



ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



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“OH GRACE”

“Oh Grace” — that takes one such as I,
So unworthy and born in sin to die,
But lifts me from the miry clay,
Because of what Christ did that day!

“Oh Grace” — that sent Thy Son to die,
For sinners all and such as I,
Who'd confess they were undone,
Of their own merit they carried none.

“Oh Grace” — Thou settest me on that Rock,
The “One” round whom multitudes did flock,
And in derision, as He was lifted high,
Mocked, as on that cross did die.

“Oh Grace” — I too was there, I see!
For had not I oft rejected Thee,
In times past I'd heard Thy call,
But further into sin did fall!

“Oh Grace” — I thank Thee for that day,
When Thou didst wash my sins away,
Because that Christ died on the Tree,
Shed His blood and set me free.

“Oh Grace” — In thanks I give to Thee,
The life Thou gavest that day to me,
That I might serve and daily go,
Telling others that thay too might know!

—*John W. Diamond (Guernsey)*

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

When a minority of the nation of Israel returned from captivity in Babylon they began to build the house of the Lord and were diligent in their labours. However due to opposition the work ceased, Ezra 4. 24. God raised two men to stir the hearts of the people in order that the work would recommence. These were Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai was direct and practical, while Zechariah was devotional and mystical. The former preached, "Consider your ways": the latter, "Consider Him." Even though so different in their messages these men worked harmoniously and the result was the work recommenced and God was glorified.

In our day it appears the work has almost stopped and the saints generally need to be stirred to work again. In many places the house is lying waste and it is a long time since any new material was brought for the building of the house. What is the cure for this? Perhaps it is given very succinctly in Haggai 1.7,8, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD."

i) There is an EXHORTATION - "Consider your ways". We usually connect "consideration" with the mind but here it is the idea of setting the heart upon. Herein is the problem - many do not see the work of the Lord as heart work. If the hearts of the saints were devoted to the house and its welfare, what a difference it would make! The wise preacher reminds us, Prov. 4. 23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it [are] the issues of life."

ii) There is ELEVATION - "Go up to the mountain". We cannot obtain material for the house while labouring in the valleys. Babel was built from the slime and clay of the plain. The place reflects the material from which it was built. The testimony began in an upper room. All was above the world and its ways. We must not adopt the methods of the world to seek to build for God. We must be on the mountain in prayer and communion.

iii) There is EXERCISE - "bring wood, and build the house". This was not the bringing of little twigs for firewood. It involved labour and toil to cut down trees, strip from them their bark and shape them for usefulness in the house. They then had to be carried down the mountain to the house. To build for God we need men who will labour and toil and feel the burden of things.

Lightness has no part in the house. All wood hay and stubble will be burnt up, 1 Cor. 3. Everything we build should be costly to us. Said David, “. . . I will surely buy [it] of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing . . .” (2 Sam. 24. 24). Let us see to it that we put our very best into the assembly and at the judgement seat hear Him say “well done, good and faithful servant.”

iv) There is EXALTATION - “I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.” The assembly may seem small and insignificant to those around. They do not understand the spiritual value of a little company seeking to move in the will of God and for His pleasure. Brethren, what does it matter what the ungodly and the unspiritual think, provided it brings pleasure to His heart? Let us move on for His pleasure in simple obedience to His word, rejecting every “new cart” and ensuring that we are diligently labouring in the mountain and building into the house that which is seen in the “gold silver and precious stones” of 1 Cor. 3. Then, after the searching fires, something will remain which will attract a reward.

Messages from Muller

These are notes of addresses given by
the late George Muller

Paul's Letter to Philemon — Paper 3

Ver. 8—14. “Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me : whom I have sent again : thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels; whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.”

Exquisite statement this, and of the deepest moment. Briefly it

was just this :— Onesimus was converted; Paul a prisoner for the gospel in bonds. What a comfort this good man would have been waiting upon him! He longed to have one to wait on him. Paul might have said,—This Onesimus is my son in the faith, and therefore I shall just act as I have a right to act; I will just keep him, and let him wait on me. He might have said,—I am an apostle, and for the gospel's sake am here in prison, and it is all right and fit that my child in the faith should wait on me. Not thus, not thus. This was not the mind of Christ, and this blessed man of God sought to act according to the mind of Christ. He might have said,—I am an aged servant of Christ, an aged apostle, and I have laboured more abundantly than any of them; and as this runaway slave has been converted through me, it is all right that I should have him to wait on me. Not thus, because this would be by constraint. He would not know whether it was done willingly and cheerfully on the part of Philemon. He desired that this man of God might do what he did cheerfully, willingly. Oh, how deeply important it is to keep this before us! The principle is just this. Suppose any one said,—Now I am in great need, and such and such a one is my brother in Christ, and such and such a one has plenty of money, and he ought to give to me because I am a poor brother; he is bound by the word of God to do it, and I have a right just to demand it of him. Is this the mind of Christ? It is the mind of the flesh, and not the mind of Christ. You never find such an instance on the part of a man of God in the epistles or the gospels. Quite true that he who hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion, cannot have the love of God in him; but it is also true on the other hand that it is ill becoming that a poor brother should insist on it. The apostle Paul could have insisted on his rights, but he did not do so.

“Which in time past was to thee unprofitable.”

This brings out the character of Onesimus: a good-for-nothing man, a bad fellow.

Philemon had lost nothing.

“But now profitable to thee and to me.” Because a child of God, a brother in Christ, a member of the body. That brings out another deeply important principle. There is no child of God but

what is of some good. One might say,—Here is a very ignorant person, cannot put two letters together; what good is such an one to the Church of Christ? If in no other way, to afford opportunity for the exercise of grace on the part of others. Here is one helplessly confined to his bed year after year. That individual can pray, that individual can yet manifest the mind of Christ to such an one who comes to see him. And suppose none of these things were so, yet they give the opportunity to those who are in health and strength to show love to such an one. We should always look on one another as precious in the sight of Christ. Our natural tendency is this: to see the old Adam in one another, to see the failings and shortcomings in one another; and the result is misery to one another and dishonour to God. O beloved in Christ, let us aim after it to see Christ in one another. Onesimus was profitable to the chief of the apostles; just think of this. He could not be a useless one, because he was a member of the body of Christ, and Christ can have no member of His body who is altogether useless.

“Thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels.” Philemon was to receive him as if Paul himself came to him. And oh, how would Paul have been received? O beloved brother Paul, how glad I am to see thee again here, he would say, falling on his neck and kissing him many times. Now Paul says,—Just as thou wouldest have received me, if I were to come, so, beloved Philemon, receive this runaway slave, because he is thy brother in Christ, and thou wilt have to spend a happy eternity with him.

“But without thy mind would I do nothing.” But I must first know that this pleases thee, that thou art satisfied with it, that this is according to thy wish and will. How deeply important to keep this before us in the Divine life, that we manifest the mind of Christ. Just as that blessed One sought not to please Himself, but to be the Servant of others, so have we to imitate that blessed One.

“For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever.” “For ever,” never to be separated any more. And that brings before us the precious truth that the disciples of the Lord Jesus are bound together for eternity, are knit together for eternity. And that you see is so precious. There may come separation by distance, there may come separation by death; ah, but it is only the appearance. We are bound together in the bonds of love, not for time only, but for eternity. All the poor

sinner who rest on the atoning death of the Lord Jesus form one holy, happy, blessed family for eternity, and there will be no separation for eternity. Do we belong to that family? Do we believe in the Lord Jesus? How many among us belong to the heavenly family? How many are decided yet? Put this to yourselves, you dear young men, you dear girls from the Orphan Houses, and all here present.

Oh, the blessedness of belonging to the heavenly family! Oh, the blessedness of belonging to the members of Christ! Then let come what may—one in Christ, and one in Christ for ever!

—(concluded).

BEHOLD THE MAN

(Meditations in Luke's Gospel)

by **JIM FLANIGAN, (Belfast)**

9. His Compassion

The Gospel of Luke is fragrant all through with the tender compassion for the Saviour. The Son of God has become truly Man, and being perfectly Man, He ever moves feelingly with sympathy and love in the midst of those whose lives have been maimed and marred by sin. How it pained Him to see the havoc that sin had wrought in the creation. That creation, which once was so fair when it left His hands some millennia earlier, now groaned in the bondage of sin, and sin, when it was finished, brought forth death. Into this world of tears and tragedy the Creator-Son came voluntarily, and moved in grace and in compassion among the creatures, ministering healing to those around Him.

His compassion knew no frontiers. He dispensed blessing without discrimination or reserve. Both men and women, young and old, rich and poor, free and bond, small and great, learned and unlearned, Jew and Greek, were all objects of His love and felt His touch. Luke tells us that his Gospel is a treatise on the things that Jesus began both "to do" and "to teach". There is a perfect blending of practice and precept, and accordingly there would appear to be twenty miracles and twenty parables in this Gospel, an equal balance of works and words.

This tender compassion of the Saviour is beautifully expounded in Ch.7. It goes out to four persons in particular. Three of these are anonymous. Only one is specifically named. There are two men and two women, of differing backgrounds. Socially, racially, and morally they are different, but the compassion of Christ goes out to each and all. Ch.7 is a kaleidoscope of the ministry of a compassionate Christ. It is a commentary in miniature on the love that knew no bounds. A centurion and his slave; a widow and her son; a prophet in prison; a woman in the Pharisee's house; all are the beneficiaries of the love and ministry of Jesus in this delightful chapter.

The centurion is, of course, a Gentile. Is he the first in Luke's Gospel to know the fulfilment of Simeon's prophecy of Ch.2? A light to lighten the Gentiles? In the unbelief of Capernaum this centurion is the firstfruits of a Gentile harvest. This man loved his slave. He had too, a certain love for Israel, and had proved this in a practical way (v.5). His slave was sick and dying when the message of the Saviour came to him. He felt unworthy to approach Jesus personally, and unworthy too that Jesus should come to him. He recognised the sovereignty of Christ. "I also", he says, "am a man placed under authority." Note the force of the word "also." When the centurion commanded, then all the authority of Rome and the Emperor were behind his commands. He duly recognises that it would be likewise with Jesus. If He would but speak a word of healing, then all the authority of heaven and of God would be with that word. He believed. He acknowledged both his own unworthiness and the worth of Christ. And though the Lord was at a distance, compassion bridged that distance and reached the dying slave in instant healing.

The scene now moves from Capernaum to Nain. Two processions are approaching each other in a confrontation at the gate of Nain. "Much people" are going in (v.11) and "much people" are coming out (v.12). At the head of each procession there is an only son. The only son of the mourning widow is dead and on his way out of Nain to burial. The Son of God, the Only Begotten, Prince of Life, is making His way into Nain. Who will give away as Life and Death meet at the gate? The processions stop. The Lord observes the weeping widow. He has compassion on her (v.13) and speaks to her. He touches the coffin and speaks

to the young man. The dead is raised to life. There is a joyous reunion, and God is glorified.

The prophet of Ch.7 is John Baptist. He is in prison and in some despondency. Why should he, the last, and greatest, of the prophets, languish in prison if Messiah had truly come? The bold prophet who had earlier proclaimed with confidence "This is He," now sadly asks, "Art Thou He?" Poor John. Occupation with self and circumstances breeds doubt. In compassion the Lord continues His ministry. The blind see; the lame walk; lepers are cleansed; the deaf hear; the dead are raised. "Go," He says, "tell John what things ye have seen and heard." Occupation with the Person and Work and Word of Christ is the antidote to doubt. It is still so with us. To see only ourselves and our circumstances is to gender doubt. Let us look away to Him who, in compassion, still ministers to His people in the Gospel.

In v.36 the Lord graciously accepts an invitation to eat in the house of Simon a Pharisee. How different is this Pharisee to the Roman Centurion who said "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof." The Pharisee has little or nothing for Christ, but a woman who does have something for Him enters the house. In the culture and informality of the East this was not exceptional, to intrude without invitation. She was apparently a well known City sinner; she was a woman of the streets. Simon would not be pleased. But it is she who provides the real feast for the Saviour. She gave what Simon did not. Notice her reverence, coming to His feet behind Him. See her emotion as her tears flow. Observe her adoration as she bedews His feet with those tears. Behold her affection as she covers His feet with kisses, and see her deep appreciation of Him as she anoints Him with the fragrant myrrh. Simon is silently critical. "If this Man were a prophet He would know 'who' and 'what' she is," he reasons in his heart. But He did know "who" and "what" she was. It did not matter. She was, morally, a great debtor, but the compassion of the Saviour was greater than her debt and her sin. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound, and to the forgiven woman He says, "Shalom, Shalom!" "Go in peace."

May we, who have likewise known His love and heard His word and felt His touch, revere and adore Him as did this woman so long ago.

—(to be continued, D.V.)

PSALM 24

by David Ogden (Luton, England)

PAPER 4

Verses 7—9. HIS TRIUMPH AS CONQUEROR.

Seen in Relation to His Victory—Conquest and Coronation

The Psalm rises to its triumphant crescendo and conclusion as God's King is seen. In relation to the Lord Jesus this section can have two lines of application. It can be taken rightly as referring to his Resurrection and Ascension. He had spoilt principalities and powers (Col. 2.15), been raised from the dead by God (Acts 13.30), and then ascended far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion (Eph. 1.21). In these verses then, are seen the Victor's triumphant return from the Cross, and His unchallengeable right to sit on the Throne. It also has a Millennial significance when He returns from Heaven (Rev. 19, Zech. 14) to take up His rightful position in the city of the Great King, Jerusalem itself.

Verse 7 shows HIS SUPERIORITY ASSERTED. It is His right to enter. Here is noted The ENTRANCE AND EXALTATION OF THE KING. The very doors spoke of the Holiness of God, and guarded against those unworthy to enter. Yet here was One with the perfect right of admittance, none dare refuse Him. On what grounds could he be denied? His SOVEREIGNTY IS ANNOUNCED, He is the King of Glory. What a title for One who was despised and rejected of men, One who was a Root out of a dry ground, (Isa. 53.2), who on earth had His claims and even His very legitimacy disputed (John 8.41). Yet He is God's King upon His holy hill of Zion (Psa. 2.6). He is "the Blessed and only Potentate, King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (1 Tim. 6.17) King by Divine Decree, King by conquest, King by eternal right. The King is coming into His own.

Verse 8 sees an ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE KING, as it is asked "Who is the King of Glory?" Again two lines emerge.

Heaven asks, for none could enter who was not qualified, and had not Heaven a King? Jerusalem battered and torn after Tribulation trials asks, for it had seen so many earthly monarchs battering at its walls.

The Triumphant Cry echoes back as HIS SUPREMACY IS ACCLAIMED and The EXPLOITS AND EXCELLENCY of the KING are pronounced. He is the Lord, Jehovah Himself, strong and mighty, Jehovah, mighty in battle. He has triumphed over Death, He has routed the enemy, as at the end of the Tribulation period, He will be seen as the Mighty Conqueror (Rev. 19). He has truly gone up with a shout "the Lord with the sound of a trumpet" Psalm 47.5. Echoes of Exodus 15 are observed here, as can be noted parallels with Psalm 68 and Habakkuk 3. The Victor has returned from The Cross having spoiled principalities and powers (Col. 2.14,15).

Disputes and doubts are to be dispelled as in verse 9 HIS SUPERIORITY IS AFFIRMED, "the King of glory, shall come in." However in verse 10, He is seen not only to have the supreme right to rule, but He is not alone, He is the Lord (Jehovah) of Hosts. He has a company with Him, not only angelic legions but the Church for which He died. He is not only coming for us, He is coming with us and we shall be nearer to Him than all the myriad hosts of Heaven.

God has made Him both Lord and Christ. The word "Jehovah" speaks of His title as the covenant keeping God, as "Hosts" tells of His sphere as Captain. He is the Captain of our Salvation (Heb. 2.10). The KINGDOM IS ESTABLISHED in verse 10, as He is seen to enter through the gates. His to enter by Creatorial Right (v 1,2), by Right of Moral Character, (v 3,6) by Right of Majesty and by Right of Conquest (v 7,10). Now, He has entered into Heaven itself on our behalf, (Heb. 9.24) from which He came to redeem us, returning to the Father's Throne (Rev. 3.21). One day He will return to enter fully into His inheritance (Obad. 21).

The Psalm has reached it's triumphant conclusion. What a Victorious and Glorious Lord is ours. One has well written.

"King of glory, Thou hast triumphed,
Mighty in the battle Thou,

Everlasting doors uplifted,
Welcome Thee as Victor now,
Principalities and powers,
Spoiled by Thee, most Holy Lord.
Far above them Thou art seated,
On the very Throne of God.

Now to ages of the ages,
Crowned with honour Thou shalt be.
All the heavenly hosts unceasing,
Glory, might, ascribe to Thee.
Fadeless this, Thy royal splendour,
Purchased by Thy precious blood.
Thine, the praise of every creature,
Holy Son, and Christ of God.”

—(concluded)

Aspects of The Holy Spirit and The Believer

by B. Currie, (Belfast)

No 4(b) - FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

In the previous paper we concluded by noting the five occasions in the Acts when men are distinctly said to be ‘full’ or ‘filled’ with the Holy Spirit. These were:

- (i) 4.8 Peter for SEARCHING PREACHING
- (ii) 6.5 Stephen for SOLVING PROBLEMS
- (iii) 7.55 Stephen for SORE PERSECUTION
- (iv) 11.24 Barnabas for SHEPHERDING PEOPLE
- (v) 13.9 Paul for SOLEMN PRONOUNCEMENT

(i) Searching Preaching

Peter and John had been held overnight in prison because they had dared to teach the people and preach ‘through Jesus the resurrection from the dead’ 4.2. In the morning they are brought before the Sanhedrin comprising the formidable grouping of 24

rulers and chief priests who were Sadducees, 22 scribes who were Pharisees and 24 elders, who were unaffiliated. They were set in the midst of these men who sat in a semi-circle, and were repeatedly questioned as to the power in which they had performed the miracle of healing the lame man. Rather than cowering down, being intimidated and nervous they displayed boldness v.13 and left their audience speechless v. 14.

This was not done in the power of the flesh but was only accomplished by the filling of the Holy Spirit v. 8. Their boldness was not rudeness, rather they were courteous to the rulers, but their defence was Christ centred and Christ exalting. It is likely the reason for so little power in much of the preaching done in our day is that there is so little known by the preacher of the filling of the Holy Spirit. We must note that these were 'unlearned and ignorant men' v. 13 unlettered and uninstructed (JND). This apparent deficiency was not overcome by a course in a Bible College, but by the power of the Holy Spirit being manifested in the lives of these men.

(ii) Solving Problems

The church was not very old until problems began to arise. Acts 5 it is deception (which was quickly solved) but in chapter 6 it is division - a problem that is prevalent still. It has often been noted in 1 Cor. that fornication was dealt with in one chapter, five, while many chapters were written in an attempt to solve the problem of division. We often feel like saying with the apostle, 'Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you?' Wise men were required to solve the problem in Acts 6, '. . . look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom . . .' Such a man was Stephen v. 5 and how men of similar calibre are required today when problems and divisions abound. These difficulties will only be solved when there is a submission to the Spirit of God and His Word. Then saints will be controlled by God and motivated not by a party spirit, self interest and jealousy, but by a desire to do His will.

That there is room for Spirit filled men to assist in the solving of problems is seen not only Acts 6, but also Gal. 6.1,2 and Phil. 4.3. The difficulty of the task is obvious from the fact that only the spiritual can be involved in it. It cannot be accomplished by

the energy of flesh. Such men are invaluable and are a major requirement for the preservation and advancement of the testimony.

(iii) Sore Persecution

In the Acts, the devil had tried deception and division and in chapter 7 he disrupts by death. How is Stephen going to leave this world? Is it in a weak, fearful, trembling spirit going to face a great unknown? No, one thousand times No! We read of the man full of the Holy Spirit, that he 'looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God . . .' No wonder, with the stones pounding on his body and his life ebbing away he triumphantly cries, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit' and goes to be with Christ which is very far better, Phil 1.23. Such a victorious end is available to us all if the Lord Jesus remain away, but only if we are 'full of the Holy Ghost', Acts 7.55.

(iv) Shepherding People

God had done a great work in Antioch without using any of the twelve apostles, Acts 11.19-21. However when the news of this great work reached the saints at Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent to investigate. Why was he chosen? The answer is found in v. 24 'For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith'. When he saw what God had done he 'was glad and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord!' Little wonder he was called 'The son of consolation', 4.36. This is true shepherd work, to come alongside and encourage, console and exhort those newly saved. How they need such ministry. We may note in passing other features of a Spirit filled man:

- (a) He was glad to see the converts of another's labour, v. 23.
- (b) He recognised his own limitations and was prepared to introduce another servant who could take the saints further in the things of God than he could, v. 25.
- (c) He had the grace to introduce a servant who was younger in the faith, yet had a greater gift.
- (d) He did not return to Jerusalem for one of the twelve. His only interest was to get the very best for the people of God.

(v) Solemn Pronouncement

In Acts 13 Paul encountered one who was seeking to oppose the progress of the gospel. The situation demanded judgement and the person capable of making the solemn pronouncement was the one filled with the Holy Ghost v. 9. It is men of such calibre who are still required to pronounce judgement on sin. This again is not a task for those who are carnal but it must be done with the sensitivity that comes from God.

4. IMPLICATION

It ought to be obvious from what we have considered that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is the condition of those who are living close to the Lord, submitting to his Word and are totally yielded to him. In such the Holy Spirit is not grieved. It is therefore clear that no person living in disobedience to the Word of God can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Such a consideration becomes very searching when we think of areas of the scripture which are openly and fragrantly disobeyed. For example the visible tokens of the Headship of Christ, 1 Cor. 11.2-16; the silence enjoined upon sisters 1 Cor. 14.34, 35; 1 Tim. 2.11,12; the demands of outward modesty and adornment 1 Tim. 2.9,10; 1 Pet. 3.3,4; etc. etc. are all set at nought. Obedience is an incontrovertible sign of spirituality, Luke 6.46; 1 Cor. 14.37.

Furthermore we must emphasise that we speak of the Holy Spirit. No person filled with a Holy Person can be involved in unholy deeds. No one who is thus filled will tolerate immorality, divorce, or anything that caters for the base nature of man. Such practices are contradictory to the Holy Spirit. Not that this implies that we can reach a level of complete holiness and sanctification, (1 John 1 would not permit this), but it does mean there will be power to keep the flesh in subjection. Finally the young Christian should note carefully that apart from Acts 2.4, which we saw in a former paper to be a unique experience, there is no record of the filling of the Holy Spirit being accompanied with speaking in tongues. However we also note that the outward sign of being filled with Spirit is a display of Christ-likeness as seen in the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5.22-23. Such a person will know what it is to be led by the Spirit, Rom. 8.14, Gal. 5.18 and will thus walk in the Spirit, Gal. 5.16,15.

—(to be continued, D.V.)

EPHESIANS EXPOUNDED

by A. D. THROPAY (California)

Paper 16

1. Introduction of the old man. 4.17-19.

Verse 17

- This:** (touto) “This” refers to what follows.
- I say therefore:** This resumes the thoughts of verse 1—3, “I therefore, . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,”
- and testify:** (marturomai) A solemn declaration as a witness, an injunction. (Expositors; W. E. Vine).
- IN the Lord:** “Paul identifies himself with Christ and gives exhortation as the Lord Himself.” (Expositors).
- that ye henceforth:** (mēketi) no longer.
- walk:** (peripateoo) “To walk about,” hence, to conduct or behave oneself. (as verse 1).
- not as:** (kathōs) In accord with; according to.
- other:** (loipa) “the rest.”
- Gentiles:** (ethnos) This word is sometimes translated “Gentiles,” sometimes “nations,” and sometimes “heathen.” The word is a general term, however, and can be translated, “peoples.” For more information, please see notes on 3:6.
- walk, in the vanity:** (mataiotēs) The emptiness of an illusion, especially illusion that sees pleasure in sin. “Purposelessness; uselessness; restlessness.” (Expositors) “Emptiness as to results.” (W. E. Vine).
- of their mind:** (nous). (a) Intellectual faculty for understanding. (b) faculty for recognising moral good and spiritual truth — Romans 1.28; 7.23; 1 Timothy 6.5 — that is, walking within intellectual and moral emptiness as to results.

Verse 18

- having the understanding:** (dianoia) Literally, “To think through.” — the operation of understanding.

- darkened:** (eskitismenoi — perfect, passive participle of skotizō). To shroud or engulf in darkness. Some MSS have (skotoō) “to darken.” The periphrastic construction emphasizes the continued darkend condition.
- being alienated from:** (apallotrioō). This word is a verb, and is better translated, “having been alienated from.” It means, “To alienate, estrange, shut out from one’s intimacy and fellowship. The perfect tense indicates a continuing state. Comp. 4.18; Colossians 1.21.
- the life:** (zōēs). The principle of life; life itself. “Zōē” is never used in the New Testament of the course of life, but always the quality of life.
- of God:** The only source of true life and light.
- through:** (dia tēn) because of; on account of.
- the ignorance:** (agnoia). “It denotes an ignorance of Divine things, a want of knowledge that is inexcusable and involves moral blindness.” — Acts 3.17; 17.30; 1 Peter 1.14. (Expositors).
- that is in them:** (tēn ousan en autois). The source of their ignorance and alienation is from within them.
- because of:** (dia tēn) on account of.
- the blindness:** (pōrōsis) hardness; dulled perception.
- of their heart:** (kardias). Hardness of the heart refers to a person who is “stubborn,” “obstinate,” “unwilling to listen or change.”
- A person who hardens his heart and refuses to listen to God, produces his own ignorance of God’s truth, causes his own alienation from God’s Life, and engulfs him in his own self made darkness. A person is held responsible for their own ignorance of Divine truth.

Verse 19

- who being past feeling:** (apalgeō — from “apo” away from; and “algeō” to be in pain or grief). Primarily means “to depart from pain or grief.” Hence, it means to become insensible or callous. —It expresses moral insensibility caused by their attempt to ease the pain of an evil conscience.

- have given themselves over:** (paradidōmi). “To give over;” “to hand over;” “to deliver up;” In Romans 1.26 Paul gives the other side stating that man’s insensibility to evil is due to a judicial act of God. In this book, Paul states that man is responsible for his own callousness.
- unto lasciviousness:** (aselgeia). Shameless, outrageous sensuality. (Compare 2 Corinthians 12.21; Galations 6.19; 2 Peter 2.7; etc.).
- to:** (eis) with a view to.
- work:** (ergasia). (a) Work, Labour. (b) business or trade as in Acts 19.25.
- all:** (pasēs) every kind of.
- uncleanness:** (akatharsia). (a) lewdness; moral uncleanness in the wildest sense. (b) Impurity of motive — 1 Thessalonians 2.3.
- with:** (en) “in” denoting the sphere in which such sins occur.
- greediness:** (pleonexia). (a) covetousness; (b) The desire of having more; (c) sensual greed; insatiable appetite.

2. Introduction of the new man. 4.20—32.

Verse 20

- But:** (de) in distinction from the “walk” of the Gentiles.
- ye:** This word is emphatic in the Greek New Testament, bearing emphasis have not so: (houtos) in this manner; thus
- learned:** (manthanō) to learn, be taught, be informed. It is in the aorist tense.
- Christ:** literally, “the Christ.” He personally was what they learned, not just facts about Him. —Our strength is in knowing Him. Our character is molded and developed by our acquaintance with Him. We become in character like the God/god that we worship. Psalms 115.4 “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands . . .” Psalms 115.8 “They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.” Compare 2 Corinthians 3.18 “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Verse 21

- If so be:** (eige) “If indeed” or “if, as is the case.”
- that ye have heard:** (akouō) “to hear with acceptance and obedience.”
- Him:** Christ was the sum and substance of all that they heard. Whatever preaching that they received was the word of Christ. Christ was preached, not sermons about Him. To hear Him with acceptance and obedience provides salvation. John 5.24.
- and have been taught:** (aorist passive tense of didaskō) “to teach”; “were given instruction.”
- by:** (en) “in.” This gives the sphere in which the teaching took place.
- Him:** They became acquainted with Him in His own sphere. We learn someone the best when we are occupied with that person in their own sphere of life and activity.
- as:** (kata) “according as, “being measured by.”
- the truth:** (alētheia). “Reality lying at the basis of an appearance.” (Cremer); A sure, firm, solid, reality.
- is:** establishing the fact.
- in:** (en) referring to the place where all reality can be found.
- Jesus:** Truth is a Person. John 14.6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” —Truth, REALITY, in all its fulness and scope is embodied in Him.

Verse 22

- that ye:** (humōs) Connect with “were taught” in verse 21. This verse will explain what they were taught.
- put off:** (aorist infinitive of apotithēmi) “To lay aside; to put off (as a garment).” The aorist tense indicates that this is to be done once and for all time.
- concerning:** (kata) in accord with; that which is measured and characterized by.
- the former:** (proteros) prior, that which characterized them prior to receiving God’s salvation.

- conversation:** (anastrophē) conduct, behavior, way of life.
- the old:** (palaios) old in time.
- man:** “the old man” refers to what a person is before they become a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what they are before they are born again.
- which is corrupt:** (ton phtheirō). To spoil, ruin, be morally depraved. “The present participle marks the condition as a process that goes on, a condition that progresses.” (Expositors) “waxeth corrupt.” This process of moral corruption occurs in everyone who has not experienced the new birth.
- according to the deceitful:** (apatē) that which gives a false impression by appearance, word, or influence.
- lusts:** (epithumias) a strong desire. The phrase “deceitful lusts” is better translated “the lusts of deceit.” These desires to look better or different than what we really we, are the foundation of the corrupting nature of the old man.

Verse 23

- and (de) be renewed:** (ananeoō — from “ana” = back again; and “neos” = recent, new in time). To make new, to start fresh.
- in the spirit:** (pneuma) here it refers to the human spirit.
- of your mind:** That is, “which governs your mind”. (The genitive of subject) (nous) The faculty of understanding, feeling, and determining.
- In order for a person’s mind to be renewed, his spirit has to be renewed first, since the spirit controls the mind. The spirit is renewed by God Himself. Psalms 51.10 “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” He does this for a person who is humble, repentant and totally depending on God. Read Psalm 51.1—9.

Verse 24

- and that ye put on:** (Middle infinitive aorist of enduo) “To place on one’s self; to clothe one’s self.
- the new:** (kainos). New in quality and character. Different in nature from the old. New to the possessor.

- man, which after:** (kata) according to; in accord with; or in conformity to.
- God is created:** (participle aorist of ktizō) “having been and being created or called into existence.” The new man is called into existence by God. The standard of measurement for this new creation is God Himself.
- in righteousness:** (dikaiosunē) the character which is fair, equitable, impartial, just and right. We call this person, an individual with INTEGRITY. He can be TRUSTED.
- and true:** (alētheias) this word describes the reality at the basis of anything genuine.
- holiness:** (hosiotēs). As Luke 1.75, pious behaviour towards God and man that is governed by grace and truth. (Only used in these two references).

Verse 25

- Wherefore:** (dio) On which account. This word connects what follows with the previous subject of putting off the old man and putting on the new.
- putting away:** (aorist of apotithēmi). As in verse 22, means, “having put off completely and finally.
- lying:** (to pseudos) from which we get the English word, Pseudo. This word refers to falsehood in every form, whether it be verbal, in the form of false statements and half-truths, or by action. This word is the opposite of “true” in verse 24. It refers to that which is not real or genuine.

Paul now inserts a quote from Zechariah 8.16: “These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:”

- Speak:** (continuous present of laleō) speak and continue to speak.
- truth:** (aletheias) as verse 25. Speak that which is reality and genuine.
- every man:** (hekastos) each
- with:** (meta) among, with. It is a preposition of association and mutual activity.

—**his neighbour**”: (plēsion) the one near or close by. Cp Luke 10.29—37.

—**for**: (hoti) Paul is no longer quoting now, he is giving the reason for the instruction that we should be honest with each other.

—**we are**: he is referring to all those who are truly born again.

—**members**: (melos) As 5.30, a member, limb or any part of the body.

—**one of another**: Since every believer is part of the same body, we should be honest with each other. Lying to another member of the same body is the same as lying to yourself.

—(to be continued, D.V.)

PAPERS ON PROPHECY

by The Late W. W. Fereday (written in 1897/98)

VOLUME I

Paper 2 (c) The Resurrection of Life and The Resurrection of Judgment.

Now we must consider other matters. It is plain that at the Lord's descent into the air all sleeping believers will be raised in glory, and all living saints will be changed by His power. This is the first resurrection, but not the whole of it. The first resurrection is in three parts—(1) the resurrection of Christ; (2) of all sleeping saints at His coming; and (3) of those who will lose their lives during the great tribulation. Such are included in the first resurrection, and will be raised in time to share the blessings of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. We get these classes carefully distinguished in Rev. 20.4, already referred to. "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them." Daniel saw the thrones, but no occupants (Dan. 7.9). Who are meant by "they"? Those who are manifested with the Lord Jesus at His appearing. Such come forth as His armies, following Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean (Rev. 19.14). These are the heavenly saints who are caught up, according to 1 Thess. 4.14—18. God brings them now with Christ, that the world may know that the Father sent the Son, and

that He loves us as He loves Him (1 Thess. 4.14; John 17.23). Christ will in that day be glorified in His saints and wondered at in all that have believed (2 Thess. 1.10).

All these will reign with Him, and will have judgment given unto them. Their places in the kingdom will be ordered according to their faithfulness on earth. Solemn consideration for all our hearts! Let us ponder it well, and look carefully to our walk and ways.

