I was being very foolish. They give me another month to think this matter over, and if I should change my mind, to come back to them. The following day I met with the brethren again, and they were quite happy to let me go, if that was my mind. On returning home the letter from my employer had arrived. I read it, pondered it, and the thought came, "you have now made a fool of yourself", but the Scripture came back, "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me". On the last Friday of February 1974, I left my employment, returned their car and other items belonging to them, shook hands with them and came home on the train. This

was done tremblingly, and not without a few tears, as my bosses and other members of staff, men who were not saved had respect for me, and were very kind to me.

As the years have passed and we look back over them we say with the Psalmist, "Truly God is good", Psalm 73 v 1. It has not always been easy, problems can arise one would never expect, but we have a good God, and in Him we trust. Some thought I should have gone to a foreign land, but my exercise was, for my homeland. It has been my privilege to preach the gospel in a number of the areas where I worked in secular employment and it has been a great joy to have some of the more influential farmers of the agricultural industry under the sound of the gospel. The need in Ulster is tremendous in these last and closing days, and we greatly value the prayers of the Lord's people, for our labours. We close with the words of the Lord Jesus, "The harvest is the end of the age". Matthew 13 v 39.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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