Then we have the two classes of saints who will be added to them. "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and those* which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20.4). These are evidently raised just at the commencement of the millennial kingdom, for John describes them as "souls," and adds "they lived." They are added to those already raised, and thus complete the first resurrection.

A few words as to these saints may be helpful. They are not, as some have taught, unwatchful Christians who are left behind at the Lord's coming, and who have to suffer in consequence, and wait awhile for their heavenly portion. The Word of God knows of no such thing. Our places in the kingdom depend, as I have said, on our walk and service now; but not our translation to heaven to be for ever with the Lord. That is the fruit of Divine grace alone. Who, then, are these two classes of saints? You will find the one in Rev. 6, the other in Rev. 15. In chap. 6.9 John saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for their testimony. This corresponds exactly with the first class of Rev. 20.4. He heard them cry with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" These are evidently not Christians. Christians, as Stephen in Acts 7, the rather pray for their murderers and bless their persecutors; at least, we are taught to do so by our Lord Jesus. But the souls in Rev. 6 call for vengeance. Are they

*This word has unfortunately been omitted in our Authorised Version. See Revised Version. It is necessary to make the two classes clear.

wrong in uttering such a cry? Impossible, especially when we consider that the seer saw them in a disembodied state in heaven! There, surely, all improper feelings have no place. These are Jewish sufferers, the early witnesses of the gospel of the kingdom after the removal of the Church of God to heaven. Their testimony has not been received, for they are seen as slain. They take their stand on the ground of earthly judicial righteousness— quite right for a Jew, but quite wrong for a Christian, who is always expected to manifest the spirit of grace. Their cry reminds us of the Psalms. They live in a different dispensation to Christianity. In answer to their cry “white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled,” or completed (Rev. 6.11). Here we have a reference to a further class of martyrs.

Later in the same book we find them (see Rev. 15.2—4). “I saw, as it were, a sea of glass, mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,” etc. Here are the fellow servants of the martyrs of ch. 6, the second class of raised saints, as in Rev. 20.4. These are not necessarily preachers of the gospel of the kingdom. They are perhaps more passive. They lose their lives because they decline to receive the mark of the beast or to worship his image. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego of old, they stand true in an evil day, confiding in the living God. At all cost to themselves they refuse to take part in so great wickedness and sin against God. There will be no middle ground in the day of Antichrist. All must declare plainly whom they serve. If the true God, then all the power of hell will be let loose upon them. Such will find comfort in the Lord’s words, “Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven” (Matt. 5.12). If they lose the earthly kingdom, through faithfulness, just when it is about to be set up, the Lord will give them a better portion in the heavens, though they are too late to form part of the Church. None are really the losers who suffer for His sake. His heart will take a great delight in dealing out to all such a full reward.

The raising up of these bands of latter-day martyrs completes

the first resurrection—the resurrection of life. They will all reign with Christ. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20.6). Happy souls! Wondrous the grace that will introduce us into such a place!

But what of the rest of the dead—the ungodly? Their tombs will be left untouched until the judgment of the Great White Throne. During the blessed period of Christ’s beneficent reign over the earth they will remain in their graves, to be judged at the end. “The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” How awful to be found among them!

When the term of universal peace and blessing has run its course, we read, “I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was 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” (Rev. 20.11,12). This is the final resurrection—the resurrection of judgment. There is no trace of saved persons in this throng. They are the lost, called up by the quickening voice of the Son of God to hear their righteous doom. They are “clothed,” i.e., they resume their bodies, to be found, alas! “naked” before Him (2 Cor. 5.3).

Man has a hereafter, either of bliss or woe. He does not and cannot perish like the beasts, though he may degrade himself morally to become like the beasts that perish (Ps. 49.12,20). Man has a life that is endless. He derived it by the direct inbreathing of God. The beasts have not this. They lived when made, but of the man two things are recorded. First, “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground” (Gen. 2.7). This refers to the body, which became mortal through the entrance of sin. Mortality is never spoken of in Scripture in connection with the soul.

“Dust thou art, to dust returnest
Was not spoken of the soul.”

Secondly, we read—“and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Such is the simple yet majestic language of Scripture. Having received such a life, man

lives on, either in happiness or in woe. Many confound this with eternal life, which is very unintelligent. The latter is God's gift in Christ to believers only. It is life in association with the Son of God in His own sphere of blessedness above. Immortality is by no means synonymous with eternal life. The former, man had from the very beginning, before the fall; the latter is the gift of God, through grace. It cannot be earned by works of law or by fleshly effort of any kind; it is alone to be had through faith in the Son (1 John 5.11,12).

Has my reader received the gift of eternal life? If so, very soon God will apply the power of it to your poor body, and "mortality shall be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5.4). Let the words of the Lord Jesus remain in the heart, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John 11.25,26). Thus He sets forth the power that resides in Himself. He will presently put it forth on behalf of all of His own.

In view of our blessed portion and prospect, may all our steps be quickened; in view of the awful future awaiting the ungodly, may our zeal be deepened to win souls for Christ while we may.

—(to be continued D.V.)

I have a home in heaven,
It is prepared for me,
Prepared by my dear Saviour,
Who died on Calvary,
No place on earth is like it
Or can with it compare,
His hand alone shall guide me,
And bring me safely there.

In glory all transcendent,
I shall behold His face
And there with hosts unnumbered,
Shall praise Him for His grace,
That brought Him from high heaven,
To this dark world of sin,
That those on Him believing 76.76.76.75.
His heaven should enter in. —Henry V. Porter

THE LOVE OF JESUS

“His is love, ‘tis love unbounded—
Without measure, without end!”

The Lord Jesus was made perfect through sufferings. He was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; He was stricken, smitten and afflicted. Oh! who can know what His sufferings were, for it was suffering love—love which longed to find entrance into every heart, which longed to bless all with His own uncreated blessedness. It was love that brought Him from the heavenly Glory and made Him hasten to Jerusalem, even when knowing all things that were to come upon Him there—the cursed death of the cross, and that bitter cup of which He said, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will but thine be done.”

Oh! this is love that passeth knowledge; it hath a height and depth which are unsearchable! How hath God commended His love to us? He spared not His own son, but delivered Him up for us all. It was love that sent Jesus; love that longed to flow out to this desolate world; and when no way could be opened but through the rent veil of the flesh of Jesus—His well beloved and only Son—He withheld Him not.

What love does the blood of Jesus unfold! With what a price have we been redeemed! and how precious must we be in the sight of God when bought with such a price!

Oh! to know more and more what the peace is which Jesus gives! To let it rule in our hearts, to lean on His very arm, yea, on His very bosom of love, while going up through the wilderness! It is here He would have us to lean. The nearer we are to Him, and the more confidence we place in Him, the more the longings of His love over us are satisfied. Oh! to be made now to drink of the river of God’s pleasures! To have every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ! (which was confiding trust in His Father’s love, depending on Him for all things) that we may now live by Him as He lived by the Father!

Oh! how true, how real a pleasure

Flows from love so rich, so free,

‘Tis a rich, unbounded treasure,

Saviour we possess Thee!

—*R.C. Chapman.*

COMMITTEE NOTES

“Praise ye the Lord. (Hallelujah. Margin)

O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever.” Psalm 106.1.

As we meditate upon the One Who has become our salvation well may our hearts swell in adoration:-”Hallelujah.” As we think of Him as Jehovah, we are reminded of His covenant relationship with Israel. He is not less mindful of the church and our hearts overflow in thanksgiving. Though we may forget Him, His mercy (or lovingkindness) draws us back to Himself. On a future day He shall have the praise that is His due when the “Alleluia’s” of Rev. 19.1,3,4 & 6 resound. Does it not melt our hearts to realise that because of His grace we shall be there? At the beginning of another year may we resolve to allow our minds and hearts to be occupied increasingly with such a beloved Person, Who alone is worthy. Meantime we would seek to encourage one another to continue in service for Him with increasing zeal for “the night is far spent.” Romans 13.12.

With hearts full of sincere gratitude we review the year that is past and trace once again our faithful God’s provision, through His beloved saints, for the needs of “Assembly Testimony.” We wish to express genuine thanks to all who prayed for us, and corresponded with us, as well as to all who helped in distribution. We are grateful to those who studied “. . . rightly dividing the word of truth” 2 Tim. 2.15, and submitted profitable papers to our editor. The Lord will reward the cheerful givers who, individually or through assemblies, contributed towards our ever increasing costs.

We would solicit your prayers for our editor who has obeyed the call of God to leave a secure position in the University of Ulster and devote his full time to the service of the Lord. We are indebted to him for the energetic service he gives to the work of the magazine. We are glad he feels free to continue this work along with his increased activities for the Lord.

For 35 years brother Glenville has been a diligent faithful treasurer for the British mainland. He perseveres tirelessly and all his efforts are much appreciated.

Last, but not least, we mention the gratuitous professional services of our Accountant. Each year he gives useful advice and certifies our accounts. We value his help increasingly.

“Finally, brethren, pray for us.” 2 Thess 3.1.

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (26)

by Paul Elliott (USA)

I was born on April 7, 1907 and born again December 14, 1927 in the little town of Aplington, Iowa, the eldest son in a family of 5 girls and 5 boys and the first one saved in the family. As children we were sent to the Presbyterian Sunday School and when I was about 12 I was sprinkled and made a Member of the Church, but I never took the bread and wine, nor could they get me to lead in the young peoples meetings, because something told me I was unfit. By the time I was fifteen I no longer went to Sunday School and was encouraged thus by my father saying it did me no good anyway. From that time on I went in for the pleasures of this world especially sports and was never happier than when I was playing ball. When I was eighteen I began keeping company with a girl who was later to become my wife. She was a Baptist and like myself, unsaved but had a saved father. About this time Oliver Smith and Pat Magee pitched a tent in our town and began preaching the Gospel. My father in law to be, went to these meetings and saw at once that they were preaching the truth. He encouraged his children to go, most of whom were grown up men. The next summer Mr. Smith and John Blair came back for tent meetings. That summer two of my girlfriend's brothers were saved among others. I was still busy with the pleasures of this world, my parents and friends were against the meetings and I did not go. The next year Mr. Smith started meetings in an old church building six miles north of town called Hitesville and many were saved. The next spring on the last day of April 1927, a Sunday evening, we were in the home of another brother of my girlfriend who had been saved during meetings at Hitesville. Sitting down at the supper table he gave thanks before we ate and I could scarce restrain the tears as the thought came to me, "how can a farmer pray like that," and I could hardly eat for the longing that welled up in my heart, I wished I had what he had. That night having promised my girlfriend I would go to the meeting, for the first time I resolved to get to the bottom of this matter. One thing I saw that

night, through John 3.16 that never left me until I was saved, was that a real believer had everlasting life and knew it. Had anyone asked during these years if I was a Christian I would have replied, “no”, and neither did I understand what it was to be one. Now I saw that a Christian was the possessor of eternal life. My first thought was that it would not be so hard for a smart fellow like me to work this matter out, but I little knew my wicked heart and how great and strong the bands of sin that held me. I tried to get better, to quit my swearing and bad habits, thinking then that I deserved to be saved, but all to no avail.

I wondered alone in the darkness,
Not a ray of light could I see,
And the thought filled my heart with sadness,
There’s no hope for a sinner like me.

I began to be afraid the Lord would come and leave me for Judgement or the Spirit of God would cease striving with me and I would be doomed. Meanwhile as I went to meetings my parents would try to persuade me not to go, as I was a good boy, they thought and had no need to be saved and often we would argue far into the night and I remember telling them “yourselves and all ten of your children are on the way to Hell”. This sort of thing continued until 6 months later my wife’s brother George came into the Barber shop and said, “Bena and I,(his only sister) are going to Waterloo tomorrow to do a little shopping and then going to the Gospel meeting at the Hall. Will you go?” I was to play in the town basketball team that night, but the thought came to me what if I should die on the floor, I would be in Hell. So I said, “I will go.” That was December 13. That night burdened about my soul, trying to believe, I was asked by Mr Smith “Do you believe that God was satisfied with his Son?” These words came to me “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” and I answered, “yes”. Then he said “are you satisfied with Jesus?” I thought, I can find no fault in Him, and said, “yes.” I had never thought of it in this light before and my desire was to get alone. When I got home, I resolved to pray and ask God to open my blinded eyes, which was something I could not bring myself to before, and thought that would just be playing the hypocrite and I did not believe anyway. When I got up from my knees, I opened the Bible and fully expected God would

show me I was saved. Nothing came, there was no peace for me. It was nearly four o'clock in the morning and I went to bed with one thought I will have to go to hell after all. While lying there in bed, the two questions asked by Mr. Smith came before me. I saw that God was satisfied with His Son and I was satisfied too. Just then God brought John 3:16 before me and as I came to the word "whosoever" I saw for the first time that God meant me and Jesus died for me and I was saved. Oh it is wonderful that He should care for me enough to die for me, oh it is wonderful, wonderful to me.

At once I was on my knees and thanked God for the Lord Jesus. As opportunity came I was baptised and received into fellowship of the Hitesville Assembly. I was a barber by trade, and as the Gospel is for people, I began to tell what great things God had done for me. Also I was exercised to take part in the prayer meetings and worship meetings and to testify and speak in the gospel meetings. Then as time went on, two brethren in the Hitesville meeting (both in Heaven now) and I would have meetings in a home, on a farm yard in nice weather, or in a country schoolhouse that was available.

As Brother Oliver Smith was my father in the faith, he would say, "Paul, if you ever consider preaching you could go along with me". Another time the wife of brother Brown who laboured and pioneered several hundred miles to the South West, said to me, "The Lord needs young men like you to preach His Word". I said, "He wanted faithful men". She replied, "young men need, and have a faithful God," a kind and gentle rebuke that still remains.

My father needed me in the Barber shop as he was not well, but I went on helping in various meetings and weekends in local assemblies until drafted into the U.S. Army in October 1942. I was an objector to bearing arms and never had a gun in my hands. I was trained for hospital work and in July 1944 landed with the 101 Gen. Hospital Unit in Liverpool, England. We went by train to Taunton, England a little way in the country, where I worked for ten months as a ward man caring for the wounded. I found the hall in Taunton (Octagon), a man by name Roland Bier, invited me to his home and many a Lord's day was spent

at little meetings and assemblies and a few all day meetings, as I was able. Next at the end of the war in England our Hospital was sent to Berlin, Germany, where I spent 3 months and found an assembly there. I arrived home in November 1945 and in less than a week was having meetings with Brother Smith in a country schoolhouse. I had the privilege of labouring with him almost constantly for seven years and at other times, until he went to be with the Lord on the last day of May 1960. Since then I have laboured with not a few brethren, in happy fellowship and seek to continue as able. It might be of interest to say as I close that my wife was saved six months after I was. We were married a year later, in February 1929.

“And even to your old age, I am He, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you.” Isaiah 46.4.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. (No member of the committee, author of articles or any other person connected with the magazine receives payment, remuneration or gratuity of any kind).

All cheques, money orders, etc., should be made payable to "Assembly Testimony Magazine."

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to : John Glenville, 16 Trelawney Road, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4DD. Telephone (0752) 846889.

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by W. W. Fereday

THE LORD'S NAME

by T. C. Taws

THE SECRET OF FAITHFULNESS

Selected

GLIMPSES OF THE LORD'S HUMANITY IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

by A. E. Baguley

MY CONVERSION AND CALL

by U. Ussher

Upon the Cross, Lord, dying for me,
Hung the blest Lamb of dark Calvary,
Shedding His blood, Lord, setting me free,
When Jesus died on Calvary's tree.

Down from the Cross, Lord, they took Him
down,
Lovingly laid within the cold ground,
Up from the tomb He rose from the grave,
Triumphant and able dear sinners to save.

This be my song, Lord, blest be His Name,
Why should I be of His Person ashamed?
Love so eternal, grace flowing free,
All because Jesus died on the tree.

Gone back to Heaven, He's gone to prepare,
A home for the faithful His riches to share,
Soon He will come His own to receive,
Then we shall see Him with all who believe.

There on before us many loved ones have
gone,
There in God's presence with the sanctified
throng,
Waiting to meet us who mourn their de-
cease,
Soon shall we meet in the haven of peace.

—by *Oliver G. Smith (U.S.A.)*

*May be sung to the tune of
"Have Thine Own Way, Lord"*

BEHOLD THE MAN

(Meditations in Luke's Gospel)

by JIM FLANIGAN, (Belfast)

10. His Intercession

The dependent Man of Luke's Gospel is a praying Man. This is to be expected. Seven times in this Gospel do we find the Saviour at prayer. In every circumstance of life He will be found in communion with His Father. In joy and in sorrow; in busy service and in quiet solitude, the Saviour will always have time to engage in prayer.

In ch. 3.21 we first find Him at prayer, right at the moment of His introduction to the nation. He is being baptised, taking His place with a believing remnant, responding to the call of Jehovah through John Baptist. This is great humility on the part of Jesus. He had nothing of which to repent, but He stands with a repentant people in Jordan. It was His gracious acknowledgement of John's preaching and His identification with those who were obedient to the Word. As another has said, "He saw His sheep in the dark waters of death and He fain would be with them". As He stands in the Jordan water He prays, and upon this dependent Man in prayer, the heavens open in visible and audible approval of Him. The Father speaks, and the Spirit descends, abiding as a tender dove upon the gentle Lamb of God.

In ch. 5.16 His ministry has truly begun. Preaching and healing, and calling disciples after Him, He moves in Galilee. By the Lake shore He ministers to a multitude of their sick as the Sabbath sun is setting. The Sabbath had left them in their sickness. The law cannot help. But the end of the sabbath is the dawn of the Lord's Day and the Saviour embarks upon His miraculous ministry. Great multitudes come to hear and to be healed, until He withdraws Himself into the wilderness and prays. Has He given His servants an example? Can we be too busy? Ought we, as the Master, sometimes withdraw ourselves from the bustle of service to engage in holy communion with the Father?

In ch. 6.12 we are allowed to see the intensity of His interces-

sion. On the mountain side He continued all night in prayer to God. This does not imply the endless vain repetition for which He rebukes the Pharisees. It is continuing, earnest, prevailing supplication and communion with God, after which He will name His twelve apostles and then return to the people again, to minister to them. He came down from the mount of intercession to a great multitude who had travelled from as far away as Jerusalem and Judea and the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, that they might hear Him and be healed.

In ch 9.19 He is at prayer again. Notice that He is “alone”, praying. Note too, that in the previous verses He is ministering to a crowd of some five thousand, but He leaves the thousands and is now alone. From the multitude to the solitude He has retired to pray. Coming from prayer He asks His disciples, “Whom say the people that I am?”. It is perhaps well known that ch. 9 is a climatic chapter in Luke’s Gospel. Soon the hour of rejection will come and the Saviour will commence His journey back to Jerusalem, and to Golgotha. What has the nation decided, He is asking. Who say they that I am? Then, for His own comfort and for theirs, He asks, “But ye, whom say ye that I am?.” Peter, bold spokesman for the twelve, answers unhesitatingly, “The Christ of God”. Approaching this crisis moment in His ministry, the Saviour is alone, praying.

In ch. 9.28 we find Him yet again in prayer. Once more He will avail Himself of the privacy of the mountain side. He ascends the mount (Hermon?) to pray, and He takes with Him Peter and John and James. And as He prayed He was transfigured. His countenance and His garments are radiant with glory. They are joined by two more men, Moses and Elijah, and the conversation is about His forthcoming exodus which He would accomplish at Jerusalem. Heaven and earth are united in glory. Peter, John and James, who had come up from the plain below; Moses and Elijah who had come down from the glory above; Jesus, transfigured, all-glorious, in their midst, in an unforgettable hour of communion. All this on the Holy Mount, the mount where He had prayed. It is almost too much for the men of earth. They are heavy with sleep. But when they awake they see His glory. Soon they must descend again, to begin the journey to Calvary.

In ch. 11.1, for the sixth time in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus prays

again. His disciples watch and wait and listen, and then ask, "Lord, teach us to pray". And He taught them. He gave them a pattern prayer, not to be repeated mechanically as in much of Christendom, but to be observed as a model of brevity and beauty, of intimacy and dignity, the language of reverence, of intelligence, and of obedience. There is simplicity and sincerity, and all in a spirit of dependency. What beautiful language is this. We speak as children to a Father; as subjects to a King; as servants to a Master; as pilgrims to a Guide. And the Lord exhorts them, "After this manner therefore pray ye" (Matt 6.9).

In ch 22.41 we see the Saviour in prayer on the eve of Calvary. This is holy ground. We approach with feet unshod. It is a garden on the Mount of Olives, Gethsemane. "Gethsemane" means, "The Olive Press". It is the place where the oil is crushed out of the olives. And so we see Him, pressed, crushed, in the exceeding sorrows of the garden. He had brought Peter, James and John so far, but no further. In His sorrow He must go beyond them a stone's cast. They had seen His glory on another mount. Now, on Mount Olivet, they are to witness the beginnings of His agony, earnest, agonising prayer, and blood-like sweat and tears.

Garden of gloom appalling,
Where, in His sore amaze,
Earthward in anguish falling,
Prostrate, the Saviour prays;
Prays in exceeding sorrow,
Prays, on the ground bowed low,
Facing the dark tomorrow
Full of unmeasured woe!

In the garden we have the very heart of true prayer. "Not my will, but thine, be done". In such a spirit we too must pray, acknowledging God's rights and bowing to His will; asking, content with what He sends, knowing that it is always for our good and for His glory.

A BEAUTIFUL COMPLEXION

An elderly Christian lady, with a beautiful complexion, was asked what kind of cosmetic she used. She replied, "I use for my lips, TRUTH; for my voice, PRAYER; for my eyes, PITY; for my hands, CHARITY; for my figure UPRIGHTNESS; for my heart, LOVE." —*Selected*

Aspects of The Holy Spirit and The Believer

by B. Currie, (Belfast)

No. 5 — SPIRIT PRODUCED EXERCISES

A lot of so called Christian activity has no foundation in the Holy Scriptures and therefore cannot be of God. All believers need to have the assurance that the work in which they are engaged is begotten by the Holy Spirit and will therefore be in accord with the Word of God. There will be no reward at the Judgement Seat for anything which is done outside the rules and therefore is unlawful, 2 Tim. 2.5. We wish to consider a few of the exercises which are the produce of the activity of the Holy Spirit.

1. Led of the Spirit

This expression is often used in relation to the gatherings of the Lord's people, when some brethren claim that they were led of the Spirit to take part. The term is used only four times in the NT, twice of the Lord Jesus, Matt. 4.1; Luke 4.1 and twice of believers, Rom. 8.14; Gal. 5.18. None of these scriptures has any reference to particular meetings of Believers.

In relation to the Lord Jesus both references have to do with His temptation. As previously noted in these articles, He was the only One who was constantly full of the Holy Spirit and therefore constantly led of the Spirit.

In relation to the believer the phrase has to do with the normal round of life. Obviously to be sensitive to the Presidency of the Holy Spirit in the gatherings of the saints, one needs to be submissive to His guidance each day.

Rom. 8.14 indicates that those who are led by the Spirit of God reveal in their lives the dignity of the sons of God. This is manifested by those who "walk after the Spirit," v4. If Rom. 8.14 is positive, telling us what we are, the second reference in Gal. 5.18 is negative and tells us what we are not — "if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under law." Again close by in the same context we find the expression, "walk in the Spirit," v16.

Thus to be led of the Spirit is to walk in the Spirit and vice

versa, and ought to be the habitual manner of a believer's life.

2. Worship in the Spirit.

The A.V. of Phil. 3.3 reads, “. . . which worship God in the Spirit,”. Both the R.V. and J.N.D. read, “. . . who worship by the Spirit of God,”. Thus to worship is an exercise which is the product of the Holy Spirit. The word translated worship in this verse is “latreuo” which means “to render religious service,” (Vine). The spiritual nature of worship is confirmed in John 4.23, 24. The word translated worship here is “proskuneo” and literally means “to kiss towards”, and hence “to make obeisance, do reverence to”, (Vine). Both words are used by the Lord Jesus in reply to Satan during His temptation, “Thou shalt worship (proskuneo) the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve (latreuo),” Matt. 4.10. It is clear therefore that both worship and service are spiritual exercises.

The implications of this are most practical, and mean at the very least that there is no necessity for anything material in our worship or service. The introduction to Christian service of social matters, films, games, music, soloists etc., is all an unnecessary embellishment of the true gospel. Similarly in respect of worship. In John 4.20 the woman of Samaria associated worship with the mountain (Samaritan worship) or with Jerusalem (Jewish worship). However the Lord taught her that genuine worship was neither material, as associated with Jerusalem, nor false, as associated with the mountain, but is “in spirit and in truth,” v. 23, 24. The introduction of ornate buildings, a bedecked priesthood separate from the laity, a visible altar, visible incense, choirs, singers and music etc. all belong to a material form of worship and have no place in this present dispensation. In fact to be consistent, those who advocate such introductions should also return to animal sacrifices. The horror of such a thought rises in the breast of all who acknowledge the finished, and all sufficient, work of the Lord Jesus on Calvary. Just as those animal sacrifices have been rendered obsolete by His death so have all other material forms of worship since we now move in spirit “into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,” Heb.10.19.

3. The Fruit of the Spirit.

This is often misquoted and called the fruits of the Spirit, but the word in Gal. 5.22 is in the singular — fruit. It really indicates

the complete quality of Christian character. The fact that it is spoken of as a fruit indicates a slow growth which is the outward manifestation of an inward power. This inward power is the Holy Spirit and as He has His way in our lives He will produce this beautiful fruit which can be summarised as Christlikeness. Some have the mistaken notion that fruit is confined to gospel preaching and seeing souls saved. However to bear fruit (John 15) is available to all saints regardless of their gift or public ability and is in essence the development of the features of Christ. This, and not preaching or teaching, is the high water mark of Christianity. It is God's will that we should be like His Son, and this He shall ensure will be accomplished, Rom. 8.29.

It is important that we all, but especially the young in Christ, appreciate that the evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in the life of a believer is neither something sensational nor spectacular but is seen in the development of, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

In conclusion please note that God gives us at least four commands as to our responsibility in relation to the Holy Spirit:

- 1) Gal. 5.16 — Walk in the Spirit;
- 2) Eph. 4.30 — Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;
- 3) Eph. 5.18 — Be filled with the Spirit;
- 4) 1 Thess. 5.19 — Quench not the Spirit.

For Godly living and the development of the fruit of the Spirit it is imperative that we obey these commands.

(series concluded)

MY FRIEND

I have a Friend that's really close, closer than any other,
In fact I've proved what the Bible says, He's closer than a brother.

"A friend in need is a friend indeed" is a saying that's really fine,
But the deed, indeed, that supplied my need, was done by my Friend divine.

A life laid down shows the greatest love, when laid down for one's friends,
But my Friend showed His Father's love, which He to all men sends.

So what do you think of my Friend divine, who's love is always true?
He wants to be your Friend as well, because He died for you.

—W. Beynon, S. Wales.

EPHESIANS EXPOUNDED

by A. D. THROPAY (California)

Paper 17

2. Introduction of the new man. 4.20-32

Verse 26

Paul quotes again. This time it is from Psalm 4.4 in the Septuagint Version.

—“**Be angry:** (present imperative passive tense of *orgizō*) this is a command to keep on being angry, indignant, enraged. This anger is connected with what is prohibited in verse 25 and with what will be prohibited in verse 28; that is, deliberate falsehood and stealing. Our anger is to be limited to those things which injure God, His Son and His Body. Anger which is the result of personal injury and with a desire to retaliate is prohibited in the last phrase of this verse as well as in verse 31. The Lord’s demonstrations of being indignant were limited to occasions when His Father’s house and honour were at stake due to dishonesty and thievery within the temple. He was never angry because of things that were done to Himself personally.

—**and sin not**”: (*mē hamartanete* — present imperative tense of *hamartanō*, negated). It means, “Stop sinning and continue to refuse.” That is, do not fight falsehood with falsehood or any other sin. Regarding the Lord in the temple, He did not fight their stealing by stealing from them or by destroying any of their possessions.

(a) He did not do anything that would cause injury to the animals nor loss of money to the money changers. John 2.15 “And when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables;”

(b) Doves, which could have been lost, the Lord did not touch, but rather “said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of mer-

chandise.” John 2.16 Perhaps the best method to prevent sinning is to follow the last part of the verse being quoted from Psalms 4.4 “Stand in awe, and sin not: *commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still, Selah.*” If you commune with your own heart upon your bed, you will not say anything that you might regret later. If you “be still” you will not *do* anything that might be regretted later.

—**let not the sun go down upon your wrath:** (parorgismos) Anger that is provoked by some action done to you by another person. Anger that is mixed with exasperation or violence. Compare 6.4. Such wrath or anger is forbidden.

NOTE: ACCORDING TO THIS VERSE, WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR OWN ANGER OR WRATH! Compare Jonah 4.1-11. Especially verse 9, “And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, even unto death.”

Verse 27

—**Neither give:** (didōmi) give, grant, bestow. As verse 26, Present imperative tense in the negative. “Stop giving . . .”

—**place:** (topon) room, space, opportunity.

—**to the devil:** (diabolos) Accuser. The word means literally, “to throw through.” The devil uses things that the believer does to accuse God in front of others. He does this by using people to gossip about things done and said by believers. We are to stop doing and saying things that provide subject matter for gossip. The most damaging gossip is done among those who profess to be Christians.

Verse 28

—**Let him that stole:** (ho kleptōn) The verb is in the present tense in the Greek. “Let him that steals.” Stealing was not entirely condemned in the Roman society in which they lived. Therefore, some Christians saw nothing wrong with stealing like others.

—**steal no more:** This is the present imperative tense negated as in verse 26. “stop stealing.”

—**but:** (de) in distinction from stealing.

—**let him labour:** (koplaō) To be wearied or spent with hard

labour and continue to do so. This is set in contrast to the laziness associated with stealing.

- working:** (ergazomai) To work, exerting oneself; To do business.
- with his hands:** This phrase answers to the type of work that he is to be occupied with. He is to do something involving his own hands.
- the things which is good:** (agathos) “that which being good in character is beneficial in its effects.” (See W. E. Vine) Rather than use his hands to steal, doing that which is selfish and harmful towards others, he is to use his hands for that which is of benefit to others.
- that:** (hina) in order that; to the end that.
- he may have:** (echō) To have, have ready, to be furnished with. This implies that he has an emergency savings fund.
- to give:** (metadidōmi — from meta=with; didōmi=to give) “To share with; to give a part with.”
- to him that needeth:** (chreia) “A pressing lack of something essential.” Lit. “to him that has an urgent need.”

Verse 29

- Let no:** (pas . . . mē) Lit. “not any”
- corrupt:** (sapos) a) Rotten, putrid, corrupt, vicious
b) Bad, profitless, worthless (Matthew 7.14,18; 12.33; 13.48; Luke 6.43; here.
(These are the only places in the New Testament where this word is found.)
- communication:** (logos) “word, speech, communication,” etc.
- proceed out of:** (ekporeuomai) To go or depart out of a place.
- your mouth:** This corrupt speech which is never to exit from the lips of a Christian includes not only offensive and off-color talk, but also any talk that has no purpose or any profit to the listener.
- but:** (alla) This word is used to show a contrast.
- that which is:** (ei tis) Literally, “if there be any good.”
- good:** (agathos) that which being good in character, is also beneficial in its affect on others.

- to the:** (pros) “towards, with a view to, in respect of.”
- use of:** (tes chreia) “need, a pressing lack of something essential” as in verse 29.
- edifying:** (oikodomē) “To build up.” Our communication should be geared towards benefiting those who have a pressing spiritual need by building them up spiritually.
- that:** (hina) in order that; to the end that.
- it may minister:** (didōmi) “give.”
- grace:** (charis) favour, benefit, kindness. The unlimited (Romans 11.6), unmerited (Ephesians 2.8), unselfish (2 Corinthians 8.9), loving favour of God to the sinner which produces “leaping for joy” and “thankfulness.”
- unto the hearers:** The purpose of Christian speech is to build the listeners up by imparting a spiritual blessing to them so that they will receive the enjoyment of God’s grace in their lives.

Verse 30

- and:** (kai) the conjunction shows that verse 30 is a continuation of verse 29. It refers particularly to “Corrupt communication.”
- grieve:** (lupeite — present imperative of lupo) To occasion grief, sorrow, distress or pain.
- not:** (mē) a negative particle associated with the present imperative is used to forbid a continual or habitual activity. It means, “Stop grieving,” that is, by corrupt communication.
- the Holy:** (hagios) This word describes the character of the One we are not to grieve. This is an “apartness” type quality that characterizes God alone and distinguishes Him from all other beings. “To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is.” (A. W. Tozer: “The Knowledge of the Holy).
- Spirit:** (pneuma) This describes the *name* of the Person as well as the *nature* of the One we are to avoid grieving. The Holy Spirit is invisible, intangible, and omnipresent.

—**of God:** These words describe the Person and origin of the One we are not to grieve. The command is made more solemn by calling the Spirit “Holy” and “Divine.” We are to avoid grieving God’s Holy Spirit.

—**whereby:** (en hō) Literally, “in which.”

—**ye are sealed:** (sphragizō) it is in the aorist tense. “Ye were sealed. The seal was used:

1. To make something secure against unlawful tampering (as the tomb, Matt. 27.66; the Den of Lions, Dan. 6.17).
2. To mark out as one’s own possession (as the 144,000 Israelites in Rev. 7.2-8; and those who are saved now, 2 Tim. 2.29).
3. To keep secret (Rev. 10.4; 22.10), to conceal (Cp. Psalm 5.11 margin).

—**unto:** (eis) with a view towards.

—**the day of redemption:** (apolutrōsis) a releasing effected by the payment of a ransom; deliverance or liberation procured by the payment of a ransom. This time, the word refers to the time when the believers are raised, their bodies changed, and their presence transferred up to Heaven.

When we consider the fact that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, it makes the seriousness of profittless, worthless language greater; let alone allowing foul or putrid language to proceed from our lips!

Verse 31

—**Let all:** (pasa) Every kind of every form of

—**bitterness:** (pikria) Bitterness of spirit and language; harshness
— In Acts 8.23 it is used of extreme evil; “gall of bitterness.” In Romans 3.14 it is used of evil speaking and in Hebrews 12.15 it is used of “bitter hatred.” Compare the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 50.5 “I was not rebellious.” In Hebrew the word is “marah” and means “bitter.”

—**and wrath:** (thumos) A strong agitated passion and emotion resulting in an outburst of wrath from inward indignation.

—**and anger:** (orgē) Primarily means “mental bent.” It signifies anger as an abiding condition of the mind, frequently with a view to take revenge. See W. E. Vines Dictionary. “Orgee”

is less sudden in its rise than thumos, but more lasting in its nature.

- a. We are not to be close friends with a person like this, in order to avoid becoming like him. Proverbs 22.24,25 “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.”
- b. God’s righteousness is never produced or gained through a man’s wrath or anger. James 1.20 “For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” The word translated “wrath” in this verse is “orgee” the same Greek word under discussion.
- d. Note that there have been four words describing wrath or anger in this chapter. Two in verse 26 and two in this verse.

—**and clamour:** (kraugē) 1) “To croak or cry with a loud and raucous voice”

2) “To demand with cries” (T.D.N.T.)

3) It refers to “clamour” and arguing in Acts 23.9

4) It is used of an anxious cry in Revelation 21.4 where it is eliminated from those in the presence of God in Heaven. — It suggests a rough or raucous sound. It is taken from the croak of the raven. It is used here of the violent assertion of ones rights; real or supposed. It is a person who is loud and insistent, trying to force his will on others by his loud, aggressive and intimidating way of speaking.

—**and evil speaking:** (blasphēmia) We get the English word “blaspheme” from this Greek word. It refers to “slander or injurious speech with reference to an authority, leader, or guide usually.”

—**be put away:** (arthētō — Imperative passive tense of “airō.”) Take away, remove.

—**from you, with:** (sun) “Together with, in company with.”

—**all:** (pasē) Every kind, or every form of.

—**malice:** (kikia) May mean “wickedness” in general (Acts 8.22; 1 Corinthians 5.8; 15.20; 1 Peter 2.16) or “ill will” and “malice” in particular. (Romans 1.29; Colossians 3.8; Titus 3.3; James 1.21; 1 Peter 2.1) Expositors.

Note: Everything mentioned in this verse is opposite to the

character of God and therefore cannot be practiced by an individual depending on God for his behaviour.

Verse 32

- And be ye:** (ginesthe) “become ye” or “show yourselves.” They are to abandon one mental attitude and perspective for another.
- kind:** (chrēstos) Mild, gracious, good-hearted, pleasant, and agreeable. This word is used of God in Luke 6.35 “kind”; Romans 2.4 “goodness of God.” It is used of Christ in Matthew 11.30 “My yoke is easy”; 1 Peter 2.3 “gracious.” It is also used of believers in 1 Corinthians 15.33.
- one to:** (eis) unto; towards.
- another, tenderhearted:** (eusplanchnos) (from “eu” =well; and “splanchnon” = the inward, innermost organs) It means literally, “of good heartedness.” W. E. Vine — It is one who can be easily touched with the feelings of others. A sensitive, compassionate, person. Hence, tenderhearted. It is translated “pitiful” in its only other occurrence in the New Testament, 1 Peter 3.8.
- forgiving:** (charizomai) (From “charis” = grace; and “didomi” = to give) It means literally, “to give graciously,” hence, “to forgive.” It is forgiveness seen by gracious acting or giving towards the offender.
- one another:** (heautois) each other.
- even as:** (kathōs) according as; in accord with.
- also God for Christ’s sake:** (hō Theos en Christō) Literally, “God in Christ” as 2 Corinthians 5.19.
- hath forgiven you:** (charizomai) As above, but in the aorist tense; “did forgive you.” It may refer to the date of receiving God’s free salvation or to the forgiveness implemented when Christ died. (See Expositors) — God’s forgiveness is free, gracious, merciful, loving, giving, ungrudging, complete, and final. Compare Hebrews 8.12 “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Hebrews 10.17 “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

Note:—1. Everything mentioned in this verse is in keeping with

God's character. A believer who demonstrates these qualities is demonstrating the character of God.

2. Kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness are mentioned in reverse order to how they proceed from the believer, but in actual order perceived by the recipient.
 - a) Kindness is doing things that are of benefit and service to others (regardless of their own behaviour) using our BODIES as the expression of our SOUL.
 - b) Tenderheartedness is the source of kindness. It is our SPIRIT having compassion on others
 - c) Forgiveness is the source of compassion. Forgiveness begins in our HEART, which, when indwelt by God Himself, treats others as God treats them.

* * *

In the issue of Sept./Oct. 1993, No. 247, we regret that the first page of manuscript was inadvertently omitted from Paper 14. We print it here with our apologies.

Verse 5 continued . . .

—**One baptism:** The Lord told His disciples to baptize all those that placed their faith in Him; all those that accepted Him as their Lord and were willing to become His disciples. Matthew 28.18,19 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”

1. Who was Baptized? Only those and all who received God's word and believed on the Lord Jesus were baptized. Acts 2.41. “Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Acts 18.8 “and Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.”

2. How is a person baptized? The word “baptisma” was used of the process consisting of immersion or submersion under water and the emergence out of the water. This was how Christ Himself was baptized. This was how all others in the scriptures were baptized. For further study see: Acts 8.27-39 — (This story tells, why, when, and how).

3. Why is a person baptized? (a) In obedience to the Lord's command.

(b) To show the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
Romans 6.3

Verse 6

—**One God:** There is only one God. Although He is three Persons, as mentioned in these three verses, He is only one Being.

—**and Father:** All those who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour become one of God's children and He becomes a Father to them. John 1.12,13.

1. The Holy Spirit brings true believers into a relationship with God in which it is as natural for them to call Him Father as it is for a child to call out for its mother. Romans 8.15,16 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"

2. God treats His children as an earthly father would treat his own children. Psalms 103.13 "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him."

—**of all:** The context shows that this refers to all believers.

—**who is above:** (epi) over, above. That is, He is in the place of supremacy and superiority.

—**all, and through:** (dia) all: That is, He permeates, guides, controls and works through all believers. Cp. Chapter 3.20.

—**and in you all:** (Paul is writing this letter to true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. (See chapter 1.1,11.13,15). God the Father dwells within every believer. This is how He works through them and produces His own character in them. Since, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are inseparable, all three Divine Persons live within the true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 14.16,17,23 "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you . . . Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my *Father* will love him, and *We will come* unto him, and make *Our* abode with him."

PAPERS ON PROPHECY

by The Late W. W. Fereday (written in 1897/98)

VOLUME I

Paper 3 (a) The Coming Judgments

It is a wonderful thing to be able to contemplate the judgments of God, and be altogether free from alarm; but such is the happy portion of the believer in Jesus. The accomplished work of Christ has turned judgment aside for all who believe—it will not, and cannot fall upon any of them. We have the sure word of the Lord Jesus for this—“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 condemnation, but is passed from death unto life” (John 5.24). Here faith rests, and takes up the triumphant challenge, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?” (Rom. 8.33,34). Blessed certainty! Precious God-given assurance!

It is quite possible that some of our readers have been taught differently as to this. The confused idea has long prevailed in Christendom, that there is to be a great general judgment at the end of time, into which all, whether saved or lost, must come; and that there can be no real certainty as to one’s eternal future until that day. This is a profound mistake, grievous in its results, and in plain defiance of the Lord’s precious word in John 5.24. If the believer walks thus uncertainly, what real affection can there be towards God? And how can there be the heavenly tone in the daily walk that God looks for in His own?

The truth is, that every believer is placed by God beyond judgment. We are no longer “in Adam” exposed to death and judgment, but “in Christ” where there is no condemnation (Rom. 8.1). No only so, but we are “clean every whit,” “holy and without blame before Him in love,” loved by the Father with the same love wherewith He loves His Son (John 13.10; Eph. 1.4; John 17. 23,26). As Christ is, so are we in this world. God can no more bring the believer into judgment for his sins, than Christ

Himself. Perfect love casts out all fear (1 John 4.17-19).

It is of the first importance that the Scriptures should be rightly divided as to this solemn theme. For clearness' sake, we will consider the matter in the following order:

1. The Judgment Seat of Christ for Believers.
2. The Judgment of the Quick.
3. The Judgment of the Dead.

1. *The Judgment Seat of Christ.*—In 2. Cor. 5.10 we read, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Here the Apostle’s language is very general. “We” includes every soul that has ever lived in this world. * Believers are not to be exempt; all must be manifested before Christ. Not necessarily on the same day, as some affirm, nor with the same issues. Indeed there are two classes plainly shown in the Scripture: those who have done good, and those who have done evil. *Our* bad was dealt with at the cross of Christ, when the blessed One bowed His holy head beneath the righteous judgment of God, and nothing remains to be dealt with but the good which we have wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost. The ungodly, on the contrary, when they stand before Christ at a later day, will have no good to show (“there is none that doeth good, no, not one”), and will be dealt with in righteousness for all their bad. The thought of this filled the heart of the Apostle with holy concern. The terrors of the coming day for those who know not God and have not believed the Gospel, were before him, and made him earnestly labour that souls might be delivered from the wrath to come. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5.11).

It is a solemn, yet blessed, thought for the believer that everything is to come out before Christ.

We need have no fear or alarm. We shall then be in a glorified state, as the earlier verses of 2 Cor. 5. show. We shall stand at the judgment seat in bodies fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Lord Jesus; for, prior to this manifestation, He will come for us and gather us out of this scene, and place us in the Father’s house. When I read there the whole story of my life, I shall see fully the wonders of His Divine grace. We shall then know the

[*Many of our brethren prefer to interpret this as ‘we believers’. Ed.]

full truth about ourselves, and shall adore and magnify the precious grace that has made us what we are.

But how anxious this should make every saint to walk and serve day by day so as to please the Lord! Our service will all come out there. "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and *reckoneth with them*" (Matt. 25.19). Those who have built on the foundation gold, silver, and precious stones will receive a reward. "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (1 Cor. 3.8). Every little bit of faithful and true service for Christ will be fully recognised then. A cup of cold water will not lose its reward. All is written in heaven by the loving, yet holy hand of Him who notes every bit of good in His own, while not ignoring their evil.

How gracious of Him to reward any! Whatever fruit we have borne, whatever good we have done, has been really the action of His own indwelling Spirit. It is, as Augustine has said, "God crowns not our merits, but His own gifts. Because He makes them ours, He rewards them, just as if they were our own virtues." He will take real pleasure in saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant, . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25.21-23).

But what if the Christian's service is bad? Thank God, it will not endanger his salvation, which depends not on service, but on the accomplished work of Christ. But he will be a loser, as we read, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. 3.15). Solemn thought! The Lord may have to disown the toil of a lifetime because it has not been according to His revealed mind and will. It is not *quantity* the Lord looks at, but *quality*. That which flows from real love to His holy person, He values highly, as we may judge from His gracious words to her who lavished on Him her ointment of spikenard (Matt. 26.6-13).

How true it is that "the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16.7). Man would be disposed to bestow the reward where the greatest display has been, and the largest results (outwardly) have been obtained; but it may be found in the coming day that the best prizes will be carried off by those who have

made but little stir in Christendom, and whose names have been but little known, but who have nevertheless served Christ loyally and faithfully according to their measure and opportunities. Not that it must be inferred from these remarks that only *service* for Christ will be reviewed at the judgment seat. The whole life will come out either for praise or blame. The Apostle brings this forward when exhorting slaves, in Col. 3.24,25. He comforts them by saying, "Of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." They might have unreasonable and unjust masters, but the Lord took notice of all, and will reward duly by-and-by. Then the Apostle throws out the word of warning, "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons."

Let every Christian therefore look well to his ways. In the light of all this, how are we living? How are we serving? Soon we shall stand before Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Soon will His holy eye look over all our record, and His holy lips will pronounce His mind as to it. Will our lives in the home, in business, and everywhere else bear His close inspection? Will our service bear the all-searching test of His holy Word? Is it pursued because we love Him and owe all to Him, or is it carried forward for mere self-exaltation and for the strengthening of party? Let us be real. Better far to have the examination now, while there is time to correct, than to let all go on to the judgment seat, where we may find ourselves eternal losers.

Such is the judgment seat of Christ for those who believe in His Name. It is no question of visiting sins upon them, but of manifestation. Rewards will be dealt out, and places in the millennial kingdom allotted, according to faithful service here below. Not that reward is the motive for service or godliness. That would be legalism. Love to Christ is the spring, the rewards come in as encouragements for our souls by the way.

—(to be continued.)

When witnessing, if people ask, "How do you know it's true,"

Remember that they can't deny what Christ has done for you.

The Lord's Name

by T. C. TAWS (Basingstoke, England)

How precious it is to meditate on the LORD'S names or titles, both in the Old and New Testaments, it strengthens our appreciation of His PERSON and reveals to us the character and attributes of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For example 'Emmanuel : God with us' reminds us of His coming into this world to declare God's love and to bring to men a 'so great a salvation.' We shall consider three expressions in the Scriptures which magnify the Name of God's Son and declare His Greatness.

(1) HIS EXCELLENT NAME. Psalm 8.1.

Among the various descriptions of our Lord's Name, nothing is greater than to read it is 'Excellent,' He is Jehovah, the great 'I AM.' Isaiah gives a wonderful list of five names unique to our Saviour, and HIS NAME shall be called Wonderful : Counsellor : The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' These names are inexhaustible, but the hymn writer seems to express our thoughts:-

"Join all the glorious names of wisdom, love and power,
That mortals ever knew or angels ever bore,
All are to mean to speak His Worth,
Too mean to set our Saviour forth."

"O Lord our God, how excellent is Thy name throughout the earth."

(2) HIS EXQUISITE NAME. S. of S. 1.3.

"As ointment poured forth" suggests the fragrance and the sweetness of the character of our blessed Lord as displayed in His perfect life while here on earth. Remembering that Eastern ointment is not solid but rather fluid, it helps us understand how Mary anointed (poured forth) her alabaster box of ointment on the feet of her Lord : an expression of true worship and adoration. We also read that "the odour (fragrance) of the ointment filled the house," and wherever or whenever we worship in the Name

of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fragrance of His presence and the sweetness of His Person 'fills the place' and should also fill our hearts with praise and adoration.

"His Name shall shed its fragrance forth along Life's thorny road."

(3) HIS EXALTED NAME. Phil. 2.9.

How wonderful to know that our Saviour who was once 'The Man of Sorrows' is now 'The Lord of Glory': He humbled Himself : . . . but God has highly exalted Him and given Him a NAME above every name : Phil. 2.9. This exalted Name is described in Revelation as 'Alpha and Omega.' 'Faithful and True' and 'The Word of God.' Although He has 'a Name that no man knoweth' Rev. 19, one day He will be known as 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords.'

THE SECRET OF FAITHFULNESS

"I will come again."

A traveller chanced on a beautiful villa, situated on the shores of a beautiful lake in Switzerland, far from the beaten track of tourists. He knocked at the garden gate, and an aged gardener unlocked its heavy fastenings, and bade him enter. The aged man seemed glad to see him, and allowed him around the wonderful garden.

"How long have you been here?" the traveller asked. "Twenty-four years." "And how often has your master been here meanwhile? When was he here last?" "Twelve years ago." "He writes often?" "Never once." "From whom do you receive your pay?" "His agent in mainland." "But he comes here often?" "He has never been here." "Who does come then?" "I am almost always alone—it is very, very seldom that ever a stranger comes." "Yet you have the garden in such perfect order, everything flourishing, as if you were expecting your master's coming to-morrow!" "As if he were coming today, sir, today!" exclaimed the old man.

"Surely I come quickly (suddenly). Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22 : 20).

"Your heart's a garden, God has sown
To give your life the work it needed.
Some day He'll come to pluck His flowers,
So mind you keep your garden weeded."

—Selected

Glimpses of the Lord's Humanity in John's Gospel

by A. E. Baguley (Leicester)

One can view with pleasure the portrayal of the Lord Jesus Christ as the KING in the gospel according to Matthew, where the Lord is viewed walking so majestically and uprightly in a manner which caused more than one person to assume that at any moment the Lord would set up His Kingdom on earth (Matt. 17.4, 29.9). The Lord's genealogy is traced through Abraham, David and the other Kings in Chapter 1.1-16. Mark portrays the Lord as the PERFECT SERVANT always abounding in the work which the Father had given Him to do. The words 'immediately', 'straightway' and 'forthwith' are prevalent in the gospel record. (see also Mark 6.2, 10.45). The servant's genealogy is not given in the gospel record. Luke presents the Lord as a dependant MAN in an attitude of prayer (e.g. Luke 6.12, 9.28, 11.1). His perfect Humanity is elaborated upon in some detail throughout the gospel record. The details of His mother, His birth and His boyhood are readily given in Chapter 2. The Lord's genealogy is traced back to the first man Adam in Chapter 3.23-38. It is worthy of note that the 42nd book in the Bible is Luke, whilst the 42nd name in the genealogy of Matt. 1 is that of the man Jesus Christ. John's gospel makes known that the Man Jesus Christ is the very Son of God, the Word of God, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1. 1, 14). There is no genealogy in John's record since the Son of God is without beginning of days nor end of life. He is from everlasting to everlasting.

Complimentary to these general views of the Lord in the four gospel accounts, a careful study of Mark's gospel reveals the Lordship of Christ (Mark 7.28, 10.51). The Kingship of the Lord is found in Luke 19.38, 23.2, 3, 37, 38. The Lord is portrayed as Servant in Matt. 12.18. Glimpses of the Lord's humanity are found in John 1.36, 4.6, 8.6, 11.35, 13.5. Though He is referred to as a Man 18 times in the book, it is to these particular five mentions in John's gospel that we wish to refer.

The first mention we have is Jesus walked John 1.36 “and looking upon Jesus as He walked he (i.e. John) saith, Behold the Lamb of God!” The word walked (Gk. *Peripateo*) used figuratively signifies the whole round of the activities of the individual life. (Ref. W. E. Vine NT words). John Baptist could observe that this Man’s conduct was unique, set apart from any other and was characteristic of God Himself. As a consequence of this, two of John’s disciples followed the Lord” and the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.” John 1.37.

The second glimpse we have is set at a city of Samaria called Sychar,” . . . Jesus therefore being *wearied* with His journey sat thus on the well . . . “John 4.6. The Lord in His perfect humanity was feeling the burden of the way. In addition to being weary, He was also thirsty (4.7) and probably hungry (4.8). Does not this remind us of David’s experience in his rejection 2 Samuel 17.29 as he, and also the people who were with him were hungry, weary and thirsty in the wilderness and three men came to minister to them of their substance? The city Shechem (NT Sychar) was also the place where they laid the bones of Joseph (Joshua 24.32). Joseph was another man who had been rejected by his brethren. Samaria was a place generally avoided by the Jews on their journey through to Galilee. But Jesus “must needs go through Samaria” John 4.4. The Samaritan woman progressively found that the man she spoke to at the well was not only a Jew (4.9), and a Prophet (4.19), but the very Christ (4.29).

As a consequence “many of the Samaritans of that city believed on Him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.” John 4.39; “And many more believed because of His own word” John 4.41.

The third glimpse we have is John 8.6 “Jesus stooped down and with His finger *wrote* on the ground”. The Scribes and Pharisees had caught a woman in the act of adultery and had referred to the law of Moses saying” . . .that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him but Jesus stooped down and with His finger *wrote* on the ground.” John 8.5,6. “So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And

again He stooped down, and *wrote* on the ground.” John 8.8,9. Their pious and evil hearts would merit their names being written in the earth (Jeremiah 17.13). “and they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one . . . “John 8.9.

The woman was left alone with the Lord. The Lord said to her “. . . woman where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee . . . she said, no man Lord. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. “John 8.10,11. As a consequence this woman was set free uncondemned by God or man.

The fourth glimpse we have is in John 11.35 “Jesus *wept*.” The Lord had rejoiced with those who rejoiced at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, where He manifested forth His glory (John 2.11). Here the Lord wept with those that wept at the graveside of Lazarus. He shared with the grief of Lazarus’ two sisters Martha and Mary. Both had said to the Lord individually “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died”. (John 11.21,32). The consequence was that Lazarus was raised from the dead with miraculous power.” . . . He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound with a napkin, Jesus said unto them, Loose him and let him go”. John 11.43,44. Further to this many of the Jews “believed on Him” (John 11.45.) “believed on Jesus” (John 12.11).

The final glimpse of the Lord’s humanity is in John 13.5 “after that He poureth water into a basin, and began to *wash* the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded”. Here is a remarkable scene which one could have expected to see recorded in Mark’s gospel, as the Lord takes the servant’s place. The record of this event in John’s gospel should draw extra attention to this detail. The very Son of God takes the servant’s towel. As a consequence the disciples learned two very important lessons to put into practice after the Lord had left them and which we can very much apply to ourselves:

(1) The importance of having to have our feet washed from all the contamination which we have contracted in our pilgrimage walk whilst being in the world, though not of it. This is not

cleansing from sin but from moral defilement. The Lord stated “he that is washed needeth not to save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit . . . “John 13.10. The two words for “wash” in this verse have different meanings. The first mention “washed” indicates bathed all over, whereas the word “wash” means to wet only a part of the body. We have been cleansed fully by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ,” . . . and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1.7).

(2) We should take the lowest place in the assembly and be subject to one another. Peter seemed to have learned this lesson as he later writes” . . . Yea all of you be subject to one another and be clothed with humility . . . “ 1 Peter 5.5.

May these glimpses of the Lord’s humanity as recorded in John’s gospel encourage us to look deeply into the scriptures and learn the lesson of the Lord’s actions as He graced this scene with His presence.

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (27)

by U. Ussher (Venezuela)

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 2. Tim. 3. 15.

These words that were written of Timothy could well have been written about the present writer. I am thankful to God for the home into which I was born and for parents whose greatest desire for the family was that they would be saved and live to the glory of God.

I was born on December 5th 1942 in the town of Garvagh, Co. Londonderry, N. Ireland. Father and Mother were both saved and in fellowship in the assembly gathered to the Lord’s Name at Killykergan. We were taught the word of God in the home, in Sunday School and in the Sunday evening Gospel meetings. When special series of gospel meetings were held in the area we were always there. That being the case I cannot remember a time when I did not know that I needed to be saved if I was going

to be in heaven. As a young child the thought of the Lord's coming troubled me from time to time and many a Sunday night after a solemn meeting there were desires within my soul to be saved. Sad to say I did not attend to these promptings of the Holy Spirit in my soul and many golden opportunities of being saved while young were lost.

The time came when I went out to work each day and saw something of what the world had to offer. I am thankful to God that I was preserved from it. Not so much because I did not have the desire to go after it, I was a sinner and the nature within longed after the things of the world, but respect for my parents and for the Gospel kept me from being involved in many things that would have taken me far away from God.

The first time I had real concern about eternal matters was in 1959 at the age of 16 when Mr. H. Paisley and Mr. J. Milne were having meetings in a tent at Coleraine. We were there most nights and after a number of weeks some of the young people from the assembly at Killykegan were reached and saved. This spoke to me and I began to settle down to listen to the Gospel. As the warning note was sounded out I longed to be saved and delivered from Eternal Judgement. Sad to say I was not saved at that time, the meetings finished and I became careless and indifferent again.

After Easter 1960 Mr. H. Paisley and Mr. T. Campbell commenced meetings in Limavady Gospel Hall. When I heard about the meetings, I knew we would be going every night and again I knew what the preaching would be like, the solemn warning of coming judgement. I made up my mind to seek salvation with all my heart. Mr. Paisley took me by the hand coming out of the door the first Monday night and said to me, "Uel, you know what we want to hear about you in these meetings" That spoke very loudly to me, to think of the preacher having such a concern for me. I had the mistaken idea that to be saved I would have to be very, very anxious. How true the words of the hymn; 'All the fitness you require is to know your need of Him.' After meetings I would read Luke 16, Rev. 20. and meditate on the reality of the truth contained to see if I could really feel anxious enough to be saved. The words of Proverbs 29.1 were often in

my mind; 'He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy!' This truth troubled me and I was afraid that God would cut me down and I would be lost forever. On Thursday morning 16th June I was standing at the door of our home waiting for the car to come to take me to work. I was thinking I would go to work and forget about it all, I even thought that I was not as concerned as I had been before. Again Proverbs 29. 1 came to my mind; I thought what will happen to me if I do not get saved at these meetings? With reality the thought came before me, God will cut me down, then I asked myself another question; What will happen to me if God cuts me down in my sins? Immediately the words came to my mind, I will be tormented day and night forever and forever. I realized as never before the dreadful reality of Eternity, of Eternal judgment in Hell and the Lake of Fire. I cried to God to have mercy upon me. That Thursday morning at work, in a corner at the back of the building where I was, I got down a number of times on my knees and cried to God not to let me die in my sins and go down to Hell forever. Thursday being the half day I was home early and went down to the river that runs at the bottom of the garden of our home. Sitting down on a big stone under the trees I read quite a few well known verses but all was dark as far as salvation was concerned. I had with me the booklet called, 'God's way of Salvation'. I began to read it from the beginning, and after a time I read words like these; "on the ground of Christ's finished Work, God invites and beseeches you to accept salvation." I pondered over these words, I realized that God was satisfied with the work of His Son upon the cross and because of His death He offered me salvation. I was enabled by simple faith just to accept from the hand of God His Great Salvation. After such a time of trying to be anxious enough, trying to believe etc. I could have sung;

'How simple God's way of salvation,
Not trying or doing ones best,
But simply believing on Jesus,
The weary and sinful find rest.'

What joy in the home, my oldest sister had been saved for some years, and then just a few days after I was saved my other sister was saved to complete the family in Christ.

A few weeks later I was baptized and received into the assembly at Killykegan. There I found all that was necessary for my spiritual development. There were those with a shepherd heart who took a personal interest in us to guide and help encourage. There were those who through their practical ministry sought to show us how we should live in this wicked world. Then there were those who sought to open the scriptures and teach the young in Christ the basic truths of the Gospel and of the assembly. We firmly believe that a scriptural assembly is a spiritual home and the training ground for future service for the Lord.

A few months after conversion our dear brother Mr. Joe Turkington was in Limavady Gospel Hall telling of His work for the Lord in Venezuela. He had a map on the wall and told of parts of Venezuela where as yet there were no assemblies. That night the desire was created within my soul to pray for Venezuela and for those parts with no assemblies. Over the next few years many a time I thought of Venezuela, my problem was not the sacrifice of leaving home to go, nor the difficulties I might have to face, but the big question in my mind was, "Would the Lord want me to go?" I often told the Lord in sincerity that I would love to go to Venezuela, I counted it the greatest privilege that could be conferred upon me to be permitted to be in His service and take the Gospel there, if only I could be sure that that was His will for me.

One incident stands out very clearly in my mind; I knew that brother Mr. Joe Milne had been in Limavady for the week end and upon returning from work early that Monday I wondered if he would have called at our home in Garvagh on his way to Belfast. I longed to have a chat with him. When I got home I found Mr. Milne there and also learned that his car had broken down and he needed some one to take him home. When we were on our way I wondered if I could bring myself to talk to him about my exercise. But that was not necessary as he commenced the conversion by saying that he had been wondering if I would have any thought about the Lord's Work. I told him I had but was too nervous to say that I was thinking about Venezuela. He gave me advice that day which I consider was from God. He said that we should make sure that where ever we went we would be

free to carry out the principles we had learned in the assembly at Killykergan. "Too bad", he said, "to arrive in a place and find that things were carried out in a different way." Then he asked me if I had a girlfriend to which the answer was no. He said, "Be very careful regarding that step as a man could have an exercise to go to serve the Lord and find that his wife did not share that exercise."

Some time after that the Lord brought Rae and I together, we are so thankful to be able to trace His guiding hand in that all important step. One of the first things we talked about was the possibility of the Lord's Work and Venezuela and found that that was upon both our hearts.

We continued to look to the Lord to guide and to make the way clear. I wrote to brother Mr. Joe Milne and told him that we continued to be exercised before the Lord and felt that if ever we went anywhere it would be to Venezuela but were quick to add that we were not sure. A verse of scripture had been much in my mind during those weeks; Job. 16.19. "Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven and my record is on high." I often pondered over it and wondered why the Lord was bringing it before me. We soon received a reply from brother Milne and I can tell you that letter gave me a surprise. He said that he had not been surprised to get our letter as he had been thinking about, and praying for us the morning our letter arrived and he felt that it was like the case of Cornelious, God was working from both ends. He also said that he had mentioned the matter to the other workers there and they all would be happy to have us with them in the work and suggested that we should speak to our brethren about commendation.

I wondered what to do. As far as we knew, neither our families nor our brethren knew of our exercise and I thought that soon the news would come back from Venezuela that we were thinking of going so we had to make a decision. I asked myself a question, "If anyone was to ask you why you think you should go to Venezuela. What would you say? It was then that Job 16. v. 19 came to my soul with freshness. My witness is in heaven, we could call God to witness all the circumstances He had called us to pass through, (it came to me like this; we have God for

it). That gave us peace so I decided that I should speak to our brethren. I am thankful to say that all were most helpful and did all they could to encourage us. We left N.I. in July 1968 with our twin boys, then four months old and arrived here in September. We spent our first months with Joe and Ruth Turkington and are thankful for all they did to help us to settle. Now 24 years have passed and we are so thankful to the Lord for bringing us here and for giving us even a little part in the work He is doing. It has been a joy to labour with our dear brethren and we are thankful that we are one as far as Assembly Principles are concerned. We do value prayer that God will raise up others to take the place of those who no longer are with us. 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest'. Matt. 9. 38.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. (No member of the committee, author of articles or any other person connected with the magazine receives payment, remuneration or gratuity of any kind).

All cheques, money orders, etc., should be made payable to "Assembly Testimony Magazine."

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GRACE TRUTH

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



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THE MEAL OFFERING

An offering of fine flour
Such was the path He trod,
So even grained and free to pour,
In spotlessness to God.

Mingled with olive oil,
Symbol of Spirit's power,
Seen in that life of holy toil,
And in conception's hour.

Frankincense poured thereon,
Upon the altar laid,
So perfume sweet rose from God's Son,
As on the cross He prayed.

When baked on the plate
All could behold that sight,
Exposed, the object of men's hate
Till God clothed all in night.

The cauldron bore for me,
This I appreciate,
But who can in the oven see?
His God can calculate.

Food of the priest is He,
How nourishing and good!
Oh that I could forever be
Enjoying this sweet food!

—*Matthew J. Cordiner (Kilwinning)*

BEHOLD THE MAN

(Meditations in Luke's Gospel)

by JIM FLANIGAN, (Belfast)

11. His Transfiguration

Our Lord's transfiguration is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In Matthew it is the shining forth of the majesty of the King, and a foregleam of His kingdom. In Mark it is heaven's vindication of the Perfect Servant; divine approval of that lovely life of devoted humble service. In Luke it is the glory of the one truly dependent Man. Heaven shines upon Him, who, upon another high mountain some three years earlier, had refused Satan's offer of the kingdom. (Luke 4. 5-8). John does not record the transfiguration. His is the gospel of the glory. The Son of God cannot be transfigured.

Of the location of the transfiguration mount we cannot be certain. Tradition says it was Mount Tabor. It is more likely that it was Mount Hermon on Israel's northern Galilean border, far removed from the unbelief of Jerusalem and Judea.

Both Matthew and Mark say that the transfiguration took place "after six days." Luke says "eight days," but there is no discrepancy. Matthew and Mark count only the six complete days of the intervening period. Luke counts also the preceding and succeeding part days, and says, eight days. "Six" is the number of man's day. Man never attains to the perfect seven. When man's day has run its course then the millennial sun will rise on Messiah's kingdom. "Eight" is the number of new beginning. The coming kingdom, which is previewed here in microcosm, will transcend all that has gone before in a new order. It is most interesting, and has often been pointed out, that while "666" is the number of the Beast (Rev. 13.18), the numerical value of the Greek letters which comprise the name Jesus, is "888". The transfiguration was a glimpse of the coming kingdom.

It would appear to be a night scene. The disciples slept. Also, we read of their coming down from the mount "the following day". It is kind of God, in the dark night of our Lord's rejection, to give to His saints a sight of the glory. For Peter, James, and John, this had a special significance. James was to be an early martyr. Peter was to

be the bold spokesman and witness to the nation on that historical day of Pentecost (Acts 2). John was to wait for some sixty years more, some of these to be spent in exile, a prisoner for Christ. How these men needed a sight of the glory for their encouragement. What a comfort it must have been, in their darkest hours, to look back and remember the glory of the Holy Mount.

It is most instructive, and touching too, to compare this mount of glory with Golgotha. Behold His countenance, His face, here shining as the sun, transfigured. At Golgotha it was marred more than any man's, disfigured. Here on the Holy Mount the darkness of night was turned to day. At Calvary the brightness of the noonday was turned to darkness. Daylight became midnight on the mount of suffering. "Let us make three tabernacles", says Peter, on the mount of glory. But three crosses awaited on the other mount of sorrow. Two men appeared with Him on the Holy Mount, Moses and Elijah, and spake of His decease. Two men, thieves, hung by His side on the mount where He died. From the opened heaven, at the transfiguration, there came a voice, "My beloved Son". At Calvary heaven was closed and silent, and the Saviour cries, "My God, my God". On the Holy Mount His garments shone white and glistening in the glory. At Golgotha they stripped Him and gambled for His garments at the foot of His cross. In the sacred record, the transfiguration precedes the crucifixion, but it is, in fact, a preview of the glory that was to follow. As has been remarked by another, "When the Son began to witness concerning His sufferings (Matt. 16.21), the Father witnessed concerning His glory (2 Pet. 1.17)". He who was to be put to shame by men received honour and glory from the Father.

How fitting it was that Moses and Elijah should be there. Here were two of His greatest servants of times past, representing the law and the prophets. Here is assurance for us that saints in glory hold intelligent communion with one another and with Christ. They spake of His decease; rather, of His "exodus", which He would accomplish. It was not just the death that He would die, not the sufferings that He would endure, but His exodus which He would accomplish. Men might indeed betray Him, arrest Him, bind Him, mock Him, scourge Him, and crucify Him, but in heaven's view He is, Himself, accomplishing His exodus out of the world in His own way and in His own time. The saints in glory can converse about this with heavenly intelligence.

As they spake of this we remember that Moses had passed through the Red Sea (Exod. 14.22), and Elijah had passed through the waters of Jordan (2 Kings 2.8). But for both of them, the waves had been stayed, the waters had been held back. Here on the Holy Mount was the One who would go into the deep waters and the floods would overflow Him. He would cry, "All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over Me" (Psalm 42.7).

Then came the cloud and overshadowed the scene. It was a bright cloud. This was no ordinary rain cloud; it was no mountain mist. Doubtless it must be compared with the Shekinah. The men of earth were afraid. The men from heaven withdrew. The disciples feared as they entered the cloud. It was heaven itself come down to earth to embrace the Son. "The excellent glory", says Peter (2 Pet. 1.17).

But they must descend from the mount. Earth with its sickness and sorrow awaited them below. With the quiet remembrance of the glory they must walk with the Son of Man through the sad world to Golgotha. And the glory was not only to be remembered; it was to be anticipated. What they had seen was the promise of what was to come. May we too, in company with the Saviour, walk in the world that has rejected Him, in the full assurance of this, that one day we too shall see and share in His glory.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

by John Heading

Many of our readers have benefited from the writings of our late brother John Heading and will wish to know that his booklet expounding 2 Thessalonians is still available from Christian bookshops or directly from the publisher — Gospel Tract Publications at 85 Portman Street, Glasgow, G41 1EJ, Scotland. This little booklet of 66 pages is a very lucid exposition of a much neglected epistle and will undoubtedly prove helpful to all readers. It is very reasonably priced at £1.95.

PAPERS ON PROPHECY

by **The Late W. W. Fereday** (written in 1897/98)

VOLUME I

Paper 3 (b) The Judgment of the Quick or Living

Christ is ordained of God to be the Judge not only of the dead, but of the quick, as Peter declared to Cornelius and his company (Acts 10.42). This is a large theme, and can only be dealt with briefly here. It is but little understood, though confessed as doctrine in all the Creeds of Christendom. It is quite the fashion to merge all into the judgment of the dead. The judgment of the living really covers a wide area. It commences with the judgments that will be poured out from heaven after the heavenly saints are removed, and which will go on until the public appearing of the Lord Jesus to put down all His foes. It will be continued more or less throughout the millennial reign, ending with the overthrow of the gathered hosts at the close (Rev. 20.8,9). Then will come “the time of the dead, that they should be judged.” (Rev. 11.18).

But we have space for a little detail. The Book of Revelation furnishes us with an outline. In chapters 2, 3, in the epistles to the seven Churches, we have a sketch of the history of the professing Church from beginning to end. It is Church history, viewed from the Divine standpoint. In chapters 4, 5, we see heaven preparing itself for judgment—God on His throne and the Lamb receiving the seven-sealed book. Grouped around the throne are the four-and-twenty crowned and enthroned elders representing symbolically the heavenly saints in their kingly and priestly character. These are all seen at home with the Lord before the judgments fall. Instead of being terrified by the judgments proceeding from the throne, they worship and adore. They know God, and they have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. In chapter 6 the judgments begin to be poured out. All this is future. It is freely admitted that there may have been some sort of analogy in events that have already taken place; but strictly speaking, all this is to come. These are judgments on the living, not the dead. First we have the seven seals broken one by one by the Lamb, and judgments falling—mostly of a providential

character. Then the trumpets are blown, and further strokes descend. The vials follow, and in them is filled up (or completed) the wrath of God. The manifestation of Christ and the heavenly armies takes place next, and the assembled hosts of His enemies are overthrown, the leaders—the beast and the false prophet—being consigned forthwith to the lake of fire (Rev. 19). All this is the judgment of the quick; it is Divine dealing with living men on the earth preparatory to Christ taking His throne in Zion.

There is one important incident in the judgment of the quick which must be looked at a little more fully, because it is so generally misunderstood and misapplied. I refer to the separation of the sheep from the goats, in Matt. 25.31—46. This is often regarded as setting forth the final judgment of the dead. The page in the Bible now open before me is headed “Description of the last Judgment.” This is a mistake, and by no means a small one. Look carefully at the whole prophecy of which these few verses form part. The Lord was with His disciples on the Mount of Olives, and in answer to their questions, opens out to them the things concerning His coming to establish His kingdom at the end of the age. The first few verses (chapter 24.1—14) are general, and describe the general circumstances of His servants until the end. In verse 15 He speaks of the idol (abomination) to be set up in the holy place by the Man of Sin, of the great tribulation to follow, and then of the sufferings of the elect in Judea in that day. This part is closed up (verses 29—31) with His own appearing in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. This is His manifestation to Israel, and subsequent to His removal of the heavenly saints. Then follows a long parenthesis in the prophecy, in which we observe six parables. Three are for the Jewish people, the fig tree (verses 32—35), the days of Noah (verses 36—41), and the thief in the night (verses 42—44); the remaining three concern the professing Church, the faithful and evil servants (verses 45—51), the ten virgins (chapter 25.1—13), and the talents (verses 14—30). The thread of the prophecy is then resumed. “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (verses 31,32). The time and circumstances of this session are thus easily determined. It is immediately after the public appearing of the Lord Jesus and

before the establishment of the kingdom. But is it the judgment of the dead, as so commonly supposed? By no means. *It is at least a thousand years too early.* The dead, i.e., the ungodly, will remain in their graves until the reign of Christ is over, and will then be called forth to stand before Him. How then can there be a general judgment before the millennium? But there is a more serious difficulty still in the passage—there is no mention of any dead at all. Nor is there one word about resurrection of either good or bad. Further, three classes are found—the sheep, the goats, and the brethren (the first two being dealt with according to their treatment of the third), which quite unfits the passage for the purpose for which so many seem to desire it.

It is the judgment of the quick. The throne is not “the Great White Throne,” but “the throne of His glory.” The Son of Man sits there in His character of King, and calls all the Gentiles before Him, and enters into, not the question of their sins in general, as later at the Great White Throne, but their treatment of those whom He graciously styles “My brethren.” These are Jews, preachers of the gospel of the kingdom during the brief interval between the removal of the Church to glory and the revelation of Christ to judge and to reign. Some will treat them badly, thus showing out their deep hatred to God and His Christ. Those who lose their lives at that time are found under the altar, in Rev. 6.9—11, crying for vengeance on their foes. Others will treat them kindly, bowing to their testimony, and receiving it as the Word of God, in blessed proof that the Spirit of God has been working in their hearts.

All this the King inquires into. The sheep He pronounces blessed of His Father, and invites them to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They shall enjoy all the blessings of His millennial reign. They are not a heavenly company, but an earthly; and their portion is not said to have been ordered *before* the foundation of the world, as ours (Eph. 1.4), but *from* its foundation. This distinction is of great importance.

The sheep seem astonished when the Lord commends them for having fed, clothed, and entertained Himself. They inquire, “Lord, when saw we Thee as hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee?” (Matt. 25.37—39). They had shown such kindness to poor Jewish preachers of the gospel of the kingdom, but

had not thought of their deeds at all as done to the Lord Himself. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

It is most evident that we are not on Christian ground here. Christians are members of the body of Christ, constituted such by the baptism of the Holy Ghost; consequently, all that is done to them, whether it be kindness or otherwise, is accepted by the Lord as done to Himself (Acts 9.4,5; 1 Cor. 8.12; 12.12,13). This may not be quite understood now by all who believe, for many have no due understanding of their proper relationship to Christ, but all such ignorance will be dissipated in the glory. Christians will not *then* be surprised to hear the Lord speak of gracious acts done to His saints as done to Himself. *But the sheep are surprised!* They know nothing of such a principle. They form no part of the Church of God, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but are saved as Gentiles by Jewish preaching at the end (Col. 3.11). Then the King will reckon with those on His left hand. To them He will say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister into Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me" (Matt. 25.41—45). Thus will He deal with those who have failed to show kindness to His poor Jewish brethren of the last days. It is a solemn thing to lift the hand against the Jew. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isa. 54.17).

But this does not complete the judgment of the quick. Many details are to be found in the Prophets, far too numerous to be reproduced here. Suffice it to say that when Israel reappears as a nation, her ancient enemies will reappear also, with hearts as bitter against them as ever in the past. The careful reader has only to examine the "burdens" of Isaiah and the other prophets to be convinced that none of them have been exhausted by the inflictions of long ago. Assyria will come up again, and be dealt with (Isa. 10.12); the Philistines (Isa. 14.29-32), Moab (Isa. 15.16), Damascus

(Isa. 17.1,2), and many others. Israel will be specially used for the punishment of Edom, Moab, and Ammon (Dan. 11.41). These are all temporal judgments, for their implacable enmity to the chosen seed, and are all included in the judgment of the quick.

It may be urged against this, that most of the peoples named no longer exist. This presents no difficulty to faith. God has spoken in His word, and there faith rests. However apparently impossible to us, every sentence will be made good. Besides, who are we to say that Edom, Moab, etc., no longer exist? We no longer know these people by their old titles, but they are probably near our doors under other names. The same difficulty may be pressed with regard to the ten tribes of Israel. No one knows certainly where they are, nor by what name they are at present called (though many guesses have been made, especially of late years), but God has His eye upon them, and will bring them forward when the suited moment arrives. At the same epoch, their adversaries will show themselves, with the same sentiments as of old, to receive from Jehovah's righteous hand condign punishment for their hostility to the people of His choice. The judgment of the quick will go on more or less, throughout the millennial kingdom. "Behold, a king shall reign *in righteousness*, and princes shall rule *in judgment*" (Isa. 32.1). Longsuffering will not then be exercised with regard to sin, as now; every offence apparently being summarily dealt with (Isa. 65.20). We are apt to overlook this aspect of the Lord's glorious reign. We speak much of the blessedness of it, and of the peace and glory that will prevail, but are apt to forget the strict righteousness that will form the foundation of His rule. The true Melchizedec is first King of Righteousness, then King of Peace (Heb. 7.1).

Another point to be remembered in considering the judgments of God soon to be poured out upon the world is that the heavenly saints are to be associated with the Lord Jesus in this solemn work. Daniel says, "Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High," or high places (Dan. 7.22). This the Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians of. They were so far forgetting their high calling and destiny as to carry their disputes into the courts of the world, before the unjust. Paul indignantly exclaims, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1 Cor. 6.2,3).

This has been greatly overlooked in Christendom. Far from expecting to be the world's judges—yea, the judges of angels, too—not a few of those who really love the Lord Jesus quite expect to be brought into judgment themselves! This is serious—injurious to both peace and affection. As already shown, every believer is placed beyond judgment in the risen Christ, a standing in Divine righteousness being already his through His accomplished work. Nothing remains but eternal participation with Christ. Consequently in all He does we shall have a part; hence our future position as associated with Him in the judgment of the world and of the angels.

The final act in the judgment of the quick is the overthrow of the vast hosts which will be gathered together by Satan after his release from the bottomless pit. It seems inconceivable that after such a season of blessedness, man will be found ready to revolt against the Lord; but so it will be. The heart of man is so incurably bad that neither grace nor glory displayed before it, touch or alter it in the slightest degree. Nothing avails but a new creation, and this is the work of the Spirit of God.

Hence, when Satan goes out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, he succeeds in gathering them together to battle, in number as the sand of the sea. "And they went up on the breath of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Rev. 20.7—9). Jerusalem is the object of their attack, for there the saints (i.e., the earthly saints) are congregated. Swift judgment falls upon them from heaven. Their deceiver and betrayer is then consigned to the lake of fire, his eternal place of suffering abode.

—(to be continued).

THE LORD IS OUR :

Hiding Place	—	Isaiah 32.2
Happiness	—	Psalms 144.15
Hope	—	Col. 1.27
High Tower	—	2 Sam. 22.3
Helper	—	Heb. 13.6
Home	—	I Thess. 4.17

—(W. Goodson, Uruguay)

EPHESIANS EXPOUNDED

by A. D. THROPAY (California)

Paper 18

II. THE BEHAVIOUR OF GOD'S MASTERPIECE 4.1-6.23

C. Walking in love 5.1-7

Verse 1

- Be ye:** (ginesthe) Same word used in 4.32. "Become ye" or "show yourselves." They are to abandon one mental attitude and perspective for another. This verse continues the thought started there.
- therefore:** (oun) In view of God's character (described in 4.32); our having the Spirit's seal (4.30); and the truth found in Jesus (4.20,21).
- followers:** (mimētēs) An imitator. This word is used on imitating men (I Corinthians 4:16, 11.1; I Thessalonians 1.6; Hebrews 6.12); churches (I Thessalonians 2.14); and things (I Peter 3.13); It is used of imitating God only in this verse.
- of God:** To imitate God, we must (1) know Him (2) keep our eyes on Him (3) cleave to Him.
- as:** (hōs) A comparative participle pointing to the manner as well as the reason for imitating God. It means, "after the fashion of," "in the same manner as," "just like."
- dear:** (agapētos) beloved, dearly loved.
- children:** (teknon) an offspring. One born into the family. We are to imitate God, just like a loved child imitates his parents. This is the most important doctrine regarding character taught in the scriptures.

Our character is not developed by how well we stick to rules and regulations, but by how well we know God. This is not only imitating His outward actions, but by being occupied with that inward motivating factor that underlies all His actions. In this case, the motivating factor is love. His love was demonstrated

towards us in His free, gracious, impartial, ungrudging, complete, and final forgiveness.

Verse 2

—**And walk:** (peripateō) Literally, “to walk around.” It signifies the whole realm of a person’s activities.

—**in:** (en) In the sphere of, as being immersed in.

—**love:** (agapē) Intelligent affection based on reason, choice, and decision, which reaches out to a person regardless of what they do or who they are. In the believer, it is only produced by dependence on God.

—**as:** (Kathōs) according as, in the same way as.

—**Christ also loved:** (agapē) The past tense, points back to His earthly ministry.

—**us, and hath given:** (paradidōmi) (Literally, “to give by the side of”). To hand over from the side of one person to another; to deliver up to someone or something else. Contrast 4:19 where the same word is used.

—**Himself:** It was not deeds of kindness, special favours, or lovely promises that He handed over. It was Himself completely, totally, and without reserve. A person can do and say nice things for others without the heart being in it. The Lord was not like this.

—**for:** (huper) On account of; on behalf of; for the benefit of.

—**us:** There was absolutely no selfishness which motivated the Lord Jesus.

All that He was, completely was for others.

—**an offering:** (prospera) Used in the New Testament for all types of offerings. It is used for the meal offering and animal sacrifices in Hebrews 10.5,6. It is used of the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ as the sacrifice for sin in Hebrews 10.10,18.

—**and a sacrifice:** (thusian) This Greek word is used 29 times in the New Testament. It is always translated “sacrifice” and refers to something surrendered which is of value both to the giver as well as the receiver. (As Romans 12.1; Hebrews 5.1,23,26; 13.5,16, etc.)

- to God, for:** (eis) “unto, with a view towards.” That is, with the end in view of being to God. . .
- a sweetsmelling:** (euōdias) A fragrance, sweet aroma.
- savour:** (asmē) This wording reminds us of the burnt offering, the meal offering and the peace offering in the Old Testament which were called offerings “of a sweet savour to God.” This means, that as God looked on the work of His Son as prefigured in the Old Testament pictures, it brought rest and satisfaction to Him. The Lord Jesus, by His sacrifice, brought eternal satisfaction and rest to God.

Verse 3

- But:** (de) “In distinction” That is, in distinction from the Lord Jesus and that life which is totally unselfish and only motivated by love, there is the life of selfishness.
- fornication:** (porneia) Immorality in general. It includes every sort of illicit sexual act outside of the marriage bond.
- and all:** (pas) any and every; every kind of.
- uncleanness:** (akatharsia) As in 4.19, (a) impurity, lewdness, and moral uncleanness in the wildest sense (b) Impurity of motive — I Thessalonians 2.3.
- or:** (e) a disjunctive, showing that there is a distinction. He is going to describe something of another class.
- covetousness:** (pleonexia) (a) The desire of having more of anything. Greed. (b) Sensual greed; an insatiable desire morally.
- let it not:** (mēdē) A strong negative word, which has the force of, “let it not be even so much as . . .”
- be once named:** (onomazō) to name or to make mention of.
- among you:** A believer is never to mention evil that comes under these categories in a descriptive manner. This is further explained by verse 12, “For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.”
- as becometh:** (prepei) what is suitable, proper, fitting, becoming, right, decorous.
- saints:** (hagios) “Holy ones.” People set apart with God who sets evil apart from Himself by His glory. A “holy one” is one

in whom God dwells so that He can demonstrate His own glory. Every believer is a saint. Believers are to speak and act in a way that is becoming of one who has been set apart by God for this purpose. They are to be like God Himself by letting God, who is in them, live through them.

See Galatians 2.20. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

What is it that makes something holy? (1) God's glory makes something holy: Exodus 29.43 "The tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory." (2) God's personal presence makes something holy: Exodus 29.44 "I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons." See also 1 Corinthians 3.17,18. (3) Divinely appointed sacrifice and divine anointing makes something holy: Exodus 29.36 "Thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it." See also Leviticus 8.11; Hebrews 9.13, 14; 10.9.

Verse 4

—**Neither:** (kai) and, also.

—**filthiness:** (aischrotēs) It denotes shameless, immoral conduct in general. (Expositors) "Implying that such things are disgraceful, ugly, revolting, the opposite of "kalos," fair, comely, attractive." (Pulpit Commentary).

—**nor:** (kai) and.

—**foolish talking:** (morologia a compound word composed of "maron" = "dull, foolish, senseless, wicked" and "logia" = "to talk.") The word implies talking senseless wickedness. The context indicates crude, offensive, dirty talk.

—**nor:** (e) a disjunctive, showing that there is a distinction. He is going to describe something of another class. (As in verse 3).

—**jesting:** (eutrapelia, a compound word composed of "eu" = "well, easily" and "trepō" = "to turn.") The word means primarily, "that which easily turns and adapts itself to the moods and conditions with whom it must deal at the moment." "Versatility." (Vincent) "It then came to apply to morals as time serving, and speech . . . polished and witty speech as the instrument

of sin.” It is outward refinement and moral versatility without Christian conviction and grace. “Sometimes it is lodged in a sly quotation, in a smart answer, in shrewd intimation, in cunningly diverting or cleverly retorting an objection: sometimes it is couched in a bold scheme of speech, in a tart irony, in a lusty hyperbole, in a startling metaphor, in a plausible reconciling of contradictions, or in acute nonsense . . . sometimes an affected simplicity . . .” (Barrow, **Against Foolish Talking and Jestings**, Sermon XIV).

- which are not convenient:** (anĕkō) befitting, seemly.
- but:** (alla) This word indicates a contrast with what precedes.
- rather:** (mallon) in preference
- giving of thanks:** (eucharistia) gratitude, gentle cheerfulness of a grateful heart. (Wigram)

Verse 5

- For this ye know:** (ginōskō) To take in knowledge, come to know, recognize completely. “Ye are aware of knowing.” (Expositor).
- that:** (hoti) used when starting a fact.
- no:** (pas) any, every. All who do the following are included.
- whoremonger:** (pornos) a man who indulges in fornication described in verse 3. Immorality in general. It includes every sort of illicit sexual act outside of the marriage bond.
- nor unclean person:** (akathartos) This adjective describes:
 - (a) defilement of the soul by all types of wrongdoing. (b) One that is lewd; one morally filthy in motive and deed.
- nor covetous man:** (pleonektēs) This is the adjectival form of pleonexia in verse 3. (a) One who persistently desires to have more of anything. Greed. (b) One with sensual greed; an insatiable desire morally.
- who is an idolator:** One who worships any thing apart from God. That is, “they worship and serve the creature more than the creator.” Romans 1.25.
- any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God:** The kingdom is one. It is owned and occupied equally by Christ

and God. This indicates that they are one. An individual who practices the above evil is not saved.

Verse 6

- Let no one deceive:** (apataō) To delude, deceive, seduce, especially with false statements.
- you with vain:** (kenos) empty of contents; hollow; without substance; without truth or fact.
- for:** (gar) giving the reason for not allowing yourself to be deceived.
- because of:** (dia) on account of
- these things:** (tauta) that is, those things referred to in verses 3-5.
- cometh:** (erchetai) The present tense indicates that it continues coming.
- the wrath:** (orgē) Primarily means “mental bent.” It signifies anger as an abiding condition of the mind, frequently with a view to take revenge. See W. E. Vines Dictionary. “Orgee” is less sudden in its rise than thumos, but more lasting in its nature. (As 4.31).
- of God:** God’s wrath is different from man’s wrath. God’s anger is slow to rise. It is produced by the harm that is done to others.
- upon the children:** (huios) “sons.” A Hebrew idiom, which describes one with a certain behaviour.
- of disobedience:** (apeitheia) unpersuadable, obstinate, disobedient.

Verse 7

- Be:** (ginesthe — present imperative of ginomai) to become.
- not ye:** (mē) the phrase means, “do not ye become,” or “suffer yourselves not to be.” (Expositors)
- therefore:** (oun) in view of God’s wrath (verse 6) and their lack of inheritance in God’s kingdom (verse 5)
- partakers:** (summetochos) joint partakers; a partaker together with.
- with them:** Do not become involved with those doing the sins mentioned in the above verses. —(to be continued)

Considering the Psalms

by D. S. Parrack, (Somerset)

In any consideration of the Psalms it needs to be borne in mind that it is not uncommon for any one of the different writers to be at one point talking of his own experience whilst speaking expressly of the Lord Jesus in another section of the very same Psalm. In consequence it may be that the reader finds some difficulty in deciding into which category particular statements or passages fall. Can we in fact be sure that our own interpretation is right in any particular instance? Here are three possible ways of deciding, one bad, two good, the bad first.

Why not just rely on your natural intellect? This did not prove much good to the Pharisees who, in spite of what we probably think of them, did know the Old Testament, including the Psalms, thoroughly. When the Lord Jesus was discussing Psalm 110 with them and introduced a query into the conversation, "no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions," Matt. 22.46. So much for natural understanding. But do not be either worried or surprised at this failure. God has clearly said that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor.. 2.14. He does not expect us to understand that way, which brings us to the second possibility, a good one this time.

There have been given to the church a wide variety of spiritual gifts. We can quite rightly see these gifts as being made the responsibility of individuals, but their prime purpose is "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," Eph. 4.12, i.e. for the spiritual wellbeing of the church, especially the local church where the endowed individual is in fellowship.

Amongst these gifts are "prophets — evangelists — pastors — teachers," Eph. 4.11. 'Pastors' we all recognise, though the scripture is not speaking either of a title or a salaried job, rather of an individual actually carrying out pastoral care. 'Teachers' also are

fairly well identified, but the term includes those able and willing to teach, when required to, in circles smaller than the whole local church, e.g. Aquila and Priscilla, Acts 18.26, and Timothy, 2 Tim. 2.2. 'Evangelists' have the particular task of spreading the gospel message and so being the means used by God in "(adding) to the church daily such as should be saved," Acts 2.47. Philip who was known in the church as "Philip the evangelist," Acts 21.8, shows the range of ways in which this gift may be exercised. Under the instruction and control of the Holy Spirit, Acts 8.26,29,39, he met one man in the desert "and preached unto him Jesus," Acts 8.35, then went on "and passing through (Azotus) he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea," Acts 8.40.

The title 'prophets' though may tend to confuse us a little. In general parlance we use it to mean those who foretell the future, and such an ability or gift was evidenced in New Testament times, e.g. in Agabus, Acts 11.28, also Acts 21.10,11. But prophecy in the church is not so much concerned with forecasting coming events as it is with the impartation of divine truth for the edification of the believers. The prophet was prominent prior to the completion of the Holy Scriptures, and since its completion, has been replaced by the teacher who expounds what is written.

This means that we need to "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard," Heb. 2.1, assuming of course that those from whom we have heard them are evidencing a God given ability in "rightly dividing the word of truth," 2 Tim. 2.15. Even those among us who consider ourselves, rightly or wrongly, as being able to minister the scriptures should remember that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets," 1 Cor. 14.32, and obey Paul's instruction, "Let the prophets speak two or three and let the other judge (consider). If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace," 1 Cor. 14.29,30.

This then is one means which God has given us to know, and benefit from, the truth of the scripture. Those given spiritual gifts, then they themselves being given as gifts to the church.

Thirdly, it is always a great help where we find the New Testament giving us definitive guidance as to Old Testament meanings. One example of such a situation is found in Acts 2.25-36, where Peter, quoting from Psalm 16, states quite categorically,

“David speaketh concerning him,” i.e. the Lord Jesus, going on to explain, “Men and brethren let me speak freely unto you of the patriarch David that he is both dead and buried and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.” Therefore, he argues, when the Psalmist spoke of resurrection he could not have been speaking of himself but, having been promised by God that “the fruit of his loins,” i.e. his offspring, “according to the flesh,” Rom. 1.3, would one day sit on his throne, “he seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ.” It is a good thing when reading or studying the Psalms, as indeed all Old Testament scripture, to see what the New Testament has to say about the portion under direct consideration. There is a phrase which bears repetition. “The new is in the old concealed, the old is by the new revealed.”

In some cases however the matter is not dealt with in such a cut and dried manner. We need then to look at the whole tenor of scripture to see what the Psalmist cannot mean, to whom his words cannot refer. In Psalm 69 for instance, verse five shows David as saying, “O God thou knowest my foolishness and my sins are not hid from thee.” We know that he cannot possibly be speaking here of the Lord Jesus for He had no sins. Indeed it was precisely because of His sinless perfection that He could die in our, the sinners, place. “God hath made Him to be sin for us, (He) who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him,” 2 Cor. 5.21. In this verse David therefore is obviously speaking of himself, and in the scriptures we are shown some of the foolishness of his sins; see e.g. 2 Sam. 12.9.

But in the previous verse, Ps. 69.4, we read, “They that hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head,” and of this lament we are told positively that it was spoken prophetically of the Lord Jesus, John 15.25. It will be seen from this example that it is a dangerous way of interpreting a Psalm, indeed any Old Testament scripture, to try to assign the whole passage as applying to one specific person or as teaching one isolated truth.

The two methods recommended above as ways for seeking to determine what God wants to teach us of Himself and His ways are not to be seen as mutually exclusive alternatives, they need to be used in tandem. Whilst it is true that, because as believers we are all sealed by the Holy Spirit, Eph. 1.13,14, “ye need not that any man should teach you,” 1 John 2.27, it is also true in the context of bible reading and understanding that “we then that are strong ought to bear

the infirmities of the weak and not please ourselves,” Rom. 15.1. There was plenty of corn about when Ruth was gleaning but Naomi was not capable of collecting her own so her daughter-in-law did it for her. Boaz went further and ensured that there were “handfuls of purpose for her,” Ruth 2.16, to ease the double workload of the newly arrived alien.

God looks for us to adopt both methods of spiritual feeding, to work for it ourselves and to gratefully accept the fruits of the work of others. But do not rely on the first stated method. Neither you dear brother, dear sister, any more than the author of these notes is capable of understanding spiritual truths with our natural mind, however clever and educated we may be. That throws us all back equally on God, and He is the source from which true blessing and understanding must come.

Miracles at Calvary (1a)

by John B. D. Page (Weston-Super-Mare)

“Crucify Him, crucify Him,” cried the enraged religious leaders. As they made known their outrageous demand to Pilate, Jesus stood silent. Declaring repeatedly that he found no fault in the guiltless Prisoner and desiring to release Him, Pilate found himself powerless against the priests’ persistent demands for His death. Finally rejecting Him to be the Son of God and openly refusing to acknowledge Him as their King but declaring hypocritically that they had no king but Caesar, the Jews fiercely demanded His crucifixion which was Rome’s prerogative to permit or reject in a vassal state such as Israel.

“Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him,” shrieked the merciless mob of Jews as they clammered savagely for His condemnation to death. Pilate’s several public appeals for compassion had fallen upon deaf ears as the Jews raised their relentless and obstinate cry, demanding the Prisoner’s death by crucifixion.

Convinced in his own mind that he should acquit the Prisoner but fearful of the Jews’ reaction if he did what he knew was right, Pilate was in a quandary. Sacrificing the claims of justice and yielding to

the base fear of man, he sanctioned this sinless Man to be crucified, and so Jesus was led away to be crucified.

Bearing His cross as other criminals were compelled to do, Jesus apparently felt exhausted from the strain of several trials during the past night which was an illegal time for holding them. Therefore, He was relieved of its weight when the guard seized Simon of Cyrene to bear it and follow behind Jesus. The common notion that the cross had a transverse bar is not borne out by the Greek word *stravros* which means 'an upright stake' of heavy rough timber (Matt. 27. 32, 42, and so in the gospels). This is confirmed outside the gospels where Jesus is said to have been hanged on a "tree" (*xulon*, Gk.) which means 'unsawn timber' such as a tree (see Acts 5.30; 10.39; 13.29; 1 Pet. 2.24). The ecclesiastical form of the cross has apparently a heathen origin in ancient Chaldea. Christian Churches had become apostate by the middle of the 3rd century A.D., and tragically they adopted the cross with its transverse bar as a symbol for improving their standing in the pagan world. Of the cross, some one has aptly said, "Rome gilds it; modernists evade it; believers glory in it!"

During the six hours that the Lord Jesus was hanging upon the rough wooden stake, He endured reproaches from passers-by, jeers from the religious leaders, mockery from the soldiers, taunts from the criminals on either side Him, and yet, "when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not," says Peter about thirty years later, "but He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously", 1 Pet. 2.23.

As the hours passed, several miracles occurred, none of which had happened before and certainly have not happened since Calvary. Attention is paid to some and others are often overlooked, but they all deserve meditation in their contextual setting and in the light of the Scriptures.

The first miracle for consideration is the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies relating to the death of Christ. This follows the example given by the Lord Jesus Himself when "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded . . . in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself" to the two distressed disciples pondering upon the recent sad events as they were walking along the road to Emmaus. In His exposition, He would have shown how forecast and fact fuse in the perfection of His Person and His atoning work upon the cross.

1. The Miracle of the fulfilment of Old Testament Scriptures when Christ died.

“Christ died . . . according to the scriptures,” said Paul when writing to the assembly at Corinth, 1 Cor. 15.3. The Death of Christ, which had occurred about twenty years earlier, was then an undisputed fact of history. His Death was in fulfilment of, and in agreement with, the Old Testament Scriptures. Writing several decades after the event, this was apparently understood by the four gospel writers who found nothing contradictory between the prophecies of earlier centuries and the facts of history.

In recording the Death of Christ, each evangelist, avoiding the horrors of crucifixion, describes it with dignity and brings out the harmony between the Old Testament predictions and his statements. Sometimes an Old Testament sentence is interwoven in these four accounts of the Lord’s death. Other times an incident that transpired at the cross is said to be in fulfilment of an Old Testament verse which is quoted. Despite a centuries long interval between the prediction and the event, there is no contradiction which is nothing short of a miracle.

Arriving at Golgotha and just before the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus, “they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall”, says Matthew (27.34) who, without saying this fulfilled a Scripture, refers undoubtedly to Psalm 69.21a, “They gave me also gall for my meat; . . .”. Apparently, the common practice was to give a prisoner this drugged potion for deadening the pain and making him easier to handle, but Jesus, after a taste, refused to drink it (Matt. 27. 34). With His senses clear, He was determined by the grace of God to taste death for every man (Heb. 2.9).

Passers-by reviled and jeered at Jesus hanging on that shameful cross, “wagging their heads” derisively at Him. In the same way the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked Him and said sneeringly, “He trusted in God: let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him”, Matt. 27.39,41,43. Both the revolting behaviour of the people passing by and the religious leaders’ reproaching Him with their words of Scripture were seemingly predicted in Psalm 22 most of which, unlike any other portion of Scripture, describes the horrors of crucifixion so graphically many centuries before that form of capital punishment was known. The suffering Victim of the 22nd Psalm says that He was “a reproach of men: and despised of the people. All that see me laugh me to scorn: and they shoot out the lip,”

all of which described prophetically the hatred of men displayed at Calvary. Then continuing, “they shake the head (as the passers-by and religious leaders did contemptuously) saying, He trusted in Jehovah that He might deliver Him: let him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him” Ps. 22.7f. In expressing their abhorrence of Him when quoting from this Psalm, the chief priests with the others were careful to change the ineffable name “Jehovah to “God”. Without claiming that those verses of the 22nd Psalm were then fulfilled, Matthew incorporates them into his account of Calvary, illustrating the cohesion between the Old and New Testaments.

Not only are there these instances where the gospel writers have interwoven Old Testament scriptures in their accounts of Christ’s crucifixion, but there are those where they quote from the Old Testament and state that it was then fulfilled, which will now be considered.

Although all four gospel writers record the parting of the Lord’s garments by the soldiers, only two state it was in fulfilment of a Scripture. These were Matthew and John. Having crucified Jesus, the soldiers “parted” His garments, casting lots” says Matthew (27.35) who then gives the reason, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet” who is quoted, “They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots,” which is cited from Psalm 22.18. Writings two to three decades later than the others, John gives more information saying that the soldiers “took His garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part,” implying incidentally that the centurion had four soldiers, whose action was not wrong under Roman law because a criminal’s clothing was their perquisites. It meant that one soldier had His headdress, another His outer coat, the third His girdle, and the fourth His sandals. His inner “coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.” Instead of tearing it, they agreed among themselves to cast lots for deciding whose it should be. Unknown to these pagan soldiers, the motive behind their actions was not their lawful rights but primarily “that the scriptures might be fulfilled,” says John who, like Matthew, quotes Psalm 22.18 (John 19.23f). Whilst Matthew saw the predictive element in this Psalm by ascribing it to “the prophet” without naming him, John viewed the same verse as “the scripture”. Unconsciously the soldiers fulfilled this prophetic scripture spoken by David about a thousand years before—this is nothing short of a miracle!

—(to be continued).

KIDRON

by J. WHITMORE (Essex)

The brook, Kidron, is mentioned on six occasions in the Scriptures, five in the Old Testament, and one in the New. The five references in the Old Testament set forth aspects of what our Lord had to pass through as He went across the brook into the garden, John 18.1. The five references are:

- | | | |
|-------|---------------------------|------------------|
| (i) | Absalom's Rebellion. | II Sam. 15.23. |
| (ii) | Shimei's boundary | I Kings 2.37. |
| (iii) | Maachah's Idol Destroyed. | I Kings 15.13. |
| (iv) | Josiah's Purgings. | II Kings 23.4,6. |
| (v) | The City Rebuilt. | Jeremiah 31.40. |

Absalom's Rebellion.

II Sam. 15 brings us to consider a sad chapter in the history of David. As a result of the intervention of Joab, Absalom had been restored after the death of Amnon, this was an act of compassion on the part of David which was to be repaid by a betrayal that rivals that of Judas Iscariot. It is very probable that the reference in Psalm 41.9, 'mine own familiar friend. . . hath lifted up his heel against me', relates to this incident, and so we learn that the experience of David is a picture of what the Lord was to suffer at the hand of Judas.

Both David and the Lord knew the character of the traitor, although David remained ignorant of the deed until the time; there is, however, little by way of comparison beyond this. David acted in a way that would warn us of the danger of allowing natural affection to cloud spiritual judgment and also show us the solemn harvest of sin. He had lost Amnon at the hand of Absalom, and therefore he effectively lost Absalom as well. These events were in fulfilment of the prophecy of Nathan that David's act would be enacted against himself before all Israel, II Sam. 12.11,12. Amnon was guilty of sin in the same manner as his father, II Sam. 13.14. Morally, David could not condemn another where he had been shown mercy, and so the matter is taken out of his hands. Absalom, however, is not content, and so he plots to avenge his sister, II Sam. 13.22, waiting two years to carry out his purpose. The result was exile for Absalom, until the intervention of Joab on two occasions, II Sam. 14.1, 33.

II Sam. 15 begins with the account of how Absalom repays David by his deceit in drawing the hearts of the people after him, v.6. Here we see the parallel between Judas and Absalom. Both are recipients of the evidence of the favour of their respective lords, yet both desire more than they are willing to give. Judas turns as he sees the Lord commend Mary for her act of devotion. He only wants the money, and so he cannot accept the praise heaped upon her; Absalom sees his father's weakness, and sets his heart on the kingdom. The Lord crosses Kidron to meet Judas and the band sent out to arrest Him; David flees from the army of Absalom. For both the end is a wilderness scene. David, with his men, flee the way of the wilderness; our Lord goes meekly to the cross, and such desolation as none could imagine.

The hearts of both men are still full of love. David pleads for Absalom to be spared, 18.5, while our Lord pleads for forgiveness for all involved in His death, Luke. 23.34. Let us learn the first lesson of Kidron, it is a place where love motivates all that is done.

Shimei's Boundary

If the first reference to Kidron reminds us of the treachery that faced both David and the Lord, then the second brings in the thought of iniquity.

The background is once more the rebellion of Absalom. Shimei had cursed as David fled, but David had shown mercy as he returned. Shimei accused David of reaping the consequences of his actions, the very charge of which the nation thought the Lord worthy, Isa. 53.4b. Solomon was given a charge to repay his iniquity, I Kings 2,8,9. He set Kidron as the limit of Shimei's movements, ordering him to build a house in Jerusalem. If he left the city, then he would die. Solomon is therefore careful to ensure that he does not have any opportunity to stir up trouble for him. This is a warning to us of the need for caution in dealing with the contentious. Although there may be evidence of change, the wise will realise that such men will often put on an appearance in order to become accepted. David and Solomon both show that they were unconvinced about the true character of this man. He is to be restricted in his movements, and if faithful, then he will accept the limitations without question. Shimei maintains the terms for three years, but then two servants run to Gath. Shimei decides to follow them, and so he breaks the agreement with Solomon. Although three years had elapsed, he is still bound by his word, and so Solomon executes the sentence agreed.

In crossing Kidron, Shimei rebels against the command of Solomon, and therefore suffers the consequences of his own sin. As our Lord crossed Kidron, He went into the place where he would be taken in order to carry out the work of bearing our iniquities, Isa. 53.6. Shimei goes his own way, and suffers, but our Lord never moved outside the pathway that the Father decreed, and yet He was to suffer for those who had both in ignorance 'gone astray' and wilfully 'turned . . . to his own way', Isa. 53.6. How we rejoice to know that the very place that spells judgment to the rebel, is the place where the Obedient One took the judgment so that the rebel might be set free. Shimei went three years before he transgressed: the number three speaks of resurrection, that which seals the work of our Lord, and the judgment of those who reject, yet assures the believer of his security, Rom. 4.25.

Maachah's Idol Destroyed.

This incident ends a sorry chapter in the history of Judah. Maachah was the daughter of Absalom and the wife of Rehoboam. This is a union which should have existed. There is a clear principle in the history of the Kings of Judah that where the mother is named, there is an indication of character, I Kings 15.2. makes it clear that Maachah was the mother of Abijam, Asa's father, and her influence is seen in the short reign of her son, who followed the ways of Rehoboam, lifted up with pride, but calling on the Name of the Lord in his trouble. It was only mercy towards Judah as a result of David's testimony that preserved Abijam, yet he still refused to repent. How strange that Absalom's grandson is preserved because of the faithfulness of David, and yet, in a day to come, Israel will rejoice in a salvation based entirely upon the work of the Lord which He accomplished when they refused Him. The pride of Absalom is seen in both Rehoboam and Abijam, but now Asa succeeds to the throne, and a new order is established in which the profession is to be matched by the reality. The two earlier kings has boasted in the sacrifices and temple, but Asa set to work to see that the moral state was maintained in line with the ceremonial. He takes away sodomites and idolatry, removing Maachah from her position because of her idol, which is burnt by Kidron. If Kidron is associated with treachery and rebellion, then there it is associated with personal holiness. The family of Asa as well as his own life, are brought to the test of the Word of God, and sins are judged in that light.

Josiah's Purging

If the previous incident ended a sorry state for Israel, then this marks a far more serious evil that had come into the land. It is now the temple itself which has been corrupted. The evil of the individual that was seen in Asa's day is now manifest in the temple. It has permeated the whole nation, even to the place that bears the name of the Lord.

Sadly, it is not merely the place of the evil, but also the extent that is notable. As Josiah orders the purging of the temple, there is evidence of homage to Baal and all the host of heaven.

II Kings 23.7 shows that such idolatry leads to gross immorality. How sad to think that the nation who had inherited the land as a result of the judgment of God on the earlier inhabitants, now allows the very sin of Sodom to be carried out alongside the house of the Lord. Here is the awful depth of iniquity that faces Josiah.

Once more, Kidron is the place where judgment is carried out. Every idol, and all associated with them, is carried out to be burned and ground to powder. Let us learn the lessons seen here. It is not enough for the idols to be put away once, such is the heart that the temptation will return. We need care to maintain the vigil. Secondly, if sin is not judged in the individual, it will permeate the whole body. We are warned of this in respect of both moral issues, I Cor. 5.6, and doctrinal issues, Gal. 5.9. The result of this cannot be estimated in terms of the depths of sin to which any may sink if it is not checked. Let us be careful to live in the light of the cross, to put into practice our profession of being dead to sin and alive to God, Rom. 6.11.

The City Rebuilt

In Jer. 31.40, we see the association of Kidron with the glorious future of Jerusalem. How good to remind our hearts that, while we see the judgment of God executed at the cross, we may rejoice in the assurance that the very place that is such a solemn reminder of the call to holiness before God, is the place at which our acceptance before a holy God is secured.

The judgment maintains the character of God, but we know with assurance that 'He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified', Heb. 10.14, and that is accomplished by His one offering, not by our merits. We know that, while we must be careful to maintain practical holiness in the sight of God, all has been fully done on our behalf, and we may joyfully anticipate the inheritance reserved in heaven for us, I Pet. 1.4. Just as Israel will receive the inheritance on the basis of faith, so we know that we are saved by faith, not works.

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (28)

by R. Hanna (Chile)

The word “conversion”, although found only once in the Bible, describes the experience of all who trust Christ for salvation. Mine was simple, yet unique in that it was I to whom God gave life eternal and afterwards called to serve Him in a land far from my birthplace, which was the town of Lurgan, Northern Ireland. Born in a humble home, of parents who belonged to the Presbyterian Church, I with my brothers and sisters regularly attended Church as well as morning and afternoon Sunday Schools. From infancy we were taught the holy scriptures and as I grew up I knew I was a sinner, in need of a Saviour. On entering my teens, my two Sunday School teachers, both true believers, were interested in my salvation, for which blessing I have often thanked God.

In October of 1934, special meetings were to be held in the Church, the invited speaker being an English evangelist, called Mr. Tom Rees. The townspeople were made fully aware of the coming meetings and at that time I was very concerned about my spiritual condition. One evening, before those meetings commenced, I heard the gospel preached at an open-air meeting in the centre of the town, and one of the speakers in his message, said: “young man, if the Lord were to come for His people before these meetings start, are you prepared to go with Him?” I knew I wasn’t saved, and God used that pointed question to awaken me to the danger of missing His salvation. I went straight home, and in my bedroom before God, conscious that I was a lost sinner and knowing that Christ died for the ungodly, I believed God, put my confidence in what He said about His Son and asked Him to save me. He did, and on that last night of September, 59 years ago, I passed from death to life John 5.24. While attending those meetings I got assurance from God’s word, as did many others who were saved at that time.

In the succeeding months and years I was one of a group of young men who were interested in Bible study, tract distribution and preaching in the open-air, near and far. These young men belonged to different religious persuasions in the town and it became our

custom to meet together in a band-loft to pray and study the Scriptures after all had attended their Sunday evening services. Many were the themes we considered and when the subject of baptism came up I was left in no doubt as to what the Bible taught. Inevitably the subject regarding what a scriptural church really is resulted in some most interesting discussions.

The time came when we had to put into practice what the Lord had taught us, and having acquainted myself with a number of different denominations in my search for a place where all God's word was taught and practiced, I found a gathering of believers in the Union Street Gospel Hall, so started attending meetings there. The first time I sat at the back observing the procedure at the Breaking of Bread meeting one Lord's Day morning, I decided there and then that it was the nearest thing to New Testament practice that I had seen. That night I told my companions what I had found, something new to me but known to some of them, so I continued to attend the meetings in the Gospel Hall. Before long I was the first of the group to make a move, so I approached the brethren and asked to be baptised. The elder brethren who interviewed me were very gracious and kind and it was a happy day for me when one of them baptised me as a believer at the close of a gospel meeting. Some time later I asked for fellowship in the assembly and the day I was received was another memorable day in my life. Since then I have never had any reason to doubt that to gather thus is God's plan for His people.

Several others of those young men took the same step and years later went overseas to serve the Lord, while others were used of Him in the homeland.

Attending ministry meetings, Bible Readings and Conferences I learned a lot from highly esteemed men of God that has since been of inestimable worth to me.

Being employed as an industrial and commercial artist in Lurgan and Belfast I decided, after much prayer and exercise, to emigrate to Canada where I found employment in the same profession, but it was my desire to serve the Lord where and when that would be possible.

With a letter of commendation from the Lurgan assembly I was received into fellowship in the Pape Avenue assembly in Toronto and soon became occupied in the assembly activities. It was there I met the one who became my wife and after our marriage we moved

to the east end of the city and were warmly received by the Birchcliff assembly.

In the year 1951 a missionary couple called William and Doris McBride, on furlough from Chile, paid us a visit in our home, during which Bill said he was interested in getting an "Egypt to Canaan" chart painted so I offered to do it for him. The lettering on it, of course, was all to be done in Spanish, about which language we knew nothing. While working on this, my wife Gladys, and I, fully aware of the great need in that land, became interested in the Lord's work there. To go there would mean a big change in our life-style, but with deep exercise before God we committed our future to Him. (Psalm 37. 4, 5).

Shortly after I was saved I bought a little card at a Missionary meeting that cost me a penny, on which was printed the motto of a man called C. R. Studd, whom God used mightily in His service. I long since have lost that card but its words were indelibly impressed on my mind and became the language of my heart, and they were these: "If Jesus Christ be God, and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him". Conscious of God's call to further service, and thankful for His guidance, we discussed the matter with the elders of the Birchcliff and Pape Avenue assemblies and they most willingly commended us to the grace of God, giving us a letter of commendation to the Lord's work in Chile, South America, dated February, 1952. Before leaving for Chile we made a visit to my family in Ireland, and while there made known our exercise to the Lurgan assembly. Without asking for it, the elders added their commendation on the back of the Toronto assemblies' letter, and the Waringstown assembly did likewise, and that was in July, 1952. It was most encouraging to have their approval and fellowship, and as we look back, at the time of writing this, nineteen of the twenty-one dear brethren who signed that letter are now with the Lord.

We returned to Canada, packed up, travelled by train to New York and from that port we sailed to Valparaiso, Chile, with two small children, both of whom are now serving the Lord. Much has happened since then, but through almost 42 years we have proved again and again God's divine GUIDANCE Isaiah 58.11; His great GOODNESS Psalm 145.7; and His abounding GRACE 2 Cor. 9.8. From experience we can sing truthfully the words of the poem written by Annie Johnson Flint:

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When strength has declined ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,
Our Father's full giving has only begun.

His love has no limit, His grace knows no measure,
His power, no boundary known unto men,
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

We thank God for all that HE has accomplished in this far-off land, and praising Him for all that is past, we trust Him for all that's to come.

Being the only assembly missionary from the British Isles in Chile, a land wide open for the gospel, we would solicit the fervent prayers of God's people for the work here, and for the workers, that we may be found faithful, good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Cor. 4.2; 1 Pet. 4.10).

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. (No member of the committee, author of articles or any other person connected with the magazine receives payment, remuneration or gratuity of any kind).

All cheques, money orders, etc., should be made payable to "Assembly Testimony Magazine."

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to : John Glenville, 16 Trelawney Road, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4DD. Telephone (0752) 846889.

Friends residing elsewhere should please forward gifts to William Neill, "Beth-Asher," 109 Lurgan Road, Banbridge, Northern Ireland, BT32 4NG. Phone (08206) 24238.

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Make me go in the way of Thy commandments

Psalm 119 v 35

In the way of Thy commandments,
Lord make me now to go;
Teach me to understand their meaning
And at Thy feet keep low.

Thy holy precepts seek to learn,
With all my heart each day,
And meditate in all Thy law
And all Thy grace display.

Thy testimonies are wonderful,
To be observed by all;
Who seek to learn from Thee alone
And on Thy name do call.

Teach us, Oh Lord, Thy statutes
That songs may rise to Thee;
From lips of praise and worship,
Until Thy face we see.

Quicken Thou our footsteps,
As pilgrims travelling on;
To that bright celestial city,
Till day eternal dawns.

As strangers pressing homeward,
To Heaven's fair land above;
Leaving behind earth's sorrows,
We triumph in His love.

To seek His will and guidance,
Is now required no more;
We've reached our home in glory,
On that bright and tearless shore.

—*R. Magill (Belfast)*

Miracles at Calvary (1b)

by John B. D. Page (Weston-Super-Mare)

All four gospels refer to the crucifixion of criminals with Christ. Whilst Matthew and Mark say that two thieves were crucified with Jesus, Luke says two malefactors were then put to death with Him. This is not a case of literary variation for translating one word in the Original Text, but two different Greek words are used to describe these condemned men. Luke's word "malefactors" (*kakourgos*, Gk.) denotes evil men, and someone has suggested they were insurgents intent upon emancipating their homeland from the yoke of Roman rule, for which Rome's penalty was capital punishment. Matthew and Mark refers to "thieves" (*lestes*, Gk.) or "robbers" (RV & NTr.) which is a word signifying they plundered openly and by violence — in contrast to thieves who steal at night! This, with other details, has prompted some expositors to suggest they were different persons, but the important matter in the context of these articles is to note the words of Mark, "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors" Mark 15.28. Only a few hours earlier when leaving the upper room, the Lord Jesus quoted Isaiah 53.12 to His disciples, "I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning Me have an end" Luke 22.37. The verb "accomplished" (*teleo*, Gk.) here means "to finish, to bring to an end", frequently signifies, not merely to terminate a thing, but to carry out a thing to the full" (W. E. Vine).

From this prophetic scripture in Isaiah dating back some 700 years, the Lord Jesus warned His disciples how evil men would soon place Him among transgressors, and Mark, although not present in the upper room, saw its fulfilment at His death when violent robbers were crucified on either side of Him and so He was counted with, and as being one of, them. Such accurate fulfilment of Scripture is a miracle. Only John says that "Jesus

(was) in the midst, John 19.18. The soldiers knew the charge brought against Jesus at His civil trial and the wording of the accusation affixed to the gibbet above His head. By putting “Jesus in the midst,” they mockingly gave Him the place of honour as the supposed “King of the Jews”. The soldiers could have crucified Jesus at either end of the criminals but they were restrained from doing it. Consequently, at the last deepest depth of His humiliation on earth even in the hour of death, the Lord Jesus occupied the central position. Whilst men humiliated Him by crucifying Him, God has highly exalted Him. Later, John saw Him in heaven “in the midst” of celestial beings Rev. 5.6. The under-lying significance of that scene first at Calvary and then in the opened heaven is the centrality of Christ at all times and in all spheres. If Christ is central and foremost in our lives, He is then sanctified as Lord, 1 Pet. 3.15, RV.

According to John 19.28ff, Jesus knew that by the ninth hour (i.e. 3.00 p.m.) all things were accomplished. Therefore, “that the scriptures might be fulfilled, (He) saith, I thirst”. Hearing Him, the soldiers filled a sponge with vinegar (i.e. sour wine) from a nearby vessel and, putting it to His mouth on a stalk of hyssop, He received it. Despite agonising pain in His dying moments, Jesus knew by His omniscience there was still a scripture to be fulfilled and so He said intentionally, “I thirst”. His dying words resulted in the fulfilment of Psalm 69.21b, “. . . in My thirst they gave me vinegar to drink”. The soldiers, who may have reckoned Him to be a criminal like those on either side of Him, could have ignored His request. But, unknown to them, the unseen overruling hand of God did not permit them to turn a deaf ear to His words. By responding to His request, the soldiers unwittingly fulfilled literally that ancient scripture spoken by David about ten centuries beforehand. Such accurate fulfilment of scripture is indeed miraculous.

In his gospel, John gives the Jewish background for what he is about to say concerning the next fulfilment of scripture relating to Christ’s death. As the sixth day of the week was known as the day of preparation when food was prepared and other domestic duties done ready for the sabbath which was kept with solemnity, Jews were anxious that no bodies remained in hanging on their gibbets during that holy day. Therefore, they ob-

tained Pilate's permission for the crucified victims' legs to be broken for hastening their death, and then the corpses could be taken away for burial in accordance with the divine command of Deuteronomy 21.23. This was in sharp contrast to Roman custom which was to leave the bodies on their gibbets to putrefy. Having broken the legs of the criminals on either side of Jesus, the soldiers "saw that He was dead already, (and so) they brake not His legs," but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side (John 19.31-34). As the narrator and without naming himself, John says that he was an eyewitness and testifies to the veracity of these things, so that his readers may also believe (John 9.35). Commenting upon this verse in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (St. John)*, A. Plummer says, "Why does St. John attest thus earnestly the trustworthiness of his narrative at this particular point? Four reasons may be assigned. This incident proved (1) the reality of Christ's *humanity* against Docetic views; and these verses therefore are conclusive evidence against the theory that the Fourth Gospel is the work of a Docetic Gnostic;

(2) the reality of Christ's *Divinity*, against Ebionite views; while His human form was no mere phantom, but flesh and blood, yet He was not therefore a mere man, but the Son of God:

(3) the reality of Christ's *death*, and therefore of His *Resurrection*, against Jewish insinuations of trickery (comp. Matt. 28.13-15):

(4) the clear and unexpected fulfilment of two Messianic prophecies." These four points made by Plummer are important, bearing in mind that John wrote towards the close of the first century when heresy about the person of Christ was evident — even as it is so widespread today. "These things were done," says John (19.36), "that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken." This quotation refers to the paschal lamb, concerning which the Lord commanded, "neither shall ye break a bone thereof" Ex. 12.46. If this were true for the type, then it had to be for the Anti-type! (N.B. 1 Cor. 11.24," . . . Take eat: this is My body, which is *broken* for you: . . ." — the word "broken" is omitted in the Revised Version and J. N. Darby's New Translation and then it accords with Luke 22.19, "which is *given* for you.") The death of Christ was so timed that the need for breaking His legs did not arise, and consequently this scripture, dating back about 1500 years, was wonderfully fulfilled. At

the opening of John's gospel, Christ is proclaimed explicitly to be "the Lamb of God" John 1. 29,36; at the close of it He is declared implicitly to be the true Passover Lamb slain, John 19.18,36. Concerning the fulfilment of these ancient prophecies Peter confirms that "those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled" Act 3.18.

Alluding probably to people standing around and seeing a soldier piercing the side of Jesus, John says, "And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced" John 19.37. Quoting Zechariah 12.10, spoken by the prophet somewhere around 500 B.C., John is careful not to claim it was fulfilled at Calvary as he had said in verse 36 that Exodus 12.46 was then fulfilled, but in this instance he says another scripture "saith". As one of the onlookers this scripture came apparently to his mind, realising that this scene of people gazing upon the Man whose side a soldier had pierced is illustrative of Zechariah's unfulfilled prophecy. In a coming day when the Son of Man will come in power and glory to the earth, the spirit of grace will be poured out upon penitent Israelis as they look upon Him still bearing that wound in His side. The fulfilment of these prophecies in every jot and tittle concerning death of Christ at His first advent provide an assurance for Christians that unfulfilled prophecies of His second advent will be fulfilled as accurately.

Early in His ministry, the Lord Jesus said "I am not come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" Matt. 5.17, and this He did not only during His life but also in His death as shown in the four gospels. It may be rightly said that Christ is the *fulfilment* of the Old Testament, and the *fulness* of the New.

Where the gospel writers state that certain scriptures were fulfilled in relation to a specific aspect of Christ's death, the quotations are made from each of the three main divisions of the Jewish canon of Scripture which are mentioned in Luke 24.44. The quotation from Exodus 12 is from the first division, "The Law of Moses" (the first five books of the Bible); that from Isaiah 53 is from the second division, "The Prophets" (which include the historical books); and those from Psalms 22 and 69 from the third division, "The Psalms" (including the poetical

books). This confirms that all the Scriptures were written concerning Christ.

It may not come amiss to mention that during the closing phase of His ministry the Lord Jesus on several occasions told His disciples how He must be killed and be raised again on the third day. In each prediction, He enlarged upon the last (e.g. Matt. 16.21; 17.22f; 20.17ff). After His death and burial, some women arrived at dawn on the first day of the week at the sepulchre where an angel said to them, “. . . I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen,” adding significantly, “as He said” (Matt. 28.5f). By saying to them, “as He said”, the angel indicated that the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus were in fulfilment of His earlier prophetic utterances concerning these things. As the Word Incarnate, He spoke the word predicting His own death and resurrection, and His word could not be annulled but it had to be fulfilled — as it was!

—(To be continued)

BEHOLD THE MAN

(Meditations in Luke's Gospel)

by **JIM FLANIGAN, (Belfast)**

12. His Crucifixion

At nine o'clock in the morning on that dark day, they crucified Him. From Gethsemane with its agony, through Gabbatha with its mockery, He had walked to Golgotha. For this day He had waited. Now His hour had come. It was Passover, and He was the true Paschal Lamb, without blemish or spot. Now He would be slain; His blood would be shed.

The hours of the preceding night had been dark and difficult. The traitor had kissed Him and betrayed Him. Peter had denied Him and had wept bitterly. The chief priests had tried Him and had delivered Him to Pilate. Pilate had sent Him to Herod, and Herod had sent Him back to Pilate. Jew and Gentile were joined in their rejection of Him. He had been mocked and maligned. They had spat on Him, beaten Him, stripped Him and scourged

Him, They had crowned Him with thorns and robed Him in purple. And through it all He had remained silent, uncomplaining and uncomplaining; He opened not His mouth (Isaiah 53.7). A Man of sorrows indeed, condemned to die by crucifixion, and two malefactors led out with Him to the Place of a Skull.

If we can identify Calvary correctly today, it is the northern tip of the hill which is Mount Moriah. Two hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the Maccabees had cut a highway through the hill. The greater, southern part of the hill is the Temple Mount. On the other side of the highway, outside the city wall, is that rocky prominence with the skull features, Golgotha. Centuries earlier another father and son had walked together to Moriah (Gen 22). It was an early foreshadowing of this scene, Father and Son moving together to the place of sacrifice.

For at least part of the way He carried His cross, He walks calmly amid the tumult, the shouts of the men and the tears of the women. Gently He speaks comfort to these. "Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children". "His blood be on us and on our children", the multitudes had cried to Pilate. "Weep for them" says the Lord Jesus. Less than forty years later, in AD 70, more than a million Jews perished in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. No doubt some of these were present at Calvary. And today, near to the site of the House of Caiaphas on Mount Zion, there stands a monument to the memory of one million, two hundred thousand Jewish children who died in the holocaust. And the worst is yet to come.

The Gospels do not record all the painful details of the crucifixion. It was an ignominious death, employed by the Romans only for slaves, aliens and traitors. Other offending Roman citizens were beheaded if guilty of death. So does Paul write, "Even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:8). For the greater detail and for the feelings of Christ, we must turn to the Psalms, and especially Psalm 22. There was the nailing of His hands and feet to the wood. Gentle hands that had been laid on little children and upon their sick, now spiked cruelly to the tree. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings", their prophet had written (Isaiah 52.7), but those feet were spiked, like His hands, to the cross.

There followed the lifting up of the cross. Crucifixion was known as a "lifting up" (John 12.32-33). The Son of Man must be lifted up. What shame was this, lifted up, bereft of garments, lifted up to the irreverent gaze of wicked men. "All my bones are out of joint", He cries (Psalm 22.14), as the heavy cross would be jolted into the socket in the ground. "They gaped upon Me". "They look and stare upon Me".

The physical weakness of the Crucified was painful. "I am poured out like water". "My strength is dried up." And with this the awful thirst. For three hours He hung under the burning Jerusalem sun. "My tongue cleaveth to my jaws". "I thirst". And they touched His parched lips with vinegar. They gambled for His clothing while He suffered. He was the gentle hind of the dawn, surrounded by bulls and dogs, by the proud and arrogant bulls of Bashan, the leaders of the nation, and by the fierce dogs of Rome, unleashed upon Him.

From the third hour (9 a.m.) until noonday, the sun blazed upon Him. Then suddenly, supernaturally, the sun withdrew its light. There followed three mysterious hours of darkness which covered the land. The sinless One is now the Sin-bearer. The guiltless Substitute is taking the place of the guilty. He was made sin for us. Jehovah deals with Him accordingly. "Eloi Eloi lama sabacthani?"

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood;
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

At the ninth hour (3 p.m.) He cried with a loud voice. Probably He cried only one word, "Finished!" The saving work was done. The suffering and pain were over. The darkness was past.

Crucified, crucified, and nailed upon the tree;
With pierced hands, and feet, and side;
For you; for me.

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

PAPERS ON PROPHECY

by The Late W. W. Fereday (written in 1897/98)

VOLUME I

Paper 3c—The Judgement of the Dead

3. *The Judgement of the Dead.*—In pursuing our subject, we have now reached the end of time. Christ is the Judge of the dead, even as of the living. “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour, the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5.22,23). How solemn that men should have to stand before Him! The One who died for sinners, and rose again: the One who has waited throughout this period of Divine long-suffering and grace, able and willing to save all who believe, however lost or vile! Then for men to have to stand before Him at the end! What shame and confusion of face! What speechlessness! Will men in Christendom be able to say that they never heard His Name, nor the sound of saving grace? Will they be able to plead that the Word of God, containing the record of His grace and truth, was never placed within their reach? Neither will nor can be urged in extenuation of their position. The sentence of God will be justified by each and all.

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God (or ‘the throne’), and the books were opened; and another book was 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. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell (Hades) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell (Hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20.11-15). It is a “great” throne, for the most momentous of all questions is to be settled there; “white” because of the holiness and righteousness of all that is there enacted. All who are not raised in the first

resurrection must then rise, the mighty voice of the Son of God calling them from their tombs. The sea comes forward with its contingent, as Hades delivers up the spirits to be reunited with the bodies. The books tell their tale, all is faithfully recorded by a holy God. The Word of God will be there, even as the Lord Jesus said, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day" (John 12.48). Every word heard, every chapter read, only increases responsibility, if not received by faith in the heart. How does the reader stand in view of all this? Has the reader been cleansed from his sins by the blood of Jesus? Is forgiveness yours, and justification and acceptance in the risen Christ?

If not, lose no time, we entreat you. The present period of grace and mercy is fast hastening to its close, and soon the Master of the house will rise up and shut the door. Then all hope must flee, mercy will be no more. What a contrast! Eternal glory in the Father's house for all who believe in the Son; a long eternity of woe in the lake of fire for all who avail not themselves of His wondrous grace.

—(to be continued DV).

Some Psalms of Asaph

by D. S. Parrack, (Somerset)

No. 1—Psalm 75

From the claims made in this psalm it would seem that the words are spoken prophetically of the Lord Jesus. No one else could make such statements regarding the present (e.g. v3) or the future (e.g. v2). Accepting the psalm on this basis, v1 may be seen as introductory, looking forward to what the Lord Himself is about to say.

v1 Introduction. God seen as the source of all blessing and the rightful recipient of thanksgiving

One of the baleful characteristics of natural, unregenerate man, linked to their own rebellion against God, was that "when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful" (Rom. 1.21). Not being thankful evidences that there is no

appreciation of God and no response to Him. As believers we are exhorted, “Do not err my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1.17). There is no one else to whom we can look with any confidence. Everything, including any effort of our own, is subject to failure and will, if depended on, bring only disappointment. Asaph points us to the one sure source of blessing and sets us an example of thankfulness. “Unto Thee O God do we give thanks,” and repeats himself for emphasis, “unto Thee do we give thanks”.

But we may sometimes feel that things have gone very wrong in our souls, that our perception of God’s activity has dwindled almost into nothingness. How can we be assured of the continuity of His care and love when we are in that unhappy state of heart? When the scriptures speak of a person’s name, the whole personality and character are included. So God’s nearness is borne witness to by what He has done and is doing. “For that Thy name is near, Thy wondrous works declare.” The one work, the one act of God which envelopes and includes all others is the giving of the Lord Jesus for us at Calvary. “Herein us love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4.10). That giving leads to and ensures the never changing nearness of the Lord Jesus to His people. “For he hath said, I will never leave thee or forsake thee” (Heb. 13.5). That is how we know His nearness, not by any warm glow in our hearts, because that comes and goes as we change, but because of the altogether dependable promise of the One who Himself never changes (see e.g. Heb. 13.8).

v2/10 The Lord Jesus speaks directly to His people with statements and promises

The form of address changes from the ‘we’ of v1 to the ‘I’ of the rest of the psalm. Having associated himself with the people of God in indebtedness and response to God’s goodness, Asaph now records His personal words to us.

Although it seems scarcely possible, from the chaotic state in which things are today, a time is coming when all the iniquities of this world will be put to rights. “When I shall receive the

EPHESIANS EXPOUNDED

by A. D. THROPAY (California)

Paper 19

II. THE BEHAVIOUR OF GOD'S MASTERPIECE 4.1-6.23

D. Walking in the light 5.8-14

Verse 8

- For:** (gar) this word means “Because.” It is introducing the reason for what was said in verse 7.
- ye were sometimes:** (pote) “at some time or other;” “previously.”
- darkness:** (skotos) That is, “darkness itself.” It does not say that they were in darkness, but that they were darkness itself. Persons . . . “in whom darkness becomes visible and holds sway.” This does not discount the fact that they were also living in the sphere of darkness. The Lord Jesus mentioned this while He was on earth. John 12.35 “Then Jesus said unto them, ‘Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.’” John 12.46 “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”
- but:** (de) this word is used to show distinction between two thoughts or situations.
- now:** (nun) at the present time during which he was writing.
- are ye light:** (phōs) Again, they are not only in light, they are light itself! We cannot see the light reflected in the physical realm, we can only see the “Fruit of light” described in verse 9. Those that belong to God and those that do not belong to Him are easily detected in the spirit realm by spirit beings. God’s children shine out as lights.
- in the Lord:** He is the sphere in which our light shines. He is also the source of our brilliance. II Corinthians 4.6 “For

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

—**Walk:** (peripateō) Literally means, “walk around.” It came to mean, “order one’s behaviour; conduct oneself.” The tense is present imperative, “keep on walking or conducting yourselves.”

—**as children:** (teknon) “born ones”.

—**of light:** Conduct yourselves as those who were born from light. A person who is born from light is actually born from God. We are told in 1 John 1.15 “This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” If they are lights, the light is obviously not for themselves but for others. Paul explained this in Philippians 2.15 “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;” The Lord Jesus said the same thing recorded in Matthew 5.14-16 “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Verse 9

—**for:** (gar) explaining and confirming what is stated in verse 8.

—**the fruit:** (karpos) A figurative term for the moral results of anything. In this case it refers to the moral results of light. (Expositors).

—**of the spirit:** most manuscripts have “phos” here in keeping with the context. “the fruit of light . . . “

—**is in all:** (pas) as verse 3, “every form of; every kind of.”

—**goodness:** (agathosunē) “Uprightness in heart and life.” (Thayer) “Producing kindly activity on behalf of others.” (Lightfoot) “Active goodness, beneficence.” (Expositors) “the character that leads to good work towards others without any expectation or desire for recompense or repayment.”

—**and righteousness:** (dikaiosunē) The doing or being what is right, fair, just.

—**and truth:** (alētheia) “reality at the basis of an appearance.” Being genuine, sincere, real.

Verse 10

—**Proving:** (dokimazō) “To test, examine, prove, scrutinize;” (Thayers) “To prove by testing.” “To put to the test or prove by experience.” “The ability to test a thing, see its value, and give full approval.” (see TDNT; Wuest) This word is to be connected with verse 8. The thought of verse 8 was interrupted by the parenthesis in verse 9 which explained what the walk would consist of. This verse defines the “walk” required by each believer as conduct which is to be taken up as a constant evidence of what pleases the Lord.

—**what is acceptable:** (eureston) “well pleasing.” (Cp. Colossians 1.10 “that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

—**unto the Lord:**

Verse 11

—**And have no fellowship:** (sunkoinōneō) “to become a partaker together with others.” A joint participation in a common interest or common activity.

—**with the unfruitful:** (akarpos) Cp. with “karpos” in verse 9. “Contributing nothing to the benefit of others. (see Thayers).

—**works:** (ergon) a deed, work, action. Anything accomplished by the hand or mind. (Thayer) Contrast “fruit” (verse 9) with “works” (in this verse). Fruit comes effortlessly to the branch on the vine. Works are exhausting. Cp. Galations 5.19-23.

—**of darkness:** (skotos) Literal darkness; moral or spiritual darkness.

—**but rather:** (mallon de) “in place of; instead of.” It shows opposition to what precedes and does away with it. (See Thayers).

—**even:** (kai) even, also.

—**reprove:** (elengchō) To rebuke with sufficient cause, then to

refute with evidence so as to convince and bring about conviction.

(As II Timothy 4.2; Titus 1.9) The scriptures are the source for reproof. **LEARN THE SCRIPTURES, NOT ERROR IN ORDER TO REBUKE OR CONVINCING THOSE THAT BELIEVE OR TEACH ERROR.** See verses 12, 13. Also see Titus 1.9 “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” II Timothy 3.16 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”.

Verse 12

- For:** (gar) The basic meaning of “gar” is “because.” (J. N. Darby) This word is used to explain why he made the statement that he did in verse 11.
- it is a shame:** (aischron) Strictly means, “ugly, deformed.” Hence, it is used for something that is unbecoming, improper, indecorous, dishonorable, shameful, and disgraceful.
- even:** (kai) “even, also,”.
- to speak of those things which are done:** (present tense of ginomai) “are being done, performed, produced.”
- of:** (hupo) Literally, “under.” That is, under the power and direction of; by.
- them in secret:** (kruphē) secretly, not openly. Many unbelievers practice things secretly that are too ugly to mention. It is better to openly rebuke the practice and separate from those that practice it, than to silently ignore what they are doing and fellowship with them. Compare Lot, II Peter 2.7,8 “And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;).”

Verse 13

- But:** (de) Paul is now making a distinction between what occurs when a person reproves the unfruitful works of darkness instead of having fellowship with them.

himself to open them It is the light which Christ is to shed upon the sleeper that will waken him. Just as the sun in the natural heavens, shining upon the eye of the sleeper, awakes him, so the beams of the Sun of Righteousness end the sleep of death.” (Pulpit Commentary, Homilies).

Where is the quote taken from? There is no exact counterpart in the Old Testament. The passage that is closest to it is Isaiah 60.1. “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.”

- a) Some say that Paul only intended to give the spirit of the passage in Isaiah 60.1.
- b) Some suggest that he is quoting a saying of our Lord not recorded in the Gospels.
- c) The verse is written in a rhythmical pattern. Some believe that this is a part of a very ancient hymn or liturgical composition.”
- d) The spirit of the passage in Isaiah 60.1 and 26.19 may have been put into poetry and quoted by Paul in this passage. (From Expositors, Pulpit Commentary).

“THE LORD IS DUE!”

Yet a little while,
And He will come
For many bringing joy
But — sadly for some!

Why should it be
That it is thus so,
Is it not because
For Him they did not go?

For when the Lord
That task did give,
They'd laid it aside;
For — the world to live!

Dear one reading this,
Which one are you?
Take quickly stock now!
For — The Lord is Due!

—*John W. Diamond (Guernsey)*

A CALL TO FULL-TIME SERVICE

by R. Catchpole (London, England)

Every believer has been called of God. The apostle writing in 1 Cor. 1.24 describes such as “them that are called”, this call being to salvation. Other verses develop various aspects of this call:

- (1) that it is “of God”, 1 Thess. 2.12,
- (2) “according to his own purpose and grace”, 2 Tim. 1.9,
- (3) that it came “by the Gospel”, 2 Thess. 2.14.

The results of this call are likewise clearly stated:

- (1) “called out of darkness into his marvellous light”, 1 Pet. 2.9,
- (2) “called unto the fellowship of his Son”, 1 Cor. 1.9,
- (3) “called unto his eternal glory”, 1 Pet. 5.10.

Since every believer has been called of God it follows that all are to be servants of God, indeed Paul expressed it thus, “being made free from sin and become servants to God”, Rom. 6.22. It should not surprise us therefore that while we tend to divide the secular life from the spiritual life there is no such division in the Scriptures, the believer is to do all “as to the Lord”, Col. 3.23. We should not miss the tremendous dignity this gave to even the service of a slave, and although all believers are not called to be “set apart” to the work as were Paul and Barnabas, Acts 13.2, it nevertheless surely behoves each one to seek God’s will for his life that he might be found in the service of God’s choosing.

THE CALL TO SERVICE

That God sets some apart to a particular work for Him is clearly illustrated in the Scriptures, Moses, Ex. 3.4; Gideon, Jud. 6.11—39; and Elisha, 1 Kings 19.19—21 are fitting examples and no doubt others readily come to the readers’ mind. It is essential that any contemplating such work for Christ are first fully assured that they have a definite call from God. The servant of God is not immune from discouragements and difficulties and at such times reassurance can be drawn by looking back to that initial call and conviction.

The Call :— While God is sovereign in whom He chooses it does appear that He limits Himself to those that are willing to go. In Isaiah 6.8, the Lord said “whom shall I send, and who will go for us”. The phrase “whom shall I send” demonstrates that God elects His workmen, but the words that follow “who will go for us” suggests that He limits Himself to those who are willing to respond to that call. This is, we must stress, a general principle, and we must not infer from it that all who are willing will automatically be called. Again we must not limit God, for Jonah is a clear example of His dealings with one who was reluctant to go, though do not forget that the prophet had already been used in the service of God, 2 Kings 14.25.

The Conviction :— Having established that God does call individuals to particular service for Him the immediate question to be addressed is “how can I know if God is calling me?” This in turn opens up the broader issue of knowing God’s will for my life.

Prayerfully three things need to be considered.

(1) In what direction are my desires and inclinations leading me?” We recognise that God might call us to a field of service for which initially we might have little desire. If that be so then over the following months there will be an increasing awareness that this is indeed God’s will for us and with that a willing acceptance of, and growing interest in, that work.

(2) Are the circumstances of my life also pointing in that direction? We should expect to see the hand of God overruling our pathway to that same end.

(3) Do I have a direct word from the Lord? This might come from my own personal reading of the Scriptures or through the ministry of other saints. When God is calling to a definite pathway these three features will be found in total harmony. They are well illustrated in the life of Jacob, see Gen. 30.25; 31.1,2; 31.3. It should be appreciated that definite conviction of a call to service does not come overnight but is the fruit of much spiritual exercise over a protracted period of time. A period in which the servant will apply himself to prayer and to the study of God’s Word, and in which he is gaining experience in God’s work and ways in preparation for his future service.

The Commendation :— Thus far we have spoken of God's call as it affects the individual, there is however another aspect that is equally important before he can step out into the Lord's work, and that is the need for a similar conviction on the part of the local assembly that he has indeed been called of God, for it is they who are responsible to commend him to the grace of God for that work, see Acts 13.1—4; 14.26. It is evident that God's calling of Barnabas and Saul was made known to, and recognised by, the saint's at Antioch. The local assembly should expect that any believer seeking their commendation will :—

- (1) have been a committed member of the assembly,
- (2) have shown an interest and an ability for the particular line of service to which they feel they have been called,
- (3) have seen the hand of God blessing them in that sphere,
- (4) have shown spiritual maturity, a love of God's Word, and an ability to work in fellowship with others.

Many other items could be added to this list but these are basic features that should be true of all who seek commendation. Should there be any reservations on the part of the commending assembly, it is essential for the servant to prayerfully wait until such time as he has their confidence and approval in this matter. It might be objected that a commendation could be withheld, not for spiritual reasons, but purely from personal prejudices and that in such a case one truly called of God might be hindered from going. Surely we believe that as the servant prayerfully commits the matter to God, He can change attitudes and remove any obstacles to the fulfilment of His will. Alternatively reluctance on the part of spiritually minded brethren will prevent the believer entering into a field of service to which he has not been called or for which he is not yet ready.

ADDITION TO THE COMMITTEE :

Our brother Mr. Roy Reynolds from the assembly at Bleary, Co. Down, has agreed to join the committee of this magazine. Our brother is an overseer in his local assembly and is well known and respected among the Lord's people in N. Ireland where he seeks to strengthen the testimony by both preaching the gospel and ministering the word of God. We are very happy to welcome him to the committee of Assembly Testimony.

A SWEET SAVOUR

by Donald M. Clark (Stoney Creek)

Song of Solomon 1.3: “Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.”

In this verse it is the savour “of thy good ointments” that is before us. To savour something means that it is treasured, enjoyed and valued by the recipient. Since the Lord Jesus is typically spoken of here we may apprehend the “good ointments” to direct our hearts to the glory of his Person and work.

There are types in the Word of God that will help us understand what is spoken of in this verse.

First let us turn our attention to the holy anointing oil as given to us in Ex. 30.23-25: “Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: and thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.”

The ingredients of this holy anointing oil have been recorded by the Holy Spirit for our instruction and learning, not merely as a recipe. By considering them we may receive help in understanding the phrase “thy good ointments” in our verse above.

The first ingredient is **myrrh** which is a resin that is obtained from a Mid-East shrub. It is bitter to taste but is used as a perfume. The bitterness suggests to us the cross of the Lord, which was surely most bitter. There God dealt with Christ about our sins. For the believer it is a sweet perfume because that bitterness of the cross resulted in our redemption.

The next, **cinnamon**, is obtained by stripping the bark from an aromatic tree and exposing the bark to the sun. This turns our thoughts to the extreme cruelty of the cross. There the Lord of

Glory was crucified. How intense the suffering for the sinless Lamb of God, exposed to all the cruelty of man. We can scarcely take in the fact that He endured the cross to display His absolute obedience to the will of God and His love to us. "With joy and sorrow mingling we do remember thee!"

The third ingredient is **calamus**. Strictly speaking this was a reed, which had a fragrant smell, and when dried and pounded formed a valuable ingredient for rich perfumes. The reed that was placed in the right hand of the Lord Jesus in mockery comes before us, Matt. 27:29-30: "And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head." What humiliation for the Son of God to be so treated by the very creatures His hand had made. This is another element of Christ's work that contributed to the fragrance of the anointing oil. A verse of a hymn by Bernard of Clairvaux expresses the thought.

"O Head! once full of bruises,
So full of pain and scorn,
 'Mid other sore abuses
Mocked with a crown of thorn;
O Head! e'en now surrounded
 With brightest majesty,
In death once bowed and wounded
 On the accursed tree."

Cassia was obtained by stripping the bark from an aromatic plant. Our Lord was stripped of all His garments and a purple robe placed upon him, again to add to His humiliation. He was degraded in the eyes of man, but He who was so humiliated had been exalted by God to the highest place of all, at His own right hand. Along with myrrh and aloes it will perfume the garments of the Lord when He returns as King. (Psalm 45.8) Further His precious name has been set above every name. Phil. 2.9,10. And so once again from the bitterness of the cross came forth a sweet savour.

The last ingredient was **olive** oil. Gethsemane means "oil press," for there was a garden of olive trees. Olive oil is extracted from the olive by pressing it. What an appropriate name for the place where, in His agony, in anticipation of being made sin for

us, Jesus passed through the press, so to speak. What intense pressure was brought to bear on Him as the horror of our sins being borne on His sinless person came before Him. "And His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground," Luke 22:44.

The combination of these four ingredients as holy anointing oil were not to be duplicated nor to serve any other purpose. So the work of the sufferings of Christ could not be duplicated, nor can salvation be obtained by any other means than through faith in Him who completed the work. We have received an anointing by the Holy Spirit which should permeate our entire being and send forth the fragrance of Christ.

A further type will be found in the offerings spoken of in Leviticus chapters 1 to 3.

In them is revealed His total and absolute commitment to fulfilling God's will at whatever cost. The Burnt Offering, the Meal Offering and the Peace Offering are all spoken of as Sweet Savour offerings. (Lev. 1.13, 2.3, 3.5) This cannot be said of the Trespass and Sin offerings for sin was dealt with there.

The Burnt Offering, which was wholly consumed on the altar, tells us that Christ gave Himself up wholly for the glory of God. The offerer placed his hand on the head of the sacrifice, by this means all of the virtue of the sacrifice was transferred to him, whereas, in the Sin offering all of the sins of the offerer were transferred to the sacrifice.

In the Meal Offering we have the Person of the Lord presented in His grace and perfectness as a living man. His life was fragrant to God (frankincense) while His sufferings are typified by the baking of the offering in the oven.

The Peace Offering presents Christ as the basis of our communion with God. Is the bridge between the sin offering, where our sins are dealt with, and leads to our position, as accepted in the Beloved, in the Burnt Offering.

Paul sums up these offerings in 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."

When we are gathered together in His presence (Matt. 18.20) we savour His good ointments as we remember all that He was in

His person and all that He was to God as He gave Himself as an Offering wholly to God and as our Substitute.

These are the savours that should come to our hearts as we hear the name of our Blessed Saviour exalted, Now we understand the balance of the verse, “thy name is as ointment poured faith, therefore do the virgins love thee.” The virgins would speak of those who were in His presence and savoured the delights of the “good ointments” associated with His name. Our hearts should burn within us as we contemplate who this Person was and His perfect sacrifice at Calvary.

Song of Solomon 1.12, “While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.”

On a Lord’s Day morning, as we gather at the table of the Lord, we know that the very Lord of Glory is in our midst. It is our privilege to show forth His death, (1 Cor. 11.26) a witness to the world that our Saviour died that we might live. Having been saturated with the savour of His good ointments, our (worship) spikenard should send forth the smell thereof. It should rise as sweet incense to God. Our hearts should be filled with His beauties and our praise and thanksgiving should overflow to our Lord.

One further illustration. John 12.3: “Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.” Mary’s action here serves as an example of the worship associated with the remembrance of the Lord. She had entered into what the Lord would pass through in His death and anointed the Lord’s body beforehand unto the burying. The consequence was that the whole house was filled with the odour. The remembrance supper should have the same effect on those gathered to remember Him.

Since she used her hair to wipe His feet with the ointment then it follows that wherever she went she too would give evidence of having been in the presence of Jesus. What a wonderful example for us! May we too carry that sweet savour with us wherever we go. 2 Cor. 2.14-15, “But thanks be to God, Who in Christ always leads us in triumph — as trophies of Christ’s victory — and through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere. For we are the sweet fragrance of Christ unto God.” (Amplified Bible)

OUR LORD IN GETHSEMANE

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"

Matthew 26:38.

We ought often to sit down with our Lord in Gethsemane, and look upon Him while He suffers. We never can understand more than a very little of the anguish of that hour in the garden, yet we should often study it. Some hints of its meaning may be reverently mentioned.

Before our Lord there lay the betrayal, the arrest, the trial with all its mockery and humiliation, then death amid the ignominy of the cross. These physical sufferings alone made an anguish that was terrible to endure. Another element of our Lord's suffering was the falseness of the human hearts about Him. There were the traitorous kiss of Judas, the sad denial of Peter, the flight and desertion of the other disciples, the rejection and crucifixion by the people He had come to save. All this He foresaw from Gethsemane.

But that which made the very essence of the anguish of Gethsemane was the fact that Jesus was to be made sin and bear our sins. What that meant to Him we never can know. We know only what is most dimly shadowed for us in the deep words of Holy Scripture, which speak of His vicarious sacrifice. They are such words as these: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"—"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"—"He bare our sins in his own body on the tree"—"He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." We are sure, at least, that the death of Jesus was not like the death of any other man, even though others did endure the physical sufferings that attended our Lord's agony. In some way, though innocent and holy Himself, and without sin, He was to die for sin. The mystery we never can fathom, but the fact we must remember as we watch with our Lord in Gethsemane. —*Selected*

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (28)

by Alex Wilson (Canada)

It was a cold morning on February 9, 1925 at 5.45 a.m. in our home in North Vancouver, B.C., Canada that I passed from death to life by faith in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Being raised in a Christian home is a great privilege yet carries with it added responsibility. The former was my experience as every Sunday I was under the sound of the Word of God and in Sunday School committed to memory many passages of the Bible. From my earliest years there was a consciousness that things were not right between my soul and God. Two scriptures in particular spoke to me — Job 33.27-28 and Isaiah 53.5. Two years before God saved me, while about thirteen years of age, interest in things that attract boys that age waned in light of the thought of my soul's salvation. Especially Sunday night after listening to the Gospel, getting to sleep was most difficult and the thought of being killed as I rode my bicycle around Vancouver troubled me.

On this certain night in February as I neared the age of fifteen years, lying on my bed repeating "He looketh upon men", the fact that God looked upon me and knew all about me was intensely real but sleep overcame me. At about 5.30 the next morning I awoke and my first thought was "Why not get this matter settled right now." So down on my knees with God looking into my very being and confessing my sinnership and my desperate need of salvation, I just simply took God at His word: "He will deliver his souls from going into the pit". I knew from Job 33 and Isaiah 53.5 that the ransom had been paid.

Payment God will not twice demand
First at my bleeding Surety's hand
Then again at mine

The peace of God filled my soul, the heavy laden had found rest. My younger brother sleeping across the room never stirred or realized that a great transaction had taken place and the destiny of a soul had been changed from hell to heaven.

Being timid, the news which would make my parents happy was not told for a couple of days, and when confession was made, they were not surprised as they had already noticed a change in me.

The brethren baptized me on June 2nd, 1925 and a week later I was received into the fellowship of the assembly.

Like most backward boys, it was not easy to start taking a public part but an exercise was there and with the encouragement of the brethren and help of the Lord this was gradually achieved.

My first employment was with a grocery store, helping with customers and doing deliveries. Later I started with one of the brethren as an apprentice in the plastering business and was employed a number of years.

At the Easter conference in North Vancouver one of the responsible brethren said to me "I hear you are going up country with Alex McGaughy, a commended worker." This statement no doubt was meant as an encouragement and caught me by surprise. My job had temporarily terminated, so seeking the mind of the Lord, this appeared to be the door opening for me. Thus we were found leaving with our dear brother in the 1924 Chevrolet Van that had been fitted and remodelled for living and sleeping in. We touched towns and farms on our way east spreading the gospel in tract form and having open air meetings whenever the circumstance presented itself. We went almost four hundred miles north, then east to the Okanagan Valley, souls were saved and this was a real stimulant and encouragement. We returned to our home area and had meetings in schools, upper rooms and rented halls and were encouraged to hear of some coming to Christ.

As the year 1933 came, I was not as yet a commended worker but had been clearly taught a person should be commended by the assembly for the work of the Lord. We had a series near our home area for eight weeks in one place, followed by six weeks in the gospel eighty miles away. God blessed in both instances and as this is being written, fruit remains in the assemblies to this day. It was during this year the brethren laid their hands on me in identification commending me to the grace of God for the work of the Lord.

We have laboured much in northern Saskatchewan with brother Hector Alves, sometimes under very trying circumstances, but "The Lord working with us" gave a compensating joy which made our light affliction seem but for a moment.

Then I married and moved to Central Canada. Many summers were spent on the Canadian Prairies with Jim Ronald and other brethren. Our journeys reached into the northern part of the United States where there are assemblies and fruit in the gospel was seen. On two occasions we got to the east coast helping the assemblies there, also paid a visit to Alaska where Brother Thompson labours.

Now, and in failing health, after sixty years seeking to serve the best of Masters, one can bear witness to the words of scripture, "God is faithful, God is able and there hath not failed one word of all His good promises" 1 Kings 8.56. To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen, Romans 16.27.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. (No member of the committee, author of articles or any other person connected with the magazine receives payment, remuneration or gratuity of any kind).

All cheques, money orders, etc., should be made payable to "Assembly Testimony Magazine."

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to : John Glenville, 16 Trelawney Road, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4DD. Telephone (0752) 846889.

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VITAL CONTACT

A person that kneels down when praying,
Just follows what's said of their Lord,
It's just not the kneeling that matters,
But the heart, that is uttering the word.

God's Spirit within us still teaches,
Just how, and for what we should pray,
It's vital, with God, there's communion,
At the start and the end of the day.

Of course, in the hours of daylight,
We need constant strength from above,
So in trials, and times of temptation,
By prayer, we should promises prove.

God listens to each word we utter,
If on Him our burdens we cast,
We'll daily resort to the practise,
As we learn from the times that are past.

Admit to our Father our failures,
And know that our sins He'll forgive,
Rely on Him daily for guidance,
Is the way that a Christian should live.

It's no good just thinking we're perfect,
Because the new life we've received,
That teaching will stop all our praying,
By Satan we'll then be deceived,

This body in which we dwell daily,
Is our problem and enemy sure,
Through it we are conscious of failings,
But cleansing through prayer makes us pure.

—W. E. Beynon (S. Wales)

BEHOLD THE MAN

(Meditations in Luke's Gospel)

by JIM FLANIGAN, (Belfast)

13. His Resurrection

The days immediately following the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus were dark days for those who had loved Him. The holy Body had been taken down from the cross and laid in a rock-hewn virgin tomb in a garden outside the city wall. A great stone had been rolled across the entrance and sealed.

Gently they took Him down,
Unfixed His hands and feet,
Took from His head the thorny crown,
Brought forth a winding sheet.

Fine linen, fitly made,
Wrapped they around His face;
Where never man before was laid
Made they His resting place.

As yet the disciples had not seemed to grasp the truth that He would rise again. The two who walked the Emmaus Road were typical. Their countenances were sad. Their steps were slow. Their conversation was sorrowful as they communed together about the sufferings and death of the Saviour. Yet even as they walked and talked, the Redeemer was alive and His tomb was empty, except for the grave clothes He had left behind. Had He not said of His life. "I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again"?

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the great and glorious truth upon which both our preaching and our faith depend. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15.14). The Saviour's resurrection is the irrefutable proof that propitiation was made at the cross and it is the grand prelude to His ascension and exaltation into the heavens. It is a well attested and proven historical fact, and although acknowledging the impossibility of dealing with it fully in one short meditation, nevertheless we must try to gather together for our encouragement some of the evidence that our Lord is indeed risen

from the dead. "He showed Himself alive" says Luke, (Acts 1.3), and in a little while there was quite a band of human witnesses, able and willing to testify that He was indeed alive. They had seen Him.

Although John gives more details of the scene in the garden, Luke confirms that it was the women who came first to the sepulchre. Devoted women, last to leave His cross; first to visit His sepulchre. It was early in the morning; sunrise on the first day of the week; they came with spices to anoint Him whom they had loved. But the stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty. Angels appeared to them in their perplexity, with a question, and a message, and then another question. "Why seek ye the living among the dead?", was the first question of the shining ones. "He is not here, but is risen", was their plain message. "Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee?", was the second question. And they then remembered His words, that He would be crucified and the third day rise again.

Mary of Magdala was there, with the other women. Mary, who, next to the man of the tombs in Gadara, is the worst case of demon possession recorded in the Gospels. How she loved Him who had delivered her from seven demons (Luke 8.2). Mary had followed Him in devotion since her deliverance, ministering to Him with other women. They brought the message to the Apostles, and Peter and John ran to the sepulchre. What follows, recorded in more detail by John, is most interesting.

John outran Peter and arrived first at the tomb. But of each of them it is recorded that they "saw" the linen clothes lying in the otherwise empty sepulchre. The word for "seeing" however, is different in each usage of it, and it is important to observe the changes in the word.

John arrived first. He did not go in, but stooped down and looked in, and he "saw" the linen clothes lying. The word here is *Blepo*. It is simple sight with no particular notice of details.

Peter then arrives and goes right into the sepulchre. There was a weeping chamber adjacent to the burial chamber, large enough to hold several persons. Peter "seeth" the linen clothes lie, but the word for "seeing" is now *Theoreo*. It indicates a careful perusal, an intent regard, observing details, wondering about an explanation of that which is seen.

John now goes in also, and he “saw” and believed. What did he see? How did he see? What did he believe? and why? The word now used for “seeing” is the word *Eidon*. It means mental perception; understanding; as one might say, having tried to understand some matter, and now seeing the things clearly, “I see it now!” John saw! He saw the evidence of a miracle as he intelligently regarded the grave clothes.

Both saw the linen clothes “lying”. Why the several uses of this word “lying”? Would it not have been sufficient to say that they saw the grave clothes? No! Both Luke and John say that the linen clothes were “lying”. They lay, extended in the long loose folds as when they had enwrapped the body of the Lord Jesus. But the precious body was gone, and the grave clothes “lay” on the bed of the tomb, perhaps depressed by the weight of the spices, the powdered myrrh and aloes which would still be in the folds. The clothes were undisturbed, lying where the holy body had once reposed.

And the napkin that had been about His head? It was still in its convolutions as when it had been wrapped around the Saviour’s head in burial. It was likewise undisturbed, and not with the linen clothes, but in a place by itself, on the ledge where the Saviour’s head had rested. John saw and believed. Thy mystery of the undisturbed grave clothes is no mystery to those who see in them the evidence of a miracle. Otherwise they are inexplicable. The Lord is risen indeed. He has vacated the tomb and has vacated also the grave clothes with which they had swathed Him. He has left them miraculously undisturbed, and He has gone, triumphantly, from the sepulchre.

Time and space prohibit the telling of the whole story. What a story it is, of the weeping Magdalene in the garden; of Peter and John; of the two who walked with Him to Emmaus; of the little band of women who met Him on the road and held Him by the feet; of the eleven in the Upper Room who saw His nail-printed hands and feet and wounded side; of Thomas who cried, “My Lord and my God”, of the seven disciples who dined with Him by the lake-shore; and of those who met Him in the hills of Galilee. Then there were five hundred brethren who saw Him all at once (1 Cor. 15.6); and later there were Stephen, and Paul, and John, who saw Him in glory.

Faith has no doubts. He who suffered and was slain is now alive, risen and ascended. With the eleven we say, "The Lord is risen indeed". And with a myriad other voices we sing —

Death cannot keep his prey;
Jesus, my Saviour!
He tore the bars away;
Jesus, my Lord!

Miracles at Calvary (2)

by John B. D. Page (Weston-Super-Mare)

2. The Miracle of the time at which Christ was put to death:

The day and even the hour of Christ's death was not within the bounds of human reckoning. The time was not devised by man but determined by God. The Jews' rejection of Christ appears to have been closely linked with such timing as seen in John's gospel, and such rejection of Him is seemingly brought out in the fourth gospel more than the other three. The reason is undoubtedly the fact that the Lord's Humanity, which the Jews could not dispute, is set forth in the three synoptic gospels, but His Deity, which was unacceptable to the Jews, is stressed in the gospel of John.

Unlike other gospel writers, John at the beginning of his gospel makes a clear statement concerning such rejection of Christ by saying, "He came unto His own (i.e. 'His own things'—neuter plural) and His own (i.e. 'His own people'—masculine plural) received Him not" John 1.11. The Jews' hostility was not a passing phase but a persistent hatred with the intent to kill Him which, unknown to them, they could not achieve before the divinely appointed hour. The unseen restraining hand of God upon men in their last evil attempts to slay the Lord Jesus particularly around the time of a feast in Jerusalem may be traced in the fourth gospel.

After a visit to Galilee, the Lord Jesus went up to Jerusalem

half way through the week-long Feast of Tabernacles and in one of the courts of the temple He taught the people. Soon they were debating whether “this man” was “Christ.” Then the rulers sought to take Him to the Sanhedrin for trial but no man laid hands on Him, “because His hour was not yet come” John 7.30. This meant that, in the purpose of God, “His hour” to be put to death was not at the Feast of tabernacles which is figurative of Messiah's millennial reign on earth.

Consequently, the Jews were providentially prevented from arresting Him, although it was their intention.

On a later occasion in the temple, Jesus was in the treasury where worshippers put their offerings in one of the thirteen brass chests placed in the Court of the Women, beyond which only men were permitted. As He taught the people in this court, there arose among His listeners a mis-understanding about the Fatherhood of God and a failure to perceive the true nature of Christ. Friction flared among the Temple rulers, but no one ventured to arrest Him — “for His hour was not yet come” John 8.20. Again, the Lord Jesus was not touched by His enemies, because it was not yet the divinely appointed time for Him to die.

An interval of about two months passed between the autumn Feast of Tabernacles (John 7.1,14,37) which was decreed initially by God (Lev. 23.33f) and the Feast of Dedication (John 10.22), instituted by men to commemorate the cleansing of the Temple in 165 B.C. During this winter feast, Jesus walked in Solomon's porch, a colonnade on the east side of the Court of the Gentiles around the Temple, where He was accosted by some Jews. Replying to their question whether He was the Christ or not, He said eventually, “I and My Father are one,” The word “one” is not masculine indicating the Father and Son are one Person but neuter, signifying the Father and Son (as two distinct Persons) are neither superior or inferior to the other but each is One in Essence and Substance besides possessing Oneness in Equality and Being. Understanding the implication of His words, the Jews immediately took up stones, as on an earlier occasion, to stone Him saying, “because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God” John 10.23f, 30ff. Voicing once more His divine relationship with His Father, the Jews “sought again to take Him,” not for stoning but to arrest Him for the Sanhedrin (as they had

earlier, John 7.30). “But He escaped out of their hand” and took refuge beyond Jordan (John 10.38ff). Once again, His opponents were restrained from stoning or arresting Him, because the Feast of Dedication was not the time of year in the purpose of God for His sacrificial death.

Three months after the Feast of dedication, the Feast of Passover was at hand and pilgrims from afar flocked to Jerusalem. Knowing that the religious leaders had conferred together and were fully committed in putting Him to death, Jesus had withdrawn Himself from the public eye by going a few miles into the country but He realised that He could not absent for long with the Passover drawing near (John 11.53—12.1). Five days before this Paschal Feast, Jesus came to Jerusalem where He was acclaimed triumphantly to be “the King of Israel” by the people. Then certain Greeks whose desire to “see Jesus” was conveyed by Andrew and Philip to Him. Apparently without meeting them, He said “the hour is come,” knowing this was the divinely appointed time, “that the Son of Man should be glorified” (John 12.12f, 20-23). On past occasions, the inspired writer had reported “His hour was not yet come,” but this time the omniscient Lord said, “The hour is come.” If He were just ‘a man’ as the Jews had alleged earlier, He could not have made such a declaration but, being “God” incarnate which the Jews rejected, He was able to make it.

Soon *the day* for the Feast of Passover dawned when the passover lamb was slain and offered upon the altar located in the Priest's Court of the Temple and when Christ, the true Passover Lamb, was sacrificed (cp. 1 Cor. 5.7). On that very day when *the hour* was come, which was the “third hour” (i.e. 9.00 a.m.) for the yearling lamb of the morning sacrifice to be offered upon the Temple altar, then “they crucified Him” Mark 15.25.

Six hours later “at the ninth hour” (i.e. 3.00 p.m.) when the lamb for the evening sacrifice was offered, “Jesus . . . gave up the ghost” (Mark 15.34,37, cp. Ex. 29.38f).

Neither before nor since Calvary, not only the year but also the day and even the hour, has such precision been known for the time of death for any other man as that for Christ. This timing was not accidental or coincidental—it was truly miraculous.

—(To be continued)

PAPERS ON PROPHECY

by The Late W. W. Fereday (written in 1897/98)

VOLUME I

Paper 4a—The Apostasy of Christendom and the Antichrist

We will now consider the march of events in Christendom after the removal of the saints to glory. The coming of the Lord will by no means, alas! clear the field of Christian profession. To many thousands, it is feared, He will have to say, “Verily I say unto you, I know you not” (Matt. 25.12). True, they carry the lamps of profession, but they are oilless; they fear His name, but they have never come into living contact with Him; they sing His praises with their lips, but have never known His love and grace in their hearts. All such will be left behind at the rapture, however loud their plea. What will be their future? This we now propose to consider.

Many have thought the era of the Gospel to be the final one, and that the millennium will be an outcome of it, brought about by diffusion of truth, and the spiritual subjugation of the whole world to Christ. But Scripture speaks very differently. The millennium will be brought in by desolating judgments, not by Gospel labour; and as for the present period of favour and privilege, instead of ending in universal glory, it will terminate in darkness and apostasy.

There is a sad consistency in all the history of man. Every dispensation has ended in gloom. Man has failed in whatever circumstances God has placed him. The period of innocence ended in the fall and expulsion from the garden; the age of conscience resulted in the flood; the dispensation of the law terminated in the rejection and murder of the Messiah; and more might be added. The Church period will have no different ending, all New Testament Scripture being witness. We will quote a few proofs. In 2 Tim. 3 we read, “This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come.” Then follows a dark description, reminding us of heathen depravity as told out in Rom. 1. “Having

a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." This is very solemn. Clearly there was no thought in the Apostle's mind of the professing Church and the world becoming better and more suitable for Christ. Look also at verse 13 of the same chapter. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Consider, too, the short Epistle of Jude. There the course of evil in the professing Church is traced from its first introduction by the enemy by means of certain men who crept in unawares, until the Lord's appearing in judgment. The evil is not eradicated, But goes on intensifying until the Lord Himself arises to deal with it. Recall also the Lord's parable of the wheat and the tares in Matt 13.24-30. The enemy sowed the tares soon after the wheat was sown, and they grew on together until the harvest, when the great and final separation comes.

With all this may be connected the warning in Rom. 11. There the Apostle shows that Christendom has taken the place of Israel in the earth as regards the outward privileges and responsibility. The Jewish branches of the olive tree were cut off because of unfaithfulness, as every one knows. But what of the Gentiles, who have succeeded them as wild branches grafted in? "Be not highminded, but fear : for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness : otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11, 20-22). This does not touch the question of individual salvation, which is eternally secured in Christ ; it is dispensational responsibility. Who will pretend that Christendom has continued in the goodness of God? Judgment, therefore, must fall, though not until the cup of iniquity is filled up by the apostasy of the last days.

To this we will now turn. Observe the way in which the solemn subject is introduced in 2 Thess. 2. The Thessalonians at the time of the writing of the Epistle were in deep distress. They were passing through sore tribulation. Paul alludes to "all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure" (2 Thess. 1.4). The enemy had let loose his rage upon them, because of their faith in the Lord Jesus. He had wrought in another way also, which was much more serious. He had succeeded in instilling into their

minds the idea that the day of the Lord had set in, and that the great tribulation connected with that solemn epoch was upon them. A letter even had been sent to them, pretending to be from the apostle Paul, confirming them in the notion. All this wrought very sadly among them. The brightness of their hope, which the Spirit commends so warmly in the First Epistle, became clouded, and deep gloom settled down upon them.

Yet one simple consideration would have materially helped them. The Old Testament Scriptures, in speaking of the day of the Lord, speaks of it as judgment on *the ungodly*. In that day the tables will be turned. The Lord's friends will then be at rest in His blessed presence, while His foes will be in adversity. This thought would have assured the Thessalonians ; but unfortunately our hearts are such, that often in a time of difficulty we forget what would prove real help and comfort to our souls.

Observe carefully the Apostle's words : "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, *as that the day of the Lord is present.*" This is unquestionably the correct reading of this important verse. The Authorised Version is manifestly wrong here. How could the inspired Apostle write beseeching them not to believe that the day is at hand, when elsewhere he says, "The night is far spent, *the day is at hand*"? (Rom. 13.12). It would be a flat contradiction, which can never be in the scriptures, where all is of God.

On the contrary, he begs them not to be persuaded that the day of the Lord had come. But on what does he ground his exhortation? *On the coming of the Lord Jesus to gather together His own*. In no way could he have presented the distinctness of the two events more clearly. The coming of the Lord for His own is one thing; His day (introduced by His appearing in glory) quite another. The saints are to be removed to heaven before the last great crisis; but inasmuch as the whole Church of God was still on earth, how could the Thessalonians suppose that it had arrived? Such is the reasoning of the Apostle, at once simple and reassuring.

—to be continued (D.V.)

Some Psalms of Asaph

by D. S. Parrack, (Somerset)

No. 2—Psalm 76

v. 1-3. The Person of God, His place and His power

It is one thing to know about God, what He requires of us, what He has done, what He has promised, but it is another thing altogether to know Him as a Person. Paul could say “I know (Him) whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day” (2 Tim. 1.12). The apostle's commitment and assurance was related to a Person, not a doctrine or a creed, and it is only on that basis that we can really have dealings with God.

So Asaph asserts, “In Judah is God known.” He will straightway start talking about what God has accomplished in their territory, but that is not the point here. It is not just that God has done something but that He is Someone. “His name is great in Israel.” As it is assumed this psalm was written before the division of Solomon's kingdom into two, it is not intended to differentiate between the two and the ten tribes in this context. It is sufficient to say that whilst, as seen from v. 2, the central place, the capital of the united Kingdom was in Judah, God had shown Himself in His greatness to the nation as a whole.

It is suggested that Jerusalem, spoken of here under its former name of “Salem,” had always been a place where God made Himself known in a special way. The first mention in the scriptures of any kind of priesthood relates to that of “Melchizedek, king of Salem - the priest of the most high God” (Gen. 14.18). The reference to “His (God's) tabernacle” is probably not in connection with the tent used for worship in the wilderness, but intended to show the temporary nature of such an abode. After all, even when the far more elaborate and durable temple was built it was acknowledged by Solomon that no edifice or structure made by man could possibly become the permanent, settled dwelling place of God (see e.g. 2 Chron. 6,18-20).

God's choice of Jerusalem was confirmed by Him to David,

(see e.g. 2 Chron. 6,4-6) and the more fortified part, Zion, became generally known as David's city (see e.g. 2 Sam. 5,6-9). When we read therefore of, "His (God's) dwelling place in Zion," we are thinking particularly of the stronghold of the city, that which gave Jerusalem its strategic significance. This may be seen as a picture of the church. God has promised to be with and in His people (see e.g. 2 Cor. 6.16) and that promise will never be broken, but the strength of it is not in or dependent upon us. It is in the One who is the foundation of the church, on whom it is built and on whom its security depends (see Matt. 16,15-18).

That strength however, not just to deter attackers but to positively repel and defeat them, does not mean that Jerusalem signifies aggression. The name of the original settlement, Salem, in fact means peace (see Heb. 7.2), and the power of the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus is directed to bring us out of the tyranny of Satan (see e.g. Heb. 2.14,15), into peace with God (see e.g. Rom. 5.1,2). "The arrows of the bow, the shield and the sword, and the battle (the weapons of war)" have been broken in a once-for-all victory and it is in the good of that triumph of His that we as believers now stand (see e.g. 1 Cor. 15.57). "Selah," think about that.

v. 4-9. Attributes of God and His activities on behalf of His people

In this section the psalmist directs our thoughts very positively Godward and only mentions benefits towards the end (see v.9). The words are addressed personally to God (see e.g. the "Thou art," of vs. 4 and 7), rather than telling us about Him.

"Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey." Having shown the emptiness of all that he was or had in himself, Paul sums up his aspiration for this life by saying, "That I may know and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. 3.10). It was to be all "Him" and "His." The attractiveness of a coming day when his life in this world would have been drawn to a close was also centred on the Person of the Lord Jesus. "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better" (Phil. 1.23). There are certainly blessings in this life for which we should be thankful and there are assurances of even more and greater blessings in a time yet to be, but the superabounding blessing is our relationship with Him, His ability

to captivate us wholly with His love, His beauty and His attractiveness.

These thoughts tend to bring before us the attributes of God, what He has done to shield us, to deliver us, from the powers that would attempt to wean or drag us away from Himself. "The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep." Even the most seemingly able to prevail against us have been foiled. "None of the men of might have found their hands (can lift up their hands)." Mighty they may be, but not when compared with the might of God deployed on our behalf (see e.g. Psalm 45.3,4). His might is not necessarily displayed in an outward form. We may have our own ideas and preconceptions as to how it ought to be exhibited but God is not only "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask" but also, "above all that we - think" (Eph. 3.20). In the case of Asaph's writing it was not that "the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea" (Ex. 15.3), but, "At Thy rebuke O God of Jacob both the chariot and horse are cast into a deep sleep." Whilst the former is more melodramatic, both ways of dealing with an aggressor are equally effective.

But men ought not to think that because God sometimes deals in that way, by restraint rather than positive stricture, that He will always do so. That can cause complacency, as if He is not to be taken too seriously. But, "Thou, even Thou, art to be feared and who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry." It may very well be that God does deal even with His enemies in compassion at times, however, from experience we know that it is always so. "Thou didst cause judgement to be heard from heaven" (see e.g. Judges 5. 19,20), "the earth feared and was still."

What does Asaph see as the primary aim of God acting in this way? It happened "when God arose to judgement." Yes, it was a merited punishment but its purpose was, "to save all the meek of the earth." The Egyptians had deserved judgement because of their continued rejection of God, but the purpose behind those judgements was to secure the release of the captive Israelites. Indeed, if only the Egyptians as individuals believed God's word through Moses and acted on it they too could be spared (see e.g. Ex. 9.20,21). Isaiah, speaking of God's activity in angry judgement, refers to it as "his work, his strange work - his strange act" (Isa. 29.21). He has done everything that is possible for Him to do in order that He may justly refrain from exercising such judge-

ment (see e.g. Rom. 3.23-26). If individuals will not avail themselves of the opportunities for forgiveness so presented to them then divine justice will follow its inevitable cause. "Selah," think about that.

**V. 10-12. God's power in the face of man's intransigence.
Our response, and His.**

It cannot be denied that natural man does wield power and usually in an unstructured manner, but only to the degree that God allows. That divine control only goes to make plain His omnipotence in relation to man. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee." In case men think that they are free to do just what they please, God's control may take the form of actual curtailment, "the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain."

In the light of that restraining and, as an added impetus for believers, the accepted grace of God, we are encouraged to "vow and pay unto the Lord your God." The psalmist is not interested in mere promises, as in a vow. He looks for the actual carrying out of those promises, the paying, a fulfilment of commitments voluntarily entered into. But it is necessary for us to put ourselves into such a position anyway? If we are going to find ourselves in a straitjacket because we were naive enough to promise something which we cannot realistically give or do, wouldn't it be better just to keep quiet? Yes, strange as it may seem to some it would. Who says so? God does. "Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay" (Eccl. 5.5). But that is neither an easy way out, nor an excuse for not being fully committed. God sees our level of commitment to Him as indicative of our appreciation of Him. "Let all that be round about Him bring presents unto Him that ought to be feared." That is a strong encouragement not a command. God is looking for a freewill offering and that can only come, in the ultimate, from an affectionate heart.

If there is no such affection, no commitment, no willingness to voluntarily submit to God, then there is no other pathway open than judgement. "He shall cut off the spirit of princes, He is terrible to the kings of the earth." "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins - it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10.26,31). This is the end of all apostasy.

—(to be continued, D.V.)

EPHESIANS EXPOUNDED

by A. D. THROPAY (California)

Paper 20

II. THE BEHAVIOUR OF GOD'S MASTERPIECE 4.1-6.23

E. Walking in wisdom 5.15-6.9

1. Spirit filled life 5.15-21

Verse 15

- See:** (blepō) Look carefully, observe, take heed.
- then:** (oun) It has a resumptive force, “then, accordingly, to proceed.”
- that:** (pōs) “how”.
- ye walk:** (peripateō) Literally, “to walk around.” It signifies the whole realm of a person’s activities.
- circumspectly:** (akribōs) “Exactly, diligently, . . . strict conformity to a standard.” (Expositors) This standard is namely the will of the Lord as verse 17. Rhemes translates it, “warily, carefully.” Each step is important in the walk.
- not as fools:** (asophoi; from a = negative; and sophos = wise) unwise.
- but:** (alla) used when showing a contrast.
- wise:** (sophos) a) a skilled expert. Romans 16.19 (b) Learned with acquired knowledge. Romans 1.14,22 (c) The application of acquired knowledge by forming the best plan and using the best means for its execution. Romans 16.27; Titus 1.17; Jude 25 (d) “One in whom action is governed by piety and integrity.” 1 Corinthians 6.5; James 3.13.

1. We are to have knowledge of the true way. Jeremiah 6.16. Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

NOT as the fool who misses the way. Jeremiah 6.16b. But they said, we will not walk therein. Matt. 7.14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

2. We are to follow the light that falls on our path — Proverbs 4.18. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. NOT be as the fool who knows not at what he stumbles. Proverbs 4.19. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

3. We are to foresee dangers ahead and prepare against them NOT be like the simple who pass on and are punished.

The wise considers the remote consequences

Proverbs 22.3 “A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself:

but the simple pass on, and are punished.

4. We are to have Christ our wisdom for our companion. NOT be as the fool who seeks the company of fools.

Proverbs 13.20 “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise:

but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Verse 16

—**Redeeming:** (Present middle voice of *exagorazomai*; from *ek* = out of; sometimes used for intensity as a prefix; and *agorazō* = To buy, purchase, redeem.) “Buying up for yourselves.” (Expositors) “To secure for one’s own use, to redeem from loss.” (Wigram).

—**the time:** (*kairos*) Not just “the time,” but “the FIT time,” the opportunity. It may have the meaning of

(1) “seizing the opportunity” by doing what you can while you are able,

(2) “buying back the present time which is now being used for evil.” The cost of the purchase is presenting your body a living sacrifice. Romans 12.1.

(3) Buy opportunities for yourself to preach Christ by acting wisely (v.15), living like Christ (v.1-2), and reprovng the darkness (v.8-13).

- because:** (hoti) used when stating a fact.
- the days are evil:** (ponēros) Wicked, wrong, morally evil, malicious, malignant. The word refers to active evil that has a wicked influence on others. The word is used to describe Satan.

Verse 17

- Therefore:** (dia touto) For this cause. He may be referring to verse 16 in particular or to the main theme of walking circumspectly.
- be ye:** (ginesthe) Literally, “become ye.”
- not unwise:** (aphrones) Without reason, senseless, lacking moral intelligence. “The word refers to imprudence or folly in action.” (Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament). This is a very strong term.
- but:** (alla) indicating a strong contrast again.
- understanding:** (suniemi) “Intelligent, comprehending knowledge.” (Expositors) “To understand thoroughly”. (Wigrams) The ability to reason by bringing various ideas together and seeing how they relate to each other logically.
- what the will:** (thelēma) will, purpose, design, sovereign pleasure. It is used in the execution of a decision. There are at least two words translated “will” in the New Testament. They are thelema and boule. They are used in the same verse at Ephesians 1.11. Boule is usually translated “counsel.” It refers to the fact that a wise decision has been made by God. The word implies intelligence and deliberation. The way that God carries out His decision is called His “thelema” and is usually translated “will.”

of the Lord is: As God fulfils His plans in our life, we are not to act senseless and foolish, but rather, we are to trust in His wise purposes. God's actions are not without good reason. Sometimes He hides His plans from us. Even this is part of His wisdom.

NOTE: The word Lord is used of all three Persons of the Trinity. The will of the Lord is the will of the Trinity.

1. Romans 10.9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

2. Luke 10.21. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.

3. 2 Corinthians 3.17. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Verse 18.

—**And:** (kai) One example of being unwise is now given, followed by how to avoid it.

—**be not drunk:** (methuskomai) To be made drunk, to become intoxicated.

—**with wine:** (oinos) The general word in Greek for wine. Three expressions are used for wine in the scriptures.

1. Oinos = This wine is fermented as indicated by the bursting of wineskins in Matthew 9.17; Mark 2.22; Luke 5.37. This passage in Ephesians also indicates that it is an intoxicant.

2. Gleukos = We get the English word “glucose” from this word. It refers to sweet wine. It is translated “new wine” in Acts 2.13. This is also fermented wine which can result in intoxication as indicated by the accusation made against the disciples and the defense that Peter made in verse 15.

3. “Fruit of the vine:” When the Lord Jesus instituted His supper, He referred to the contents of the cup as the “fruit of the vine.” (Matthew 26.29; Mark 14.25; Luke 22.18; John 15.4). This was an idiomatic expression referring to fermented wine that had been mingled in water. This was the type of wine that was used at the Passover suppers as practiced and taught by the Rabbis. (John Lightfoot; “A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica;” Vol. 2; P. 351).

—**wherein:** (en hō) Literally, “in which”

—**is excess:** (asōtia from a = negative; and sōzō = to save) Literally, “not saving.” The adverb is used of the prodigal son in Luke 15.13. The noun is usually translated “riot.” It refers to one who wastes his substance for sensual gratification. There is nothing of a saving quality in that type

of life. It neither helps the alcoholic nor anyone else. The end result is an abandoned, destroyed life, as that of the prodigal son.

- but:** (alla) This word is used to indicate a strong contrast—how to be wise.
- be filled:** (plēroō) to fill up; to cause to abound; to furnish or supply liberally.
- with:** (en) “in”
- the spirit:** The article is absent in the Greek text. The phrase should read, “be filled in spirit.” The phrase may have two different meanings. (a) His own spirit is to be filled with what follows in verses 19 and 20. (b) He is to be filled in the sphere of the Holy Spirit resulting in the following behaviour.

Verse 19.

- Speaking:** (laleō) To speak; converse with; talk to.
- yourselves:** (eautois) Reciprocally, i.e., “One to another.”
- in Psalms:** (psalmos) Impulse, touch. Songs of praise and worship, especially in the Old Testament.
- and spiritual:** (pnematikais) An adjective expressing the idea of belonging to, pertaining to, and having the characteristics of the Spirit.
- songs:** (hōdais) This word refers to songs in general (secular or religious). The word is qualified by the word “spiritual.” Paul thus designates that he is referring to spiritual songs only as the ones that we are to communicate to others.
- singing:** (adō) a word meaning “to sing.”
- and making melody:** (psallontes) Primarily, “playing on a stringed instrument.” In O.T. to sing with a harp, sing Psalms: in N.T. to sing praise.
- in your heart:** The sphere of the melody is now explained. It is “that melody that takes place in the stillness of the heart.” (Expositors).
- to the Lord:** Two types of praise are mentioned. (1) Vocal speaking and singing. (2) The “unvoiced praise of meditation and inward worship.” (Expositors).

Verse 20.

- Giving thanks:** Another way that being filled with the spirit will affect us.
- always:** (pantote) At all times; ever.
- all things:** (pantōn) circumstances, situations, and incidents as coming from God. The context eliminates the unfruitful works of darkness mentioned earlier in this chapter in verse 3-13.
- unto God and the Father:** The title designates One who is both God and Father at the same time.
- in the name of:** (en onomati) The name in the scripture refers to everything that a person is. It refers to the reputation, character, power, authority, or honour of a person. Doing something in a person's name, means that you are doing it in regard and respect of that person.
- our Lord Jesus Christ:** He is the One in whose name we give thanks. Our very physical existence is due to His work at Calvary. Every situation in life is due to the fact that we exist on planet earth. The greatest of all gifts that He desires us to have is eternal life. John 5.39,40. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Verse 21.

- Submitting yourselves:** (hupotassomai) This sentence introduces another result of being filled with the spirit. The word means "to rank under." It is a military term. The one who submits recognizes that he is responsible to and for others, (Rom. 13.14; 1 Cor. 8.1-3). He may be equal to others in intelligence, understanding and ability, but for the purpose of order, the other may have a higher position. He honours others better than himself, (Philippians 2.3); and acts for the sole benefit of the other person, (Philippians 2.4).
- one to another:** All that are filled in the Spirit will have this attitude.
- in the fear:** (phobō) Respect, awe and caution, resulting from seeing God in His true perspective.
- of God:** Some manuscripts have the word "Christ."

A GREATER . . . IS HERE

A Meditation in Matthew 12

by T. W. Blackman (Brazil)

Matthew chapter 12 records a real crisis in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, for the first time, we read of a council of the Jewish leaders (v.14, see also 22.15, 27.1,7; 28.12) held for the purpose of planning the death of the Lord Jesus. Thus, in this chapter it becomes abundantly clear that He would be finally rejected by the Jews as a nation.

But, at the same time, it would be difficult to find another chapter in the Gospels revealing so many different aspects of the glory, both personal and official, of the Christ of God.

In verses 1 to 8 He is **Lord of the Sabbath**, defending the liberty of His own and desiring mercy and not sacrifice.

Verses 9 to 13 reveal Christ as **the Good Physician and true Shepherd** of His people. As ever He performs a divine work with all the humility of a servant, and so, verses 15-21, quoting Isaiah 42, show that He is **the chosen Servant** of Jehovah in Whom His soul is well pleased.

Next there is a great contrast with this when He defends the name of the Holy Spirit against the blasphemy of the Pharisees (verses 22 to 32). The Lord declares that, casting out demons by the Spirit of God, He was, as **the divine Warrior**, binding Satan and spoiling his house.

After this, in verses 33 to 37, He gives us the parable of the trees and their fruits. Surely He alone corresponds to the description of the good tree — **the good Man** who “out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things”.

In verses 38-45 Christ compares Himself with Jonah and Solomon. With the Lord’s help we hope to meditate upon this in this article.

Finally, seeing that He was already being publicly rejected by the leaders of the Jews, His earthly people, He, as **the Son of**

God, shows who belongs to His heavenly family, viz. — “Who-soever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven” (verses 46 to 50).

We find three similar expressions in this chapter which reveal the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ:

1) In this place is One greater than the temple (Matt. 12.6).

Greater in His divinity and greatness. Here the Lord declares clearly that He is God. Who could be greater than the temple but He who said, “Now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually” (2 Chron. 7.16). In his prayer at the dedication of the temple, Solomon asked, “But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!” (2 Chron. 6.18). The lowly Son of Man, whose disciples that very hour had availed themselves of the privilege of the poor and plucked ears of corn to eat, was claiming nothing less than to be the great Jehovah who honoured Solomon’s temple with His glorious presence, He who in truth inhabits eternity and fills all things.

Greater in His holiness and beauty. The glorious temple there in Jerusalem was but a type or figure of the glory and majesty of the Son of God. The gold, silver, copper, precious stones, etc., all spoke of Him, as the Psalmist says, “In His temple every whit of it uttereth His glory” (Psalm 29.9 margin). In the temple everything spoke of the glory of the One who is greater than the temple. In our day the local assembly is His temple (1 Cor. 3.16). May His holiness and moral beauty be reflected in us.

2) A greater than Jonas is here (Matt. 12.41).

Greater in His sacrifice. In the context the Lord affirms that Jonah’s experience is a figure of His own death and resurrection (see v.40). Jonah allowed himself to be thrown into the sea to save the men that were with him in the ship from perishing in the storm. But really the tempest was all Jonah’s fault. Christ, however, although guiltless, gave His life, the Righteous for the unrighteous, in order to save from eternal ruin everyone who

believes: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4.25).

Greater in His mission. Jonah was eventually used by God to save a city and call its inhabitants to repentance. The Lord Jesus had a much greater mission: "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4.14).

Greater in His love. When, by the grace of God, the Ninevites repented, "It displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry." But, what a contrast! the Lord Jesus, contemplating once more the unrepentant city of Jerusalem, "He . . . wept over it."

3) A greater than Solomon is here (Matt. 12.42).

Greater in His kingdom. During his reign, Solomon ruled over all the land that God had given to Israel, and also subjugated the neighbouring countries. However, in Psalm 2:8, God says to His Son, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession". He already has all authority in heaven and on earth, authority over all flesh (see Mat. 28.18 and John 17.2), but the day is coming when "the earth shall be filled with with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2.14).

Greater in His glory. The Lord Jesus said on one occasion, "Consider the lilies of the field . . . even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matt. 6.28,29). Obviously, He who made the lilies of the field has still more glory than they: "O LORD my God Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment" (Psalm 104.1,2); He is the brightness of divine glory, the express image of the divine essence (Heb. 1:3).

Greater in His wisdom. With respect to Solomon we read, "Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men", "the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment" (1 Kings 4.30,31 and 3.28). But the One who gave that wisdom to Solomon (1 Kings 4.29) is here, and He is the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1.24). He it is who speaks through Solomon in Proverbs 8.22,23, "The LORD possessed Me in the beginning (John 1.1) of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlast-

ing, from the beginning (1 John 1.1), or ever the earth was". Here is the One "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2.3).

Greater in His riches. "King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom"; he had so much gold that he "made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones." (1 Kings 10.23,27); "Silver . . . was not anything accounted of in the days of Solomon" (2 Chron. 9.20). But the One who was speaking to the Pharisees that day (in Matt. 12), although with the lowly appearance of the Son of Man who had not where to lay His head, was He who gave all those riches to Solomon, He who is the owner of all things. "All things were made by Him, and for Him" (Col. 1.16), "Whom (God) hath appointed heir of all things" (Heb. 1.2). He is "Lord over all . . . rich unto all that call upon Him" (Rom. 10.12), and, "though He was rich . . . He became poor" to make us rich in Him (see 2 Cor. 8:9).

Dear reader, have you ever considered this? "A greater . . . is here"? That when we meet in His name, counting on His presence in the midst (Matt. 18.20), it is that same supreme Person who is among us? Greater than the temple in His divinity, greatness, and beautiful holiness; greater than Jonah in His mission of boundless love and saving work; greater than Solomon in majesty, glory, wisdom and riches. Do our attitude, conduct, and way of speaking demonstrate our belief that our glorious Lord is in the midst? Do our humility and obedience show that we reverence His holy presence? "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Psalm 89:7).

AMBASSADORS OF CHRIST

Is an ambassador at liberty to alter or modify the terms of his instructions because he doesn't quite understand the "how" or the "why" of them? Shall he tamper with or distort or tone down or explain away the statements and proclamations of his Sovereign in order to shield himself from laughter or scorn or reproach? Surely not. Let us who are ambassadors of Christ beware how we alter His Word.

—*Selected.*

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (29)

by R. Neill (South Africa)

My parents were saved a few years after I was born. I cannot remember many details, but I do remember the time it happened. They had been Presbyterians and were attending a special mission being held by a well known clergyman Mr. W. P. Nicholson. It was during these meetings that my parents were awakened to their need of salvation. They were both very startled one night when the preacher said "Dear friends if you are not saved yet and you die on the seat in this meeting your soul will be in Hell before we can carry your body out of the building". This forthright kind of preaching did not appeal to them and they left the meeting quite angry and decided never to return. At that time my father was working beside Mr. Alexander Jebb (a believer), who said he agreed fully with what Mr. Nicholson had said. Mr. Jebb then asked my parents to come along with him to Ebenezer Gospel Hall where Mr. Walter Norris (a Welsh evangelist) was having gospel meetings. It was at these meetings my parents were saved and later baptised and received into fellowship in Ebenezer Belfast. My parents desire then was that their relatives should hear the gospel so they asked the believers to have cottage meetings in our home. Lasting impressions were made on my mind at that time as I sat at the fireside listening to the gospel and to the singing of the hymns. I was also sent to Sunday School and attended the Sunday evening gospel meetings. I always thought that before I could be saved, it would be necessary for me to have weeks or months of deep soul trouble and anxiety, and therefore had to wait for God to bring me into this condition. It was not that I was resisting, but just careless and hoping that one day by some miraculous means I would find myself saved. A few of the believers spoke to me from time to time. I remember one of the brethren asking me, "Don't you think it is time you were saved?" I did not answer as I was embarrassed that he had singled me out in front of my companions, and from then on I always avoided him. I knew he was a man of God who longed to see me saved, and after I was saved, he was the first person I went to see, to tell him the good news.

My first serious thoughts about eternity were when I was 12 years old and on holiday in Donaghadee. While standing near the harbour one afternoon I saw a little boat capsize, and the two occupants were drowned. Their bodies were brought out of the water and laid on the pier, and as I looked at them the brevity of life was impressed upon me. A few minutes before, these men were alive and enjoying themselves just like myself, now they had gone out to meet God. I realized that God was speaking to me at that time.

The Lord spoke to me again a few years later when one of my companions was killed while we were playing cricket. His parents were believers and he had been brought up in circumstances similar to my own. It was a sad home and especially sobering to us his companions, to see his heart broken parents.

As I became older I began to have less interest in meetings, and more desire to enjoy the things of the world. I resented my parents restrictions, not realizing their desire was to hide me from the world, just as Moses parents sought to hide him from Egypt.

One of my relatives from Armagh (a Roman Catholic) who knew nothing about the gospel came to spend a holiday at our home. He suggested to me that we should go together to the local cinema and I readily agreed. As we sat in the balcony of that cinema, my thought was, "This is a much better place than the Gospel Hall, there is no one here to preach or sing hymns". I thought when I get older this is the life I want. Suddenly, to my surprise a large group of people appeared on the screen and began singing — "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun Doth His successive journeys run — His kingdom stretch from shore to shore — Till moon shall wax and wane no more." I became very unhappy as I realized that even in that building God was speaking to me and I could not escape the reality that some day I would have to stand before Him. I told my cousin I did not want to stay any longer, and reluctantly he came out with me and we went home.

Many faithful men came to Ebenezer Gospel Hall to preach the gospel. Men such as Mr. Hawthorn Bailey, Mr. W. McCracken and Mr. Sam Thompson and others preached regularly. Although I did not have much interest in what they

were preaching, yet I was always impressed by their earnestness and sincerity. One occasion stands out clearly in my mind when Mr. Thompson preached from Heb. 3.15 "Today if you will hear His voice harden not your hearts." I did not want to harden my heart, but I could not understand how to be saved. The Word of God says "Salvation is of the Lord", and I realize after many years experience, that it is only God who can open the understanding.

I shall never forget that night well over 50 years ago when I came home from the usual Sunday night gospel meeting. I had been there with a number of other young people and none of us showed much interest in the meeting. Later that night as I got into bed at 11.40 p.m. the thought suddenly came to me "The Lord is coming and if you are not saved you will be left behind for judgment".

I had often heard preachers speak about this but it never had much effect upon me. Now the reality of it gripped me for the first time, and I became very anxious to be saved. I made up my mind, I must get this matter settled now. I want to be saved tonight. In my distress I said, "Lord I am a sinner please show me how I can be saved." Immediately the words of John 3.16 came before me, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." I thought, if God loved the world, then He must have loved me, I believed too that God gave His beloved Son to die for me, and if I believe on Him, (that is rest on what Christ did and what God said) then I am saved. I just accepted what God said and immediately I knew I was saved. I told the good news to my parents. I knew they were a bit doubtful by the way they spoke to me, and my father replied, "Well time will tell"! When I went back to my room again, I got down on my knees and for the first time in my life I could truly call God my Father. I said, "Father although my parents may not think I'm saved, yet I know that I am, for I believe Thy word."

"How wondrous the redemption plan designed by God for ruined man.

His Blessed Son in death laid low that He might endless life bestow".

A few years later at the age of 17 I was baptised and received into the Ebenezer Assembly, Belfast.

As time went on I became interested in the Ligoniel district of Belfast. With other young men of my own age we visited from house to house and distributed tracts in that area. Later a converted publican opened his home to us for gospel meetings His conversion had given us great encouragement in seeing the change that God had wrought in His life. I had made up my mind that I would never be a preacher but I felt happy to help in other ways. The first night I attempted to take part publically was when the arranged speaker failed to arrive. One of the older brethren apologized and intimated that two young men will tell us the story of their conversion, after we sing the next hymn. We were shocked beyond words when he announced our names. My companion, (who like myself had never preached before) saw that I was quite nervous, and he tried to encourage me, suggesting that he would speak first and take as much time as possible, and this would give me time to think what I was going to say. He also said that the secret in preaching is to keep calm and don't get excited. He walked to the platform but when he turned and looked at the audience he forgot all the good advice he had given me, and his message was finished in about 3 minutes. I didn't take up much more time than he did, and we both decided that we would never try to preach again. We were really humiliated and got out of the hall as quickly as possible. However, one of the older sisters spoke to us later and encouraged us to keep at the preaching. After a time we thought we should try to take part in open-air meetings and sometimes we had good numbers of people who stopped to listen to the gospel. Ligoniel was a good training ground for us, and also for others who were later commended to the Lord's work in other lands, for example, brethren Sydney Maxwell and John Gray, (both of Canada) and late Tom Bentley (Malaysia).

In 1944 I attended the Easter Conference in Belfast where over 2000 believers were gathered. On the Tuesday morning four or five missionary brethren took part, and all, (without exception) told of the great need for workers in the various countries. In the evening meeting Mr. Frank Knox (a well known and faithful servant of the Lord in N. Ireland) spoke and read from Isa. 6.8

“Whom shall I send and who will go for us”? He reminded us of the great need of a perishing world, and of the many countries where there was not a man for God. As he repeated the question several times “Who will go?” the challenge came to my heart, and I felt that God was speaking to me. I made up my mind there and then, that if the Lord was directing me in this way, I would be willing to go.

On occasional Saturday afternoons a few of us would go to Belfast harbour, so that we could visit people in the various ships that docked there, from different parts of the world. On one occasion I was able to have a conversation with an elderly African who told me he was saved. We were not able to communicate too well, as he could only speak a little broken English, but he indicated to me that Africa needed missionaries, and that I should go there. I came home that day and thought over the conversation with that dear man and his earnestness to try and understand the Scriptures. I decided that if the Lord directed me to go Africa, I would be willing to obey.

As a child I received a Sunday School prize — a book entitled, “The Life of Robert Moffatt”. (Missionary to Africa). After I was saved I began reading this book, and I became further interested in the continent of Africa. I began praying if it was God’s will I should go there, He would enable me to meet someone who could give me guidance. At that time the late Mr. James Geddis who laboured for the Lord in N. Rhodesia (now Zambia) was home on Furlough. I arranged to meet him and we had a long conversation together. He assured me of a welcome if I decided to join him. I wanted to be sure that I was taking the right step, and asked the Lord for further confirmation. Around that time I was asked to join Mr. Robert Craig in a series of gospel meetings in a suburb of Belfast.

Mr. Craig mentioned to me that he had been preaching the gospel for years and at every series the Lord had always saved souls. He indicated to me that if no one professed at these meetings, it would be the first time without any blessing.

This made me very concerned for I felt if the meetings are a failure, there would be no one else to blame but myself. I made it a special matter of prayer and asked the Lord to confirm that He wanted me to go to Africa, by saving someone at these

meetings. Mr. Craig took ill for a few days and during his absence, the Lord came in and saved two young women. However, my main exercise in going to that area was to see a young man and his sister saved. They had been the subject of much prayer. I had previously asked the Lord that if he wanted me to go to Africa with Mr. Geddis, that He would give me a sign by saving this brother and sister on the same night, and also that they would be baptised on the same night. Neither of them attended that series of meetings. A short time later I was asked to join Bob Boyle (now of Canada) in meetings in a portable hall in the outskirts of the Ligoniel area, where brethren James Moore, Bob Milligan (now at home with the Lord) and a few others carried on a Sunday school, and a weekly gospel meeting. Good numbers attended and the Lord saved a few souls. After the 3rd week of these meetings, the brother and sister I had been exercised about in the previous meetings, began to attend. A few nights later the young man was in great distress and said he was not going home until he was saved. His sister who had gone outside, later returned, saying "I cannot go home — I must get saved tonight". We talked and read the Scriptures with them for a long time, and then suggested they should go home and return the next night both wept and refused to leave. At 12.30 a.m. as the young man read the Scriptures, the Lord saved him, and he immediately began to try to explain to his sister. About an hour later the truth dawned upon her, and her tears were turned to joy! They both went home rejoicing. (A year later both were baptised on the same night, and thank God, still continue to go on well in their respective assemblies.) Although the Lord had answered this prayer in such a remarkable way, I still asked Him for further assurance. Sometime later I was invited to preach in the Ardmore assembly. I asked the Lord to give me another token by saving a soul that night. When the meeting was over I was putting on my coat to leave. Everyone had gone and I was disappointed that no one had been saved. Just then a number of young ladies came back to the hall and one of them was crying. When I asked what was the matter, she told me she had been saved in the meeting, as I quoted John 3.16. I asked her, "Then why are you crying?" and she replied "I'm crying for joy". (Time proved that she was truly saved that night, and she is well known and held in high esteem

in that area.) Soon after this, one Saturday afternoon while still deeply exercised before the Lord as to His will for my life the words of Judges 18.9 came very forcibly before me, "Be not slothful to go . . . and to possess the Land." I knew that this was a direct message from God to me, and soon afterwards I made my exercise known to the brethren of Ebenezer assembly, who assured of their full fellowship and commendation to the work of the Lord.

In 1946 in company with Mr. Geddis and Mr. Finegan we left Belfast for N. Rhodesia. Since that time, the Lord has given us the joy of seeing a few souls saved not only in Central Africa but also here in S. Africa. To God be all the glory! I look back over all those years and although at times there was much unfaithfulness on my part, yet the God who sent us has remained faithful, and in the words of Joshua we can say, "Not one good thing hath failed of all the good things that He promised to do."

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. (No member of the committee, author of articles or any other person connected with the magazine receives payment, remuneration or gratuity of any kind).

All cheques, money orders, etc., should be made payable to "Assembly Testimony Magazine."

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to : John Glenville, 16 Trelawney Road, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4DD. Telephone (0752) 846889.

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Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing
of our great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

—Titus 2.13.

BLESSED HOPE

Christian, though the world about us,
May give us good cause to fear,
Let the words of scripture cheer us,
Christ's return is very near.

"Blessed Hope," what words of comfort,
To these aching hearts of ours,
Nought can change God's wondrous
 promise,
Nought can thwart His sovereign powers.

Christ our looked for Lord is coming,
In the clouds to claim His bride,
All who know Him as their Saviour,
Those for whom the Saviour died.

Cast your eyes not down, dejected,
At the state of things down here,
Lift your heads, and look to heaven,
Whence our Lord shall soon appear.

"I COME QUICKLY" Jesus said it,
And His promises are sure,
Let the "Blessed Hope" possess you
OUR SALVATION IS SECURE.

—*H. Hartley*

BEHOLD THE MAN

(Meditations in Luke's Gospel)

by JIM FLANIGAN, (Belfast)

14. His Ascension

Both Mark and Luke record the story of the ascension of the Lord Jesus, but not Matthew or John. Matthew of course, writes the Messianic royal Gospel and it is fitting therefore that he should keep the King on earth, among His people. John's is the Gospel of the glory of the Son of God. The Son is ever in the bosom of the Father and the ascension is not necessary in John's account. But it is befitting in Mark's Gospel that the perfect Servant of Jehovah should be taken up in vindication to glory. And in Luke's Gospel we likewise see the ascension to heaven of Him, who, on earth, walked as a perfect Man for God's pleasure. Here is heaven's approval and reception and exaltation of that morally glorious One for whom earth had no room.

Certain periods of time in the life of the Lord Jesus are delineated in the Gospels. There were thirty years in Nazareth in relative obscurity. There followed forty days in the wilderness of temptation. This was the prelude to three and a half years of public ministry. After His death there were three days of silence as He lay in the tomb. For forty days, as a Risen Man, He showed Himself indeed alive. And at the consummation of all these times and periods He ascended, taken up bodily into the heavens from which He had come.

Luke writes twice of the ascension; once in a few words at the ending of His Gospel (Luke 24.50-51), and again in a few words at the beginning of his second treatise, the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1.9). It is Luke who points out that most interesting observation, that our Lord ascended from Bethany. Why Bethany? We might have understood if He had gone up from Bethlehem, thus completing a circuit of glory, coming in and going out from the City of David. We could have appreciated also if He had ascended from Nazareth where He had been brought up. And had he gone up from Jerusalem in triumph; from the Temple Mount in public splendour, we could have appreciated that. But no; He chose

neither Bethlehem or Nazareth or Jerusalem, but led them out as far as unto Bethany.

Bethany was precious to Him. There were hearts there that loved Him. This dusty village lay on the slopes of Olivet, less than two miles from the noise and bustle of Jerusalem. They had received Him there when the proud City had rejected Him. They had made Him a supper there when Jerusalem had no room for Him. He would now be received up in glory from the town which had received Him on earth. This was Bethany's reward for having extended its welcome to Him. He would imprint His last footsteps on Olivet and Bethany, and would go up from there to glory.

He lifted up His hands and blessed them. It was a priestly gesture. He was going up to become, as we love to call Him, the Man in the glory. He was ascending to a heavenly, priestly, Melchisedec ministry for His people. It was so beautiful that He should leave them with uplifted hands, pronouncing a blessing upon them. Would they have seen the nail prints in those raised hands? Did they see, in His holy palms, the price of their blessing?

While He was in the very act of blessing them He began to be parted from them. "I leave the world and go to the Father," He had said (John 16.28). And in a holy defiance of the law of gravity He began to ascend. Up and up, through the heavens and into heaven itself He ascended in His body of glory and a cloud took Him in. They watched until He had gone beyond the reach of their vision, and even then they continued to gaze into the heavens which had received Him. Did the disciples appreciate or understand what was happening? A real Man, a Risen Man, had gone up into glory. Were they aware of the momentous nature of what they had seen? Perhaps they were. Note that they did not grieve over His departure. They did not weep, with a sad sense of losing Him. Indeed, they worshipped, and praised, and rejoiced. There was a Man in the glory now, their Representative and Comforter. It was a time for great joy. They returned for a while to Jerusalem and to the Temple. This gospel of the perfect Man begins and ends in the Temple. It is a priestly gospel.

What does the ascension mean to the Lord Jesus? What does it mean to me? or to the Devil? or to the world? To Him it was a vindication of all that He was and of all that He had done, as the Father said, "Sit Thou on my right hand" (Psalm 110.1). For me it

is the grand assurance and pledge, that where He is, there shall I be also (John 14.3). To the Devil it is the confirmation of his ultimate doom. The place and position that he coveted has been reserved for and afforded to the Risen Saviour. To the world it is a sad and solemn indictment. God has highly exalted the Man whom it cast out. The world will be judged accordingly. To the Church, His body, the ascension is the exaltation of her glorious Head. The Head of the Church has gone up far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named.

As we review, with Luke, the story of this Blessed One, how rightly do we exclaim, again and again, "Behold the Man." What manner of Man is this?"

Without a trace of Adam's sin,
As Man unique in origin,
All fair without, all pure within,
Our Blessed Lord!

—(Concluded).

Miracles at Calvary (2)

by John B. D. Page (Weston-Super-Mare)

3. The Miracle of the place where Christ was crucified:

"The place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him"
Luke 23.33.

For the divinely conceived plan and work of redemption, nothing was left to chance and nothing occurred accidentally. God in heaven was in control of everything that took place. This is borne out in the Scriptures which record as history not only how wicked men put Him to death but also the scriptures declared prophetically many centuries before the event that Jehovah would smite Him. Unknown to a pagan Roman centurion with his four soldiers who nailed Him to that rough gibbet, God intended that His Son should be crucified where He was—at the place called Calvary. This may not be obvious to the superficial reader of the Scriptures, but it is clear to the serious student.

Surprisingly, little is said by the Gospel writers about the location of Christ's crucifixion. Its name, "Golgotha" meaning

“The place of a skull” which probably alludes to the skull-like shape of the hillock, is given in Matthew 27.33, Mark 15.22 and John 19.17 , but John alone says the name is a Hebrew word. Luke 23.33 names the place, as “Calvary”, translated from the Latin *Calvaria*, without mentioning its meaning. Only John 19.20 makes a passing reference to its location by saying Jesus was crucified “nigh to the city.” This indicates that the site was not in the city or several miles outside but it was nearby, without mentioning which side of the city. Unexpectedly, some help is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews 13.12 where this historical fact is stated, “Jesus . . . suffered without the gate”. In the light of verses 10-13 of this 13th chapter, the Epistle was seemingly written while the Temple was still standing and probably just before its destruction at the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. If so, barely 40 years had passed since the death of Christ, and so many people were still living who knew that Christ suffered outside the city gate. Being one of the “holy men of God (who) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” 2 Pet. 1.21, the unnamed writer was led to link the location of Christ’s death with the ceremonial ritualism of the Day of Atonement which would have been appreciated by Hebrew Christians living probably at Jerusalem, to whom the Epistle was sent. In the previous 11th verse which reads, “the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin”, the inspired writer refers to the bullock of the sin offering for the high priest with his house and to the goat of the sin offering for the people, whose blood was taken by the high priest within the veil into the holy of holies of the tabernacle once a year and sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat. Such sprinkling of the bullock’s blood was once upon the mercy seat for the eye of God to see, and seven times before the mercy seat for men’s sin, after which the sprinkling was repeated with the goat’s blood (Lev. 16.6,14f). Then the carcasses were “burned without the camp,” says this New Testament writer referring to Leviticus 16.27.

Having set forth the type, the writer gives the antitype in verse 12, “Wherefore Jesus also that He might sanctify the people with His own blood,” which signifies that the blood of Jesus is the means of setting apart believers unto God. The value and efficacy of the blood of Christ needs always to be stressed, particularly in

these days of spiritual declension. Then the writer adds that Jesus “suffered without the gate”, indicating that Jerusalem corresponds with the Israelites camp in the wilderness. As the bodies of the beasts for sin offerings were burned outside the camp, so Jesus as the true Sin Offering was slain outside the gate of the city.

Having established from the Scriptures that Christ was crucified outside Jerusalem, the question arises whether the city gate was on the north, south, east or west side. In the days of Nehemiah (about 445 B.C.), there were twelve gates in the city wall — ten are listed in chapter 3 and two in chapter 12 of his book. Reporting upon the repairs of the gates and city wall, such work was started and finished at the Sheep Gate (Neh. 3.1,32) which still existed by that name in the days of Christ (John 5.2, mgn.), and it was sited at the northeast corner of the city but north of the Temple. This gate was so named because the lambs were brought through it from a fold for sacrifice on the altar of the Temple. Therefore, the yearling lamb for the Morning Sacrifice at the third hour (i.e. 9.00 a.m.) was taken through this gate whilst the Lamb of God was led in the opposite direction through the same gate to be crucified at that very hour (Mark 15.25). Similarly, later in the day the lamb to be offered upon the Temple altar at about 2.30 p.m. for the Feast of Passover was brought through the Sheep Gate even as “Christ our Passover (Lamb)” had been led earlier in the day and “sacrificed for us” 1 Cor. 5.7. The background of this title, “Christ our Passover,” is the great national emancipation of an enslaved people in Egypt. On that occasion, and for subsequent passovers, the selected lamb had to be “without blemish” Ex. 12.5. With this in mind, Peter says that Christ as the true Passover Lamb was “without blemish”, that is, physically, “and without spot”, that is, morally, by Whose “precious blood” redemption has been wrought for those who believe in Him (1 Pet. 1.19). For the Evening Sacrifice at the ninth hour (i.e. 3.00 p.m.) when the Lord Jesus dismissed His spirit (Mark 15.34,37), a lamb was brought through the same gate to the Temple altar.

For the Sheep Gate to be north of the Temple, through which Christ passed to Calvary, was not by accident. For the Lord Jesus to have been crucified on a hillock called Calvary, said to be only about 20 ft. high, lying north of the Temple was not a coincidence.

But this northerly aspect appears to be connected with the side of the altar where the beast for an offering was slain, which goes back into Israel's early history. Speaking to Moses out of the Tabernacle, the Lord said that a burnt offering from either the herd or flock was to be killed "on the side of the altar northward" Lev. 1.11. The sin and trespass offerings were to be slain "in the place where the burnt offering is killed" Lev. 6. 25, & 7.1f. For the meal offering, no animal was slain and so the rule did not apply. An exception was the peace offering which was killed "at the door of the tabernacle" Lev. 3.2. This northerly aspect, relating to both the type and anti-type, brings out the meticulous accuracy of the Scriptures.

Even during Messiah's millennial reign on the earth for which a new Temple will be built, described fully in chapters 40 - 47 of Ezekiel, there will be no departure from the divine principle where offerings should be killed. As the Lord's dealings with Israel as a nation differ from those with the church, the offerings will be restored, not for a re-instituted Judaism but a new order under a new covenant. Such sacrifices will be commemorative (not expiatory) of the already accomplished work of salvation by Christ on the cross. Like the Tabernacle initially followed by the first and second Temples (and presumably for the third Temple yet to be built), this last Temple for the millennium will face east. A gate with a porch will be sited on the south, east and north sides, but none on the west. In the porch of the north gate of the Inner Court, provision will be made for the burnt, sin, and trespass offerings to be slain on four tables, two on either side in this porch (Ezek. 40.28,35,39), which are the same three offerings mentioned in Leviticus.

This seemingly insignificant instruction to Moses millennia ago for these offerings to be killed on the north side of the altar must have been of importance in the sight of God Who gave it. Remarkably by the over-ruling hand of God, the northern aspect is also seen in the location for the sacrificial death of Christ as already indicated. For understanding the divine intention, the position of the sun in the sky needs to be considered. For instance, if the priest had stood on the south side of the altar for killing the animal then the sun behind him would have cast the priest's shadow upon the offering. This would have applied if the

priest had stood on either the east or west side of the altar. In the northern hemisphere where the land of Israel is located, the sun never appears in the north which means there was no sun behind the priest as he stood on the north side of the altar to slay the offering and so his shadow was not cast upon it. This foreshadows and emphasises the importance that no shadow is cast upon the Person of Christ and His atoning work at Calvary. If a doubt creeps into the mind of a believer or if a depreciatory remark is made by a Christian concerning Christ's redemptive work on the cross, then a shadow is cast upon the Saviour and His vicarious sufferings. Despite widespread departure from the Scriptures today, the paramount duty of believers is still to defend the dignity of the Person of Christ and the continuing efficacy of His redemptive work at Calvary for this age and the millennial age to come.

—(*To be continued*)

Some Psalms of Asaph

by D. S. Parrack, (Somerset)

No. 3— Psalm 77

V. 1-3. The pouring out of a distraught spirit

It may be that praying vocally is looked at somewhat askance in some circles today, and especially so when it is extemporary prayer. Perhaps that is an indication of the lack of heart exercise amongst God's people, life has become so easy that there is little apparent need for immediate, urgent prayer. Without knowing much of the detail of Asaph's life, it is apparent from this psalm at least, that he went through troubled times in his soul. Those troubles were such that he was constrained to break out into loud vocal prayer. "I cried unto God with my voice," and the experience was so intense that he repeats the declaration, "even unto God with my voice." There are of course times when silent heart prayer is more suitable. It is not likely, for instance, that the prayer of Nehemiah as recorded in Neh. 2.4, was audible to anyone but God. Nevertheless, real heart exercise can provoke opened lips as well.

But the marvellous thing as far as Asaph was concerned was

not that he felt the inner urge to express his feelings as he did, but that “He (God) gave ear unto me.” We don’t know how he became aware of this in the prevailing circumstances, there is nothing in this particular psalm which details any answer or practical response. But sure he was, and there are times when just the consciousness of the presence of the Lord Jesus is answer enough to all of our problems. “They looked unto him and were lightened” (Ps. 34.5).

It is without any doubt true, that God does not want us to wait until we are in trouble before we go after Him in this way. But He does know us through and through and it may be that He allows some forms of difficulty to occur in order to turn us to Himself. For Asaph that appears to have been the case. “In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.” That seeking was not a passing formal prayer, it was from his soul. “My sore ran in the night” or, as some translations have it, “my hand was stretched out in the night” i.e. in a beseeching gesture. In either case it was a prolonged experience, “and ceased not.” It would seem that it was not practical or physical troubles that were the cause of Asaph’s distress, “my soul refused to be comforted.” We can be reasonably well placed as far as the things of this world are concerned but they by themselves will never give peace of heart. They might though, unfortunately, distract our attention and aspirations sufficiently to dull our spiritual desires. But for Asaph that was not the problem. “I remembered God and was troubled.” The consciousness of the Lordship of Christ will, for believers, put any other seeming advantage and privilege we have into its right perspective and that can cause us some heart searching.

Now comes the admission with which some of us from our own experience, can have real empathy. “I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed.” Those who have gone through such a trauma, though it might ultimately have had a beneficial outcome, would not blandly wish it on anyone else. It has to be endured to be understood and no amount of theorising or theological discussion can impress its reality on the uninitiated. “Selah,” Think about that.

V. 4-9 Revealing of thought patterns arising from the above

His experiences caused loss of sleep which he attributed to God, “Thou holdest mine eyes waking (kept my eyes from

closing),” as well as an inability to discuss the situation meaningfully with anyone else, “I am so troubled that I cannot speak.” Both of these conditions, physical tiredness and spiritual loneliness are very distressing. We have however the assurance that, just like any other difficulty through which we may have to pass, the Lord Jesus has been there before us (see Heb. 4.25) . He understands bodily weariness (see John 4.6), and what it means to be isolated in the pathway we are treading (see e.g. John. 2.23-25). That is not meant to encourage masochism but to encourage us when there appears to be no evident immediate remedy for any situation in which we may be found.

It was not as though Asaph could find any consolation in looking back. “I have considered the days of old — I call to remembrance my song in the night — my spirit made diligent search.” Of course there were examples of deliverances which could be seen in the lives of others. There were even past experiences of his own which called to mind songs instead of tears. But, search as he might, they brought him no joy, no relief, everything now seemed to be on a totally different plane. Psalm 22, which is one of those most obviously prophetic of the Lord Jesus, shows Him going through this very experience (see Psalm 22.4-8), and that should give us the confidence to talk to Him about the matter, He will understand if no-one else does.

Asaph feels he has to consider other possibilities. He frames his thoughts in questions, put as though he cannot believe the answers could possibly be ‘yes’, that would mean the end of all hope. “Will the Lord cast off for ever? - doth His promise fail for evermore?” Can it possibly be that “God (has) forgotten to be gracious?” as if due to a lapse on His part. Worse still, “hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?” Have our sins proved finally to have gone past the point of forgiveness. If any of these were true it would be, for us, unmitigated disaster. “Selah,” Think about that.

V. 10-12. Consciousness of the wrong thinking behind the above questioning, and a turning instead to the things appertaining to God.

In his previous looking back, see vs. 5-6, he was taken up with times, people and eventually his own past. He recognises that in so doing, as with his questions, the pressure of events has caused him to look at things from altogether the wrong viewpoint. “This is my infirmity.” His fault is understandable and is one into which we

can fall only too easily in times of difficulty. It results basically from becoming over-occupied with the problem rather than with the One who can solve it. So the emphasis switches to what God has done and how that points to what He can do now. Not only does Asaph determine to look for the evidence, "I will remember - I will remember - I will remember" but to consider his findings "I will meditate also." But what is he going to remember, what is he going to meditate on? Not himself anymore but God, "the years of the right hand of the most High" - "the works of the Lord" - "Thy wonders of old" - "Thy work." When he has gone through the remembering and the meditating stages then he is ready to make known his findings to others "I will talk of Thy doings." There is very little point in speaking of the things of God without first making them our own, of knowing the reality of them in our own souls. "I believed, therefore I have spoken." (Psalm 116.10).

V. 13-20. The outcome of his meditations, a deeper appreciation of the Person, actions and attributes of God.

For the appreciation to even begin to be meaningful it is necessary to see things from God's side and since "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary," it is only from there that we can see things as they really are. Asaph had found that out when he was worried about other seeming inconsistencies of life. On that occasion it was not "until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end" (Psalm 73.17). The first thing we realise when we are consciously in the presence of God is just what sort of Person with whom we are having dealings. A number of people in the scriptures faced that situation (see e.g. Isa. 6.5 and Rev. 1.17). The question it wrung from Asaph was, "Who is so great a God as our God?" But that greatness is largely portrayed here by its being put to the wellbeing of His people. "Thou art the God that doest wonders," and wonders that were visible for all to see, "Thou hast declared Thy strength among the people." What was the prime purpose behind that public display of power? "Thou hast with Thine arm redeemed Thy people." There were, it is true, a whole catalogue of unnatural occurrences linked to that redemption but they were minor compared to the measureless work of grace. "Selah," Think about that.

He now considers the lengths to which God went and the methods He used in the course of that initial time of redemption and then during their subsequent safe keeping. "The waters saw

Thee, O God - the depths also were troubled.” This might be seen as referring to the parting of both the Red Sea, at the commencement of their exodus from Egypt, and Jordan, at the entry into Canaan some forty years later. “The skies sent out a sound - the voice of Thy thunder was in the heavens - the earth troubled and shook.” There were a number of times when this sort of thing happened. One of the most outstanding was perhaps at the defeat of the Amorites (see Josh. 10.6-14), when, from the human point of view, the total movement into Canaan was in jeopardy.

We may, like Asaph, know of, call to mind, and even meditate on such happenings, but they are not shown to us in order merely to arouse our curiosity or provoke logical discussion. If we look at them in that way they will still remain incomprehensible as to how they were actually executed and we will also fail to reap any spiritual benefit or guidance from them. God has never promised to explain how He accomplished these things, though He does want us to know why. It is so that His promises to His people may be fulfilled and that in their fulfilling He will be glorified and we will be blessed. As far as natural understanding and explanation are concerned, “Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in great waters and Thy footsteps are not known.”

But surely all that must have been traumatic for the people of God. That was an unnecessarily difficult pathway for them to be brought along wasn't it? Well, it is true that, resulting from their own repeated failures and back slidings, the Israelites had to go through many difficulties, but they were of their own making and God cannot be blamed for that. His purpose always was, and is, in grace. “Thou leddest Thy People like a flock,” and who can we think of who has a greater concern for his charges than a shepherd. That leading was not done just by miraculous signs and supernatural means, though they were there in plenty, but, “by the hand of Moses and Aaron.” These two individuals were ordained of God to be responsible to Him for the well-being of His people. He normally works in the same manner today, and those privileged to be His servants in that particular work must accept it as an undeserved privilege not an earned right. They need to remember as well that privilege is always balanced with responsibility. There is a balance too between the leaders and those led, the latter are enjoined to “obey them that have the rule over you (that guide you)” and the former that they shall “watch for your souls as they that must give account” (Heb. 13.17). —*(to be continued, D.V.)*

“WHAT MEAN THESE STONES?”

—Lessons from Joshua

by R. Reynolds (Bleary, N. Ireland)

Paper 1—INTRODUCTION

Those who have read the book of Joshua cannot fail to be impressed with the numerous references to stones or heaps of stones, insomuch that we are prompted to ask as future generations were anticipated to ask, “What mean these stones?” So many references cannot be without significance and the spiritual lessons which they suggest will be of value if learned and put into practice with the help of God. Those who have been saved for a longer time will have learned these lessons and discovered their important contribution to spiritual progress.

Canaan represents spiritual maturity, the goal of every believer and the place where God expected His people to reach eventually. He ever had it in mind that they should not rest until Canaan was gained and even there blessing would be commensurate with the progress they made in possessing the land. Josh. 1.3. It would not be theirs without effort, enemies had to be overcome, difficulties surmounted and inheritances appropriated. The task ahead seemed daunting to say the least but where the finger of God points, the hand of God provides and one is encouraged to see how God fought for His people and strengthened and supported them as they advanced. Weak they were in themselves, again and again the odds were overwhelmingly against them, often hopelessly outnumbered by their adversaries, yet victory after victory was theirs because God helped them to achieve the goal He had in mind for them. Fellow saint, the will of God may seem very costly, the path strewn with insuperable and innumerable obstacles but with the help of God, Canaan can be possessed and the great blessings of God can be enjoyed to a degree which the carnal Christian will never experience, therefore “let us go on to perfection”. Heb. 6.1.

1. Stones and Jordan

The first reference concerns the twelve stones which were placed in the midst of Jordan (Josh. 4.9) although not always visible to the naked eye, faith apprehended the great fact of a

memorial which marked the spot where the ark had been, judgment having been braved and the flood stayed. It can only be beneficial to us to have a fresh appreciation of the Cross and constantly remind ourselves of Him of whom the ark spake, our blessed Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Christ in that hour of darkness
Lost ones to save,
Braved Himself the ocean’s depths
And battled the wave;”

Spiritual progress will never distance us from Calvary nor from that initial meeting with Christ. He is the foundation on which we build and our everlasting stay. Our every blessing stems from Him, “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace,” Eph. 1.7. All that we are and have, we owe to His death and shame and the memorial feast each Lord’s day is an eloquent reminder of His sufferings which have made us free and His wounds by which alone we have been healed. Let nothing and no-one rob us of the joy of salvation and may Christ and His death become increasingly precious to us, otherwise little progress will be made.

Joshua 4.2,3 make it clear that twelve men were each to carry a stone up out of Jordan and carry it to the place where they were going to set up camp, namely Gilgal, the place of “rolling away,” the place of circumcision. As Israel came to the borders of the land and let us remember, they were in the will of God, they encountered a great barrier — not only were they confronted by the Jordan but its swollen waters posed an even greater problem and threatened to keep the Israelites on that side that was so reminiscent of failure and disobedience. They might well have made excuses and remained in the lush pastures of Gilead and Bashan. They could, like their fathers, have been so easily infected with pessimism and discouragement but the knowledge that the Lord had delivered all the land into their hands (Josh. 2.24) inspired them with the confidence that victory was assured.

Nothing will embolden the Christian more than an appreciation of God’s power and experiences and demonstrations of this personally in his life. It is vital for us to have such experiences — this is what enabled David to fearlessly face Goliath — he had already witnessed the power of God in his experiences with the lion and bear. This is what encouraged Elijah to confront the prophets of

Baal on Mt. Carmel, this is what encouraged Gideon to face the Midianites and each fresh witnessing of God's power enabled the Israelites to enter the next battle with increased confidence.

In ch.4 they saw such a manifestation of divine power as they would never forget — it must have reminded that of that former occasion, which succeeding generations must often have talked about, when God parted the waters of the Red Sea, affording safe passage through to His people. Josh. 4.23.

We hear of bygone days when the power of God was seen in the ingathering of souls, when the gospel flourished and the spirit of zeal pervaded the people of God and we wonder why conditions have changed so dramatically. God has not changed but we have. The God of yesteryear is the God of today, is the God of tomorrow. Exercised believers, desirous of doing His will, may yet experience the power and blessing of God as greatly as any of old. May God move us to separate ourselves from the spirit of the age, to swim against the prevailing tide and be encouraged with His own exhortation to the people of Malachi's day, "And prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Mal. 3.10.

2. Stones and Gilgal

From the crossing they wanted to go directly to conquest, from the Jordan to Jericho but God caused them to encamp in Gilgal and undergo the painful experience of circumcision. Those stones signified separation and the fact that they were placed in Gilgal reinforced the idea of sanctification. Had not Joshua said in ch.3.5, "Sanctify yourselves:" Paul instructed the Galatians in ch.5.24, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Real progress will be hindered if we do not mortify the deeds of the body and "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt . . ." Eph. 4.22.

Oh, to be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use . . ." 2 Tim. 2.21. Thus was the reproach of Egypt rolled away and subsequently Joshua was strengthened by the appearing of the "captain of the host of the Lord." 5.14. May God teach us the lesson of the stones in Gilgal, which were taken from Jordan, reminding us of the claims of the cross, the just demands of Christ upon us and our responsibilities in view of redemption.

—(to be continued, D.V.).

A Threefold Responsibility of the Believer

by A. Osborne (Wales)

It is the Apostle Paul who reminds believers of their responsibility in the words of 1 Cor. 6.19,20: 'Ye are not your own: for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body' (RV). We want in our study to note two aspects of this responsibility: the *direction* of it, and then three *spheres* in which it is seen.

The Direction of Responsibility

The Scriptures make it clear that believers are not meant to live entirely to themselves but to be mindful of their responsibility towards God (which is *upward*), towards others (*outward* relationships) and towards their own character and conduct (that is, *inward*). All we do will have an impact upon God, others, and ourselves.

The Spheres of Responsibility

There are at least three spheres in which this responsibility is seen. There is the divine sphere displayed in the life of the Lord Jesus upon the earth. Then there is the individual life of the believer. Finally there is the collective life of the assembly.

I. The Example of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 7.26)

The Lord Jesus is presented to us in three ways in this verse. We have His life upon earth, which was holy, harmless, undefiled. Then in His resurrection He was 'separated from sinners' (RV). This was not a condition but an action, for He was for ever separated from sinful men, never again to be subjected to their cruelty and wickedness. Finally He was made 'higher than the heavens', an honour bestowed upon Him by the Father, for 'God also hath highly exalted Him' in resurrection, exaltation and coronation. But we wish to consider the way He discharged His responsibilities *upward* to God, *outward* to others and *inwardly* to Himself while living on earth.

Upward Responsibility: A Holy Life

The Greek word for holy is *hosios*, which Mr. Vine suggests signifies one who fulfils all the divine obligations both in character and conduct. Of such a One the Father could open the heaven and

declare 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased' (Matt. 17.5).

Outward Responsibility: A Harmless Life

The word harmless or guileless speaks of one whose motives and ways were completely free from unkindness. He never injured anyone, never had to apologise for a word or an action. It could be uniquely said of Him 'He hath done all things well' (Mark 7.37) and 'never man spake like this Man' (John 7.46).

Inward Responsibility: An undefiled Life

Because He was undefiled and free from all taint He was incapable of contracting defilement. He was both sinless and not able to sin, for He said of Himself 'The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me' (John 14.30). The Apostle John confirmed this when he wrote 'in Him is no sin' (1 John 3.5).

2. The Individual Believer (Titus 2.11,12)

The grace of God manifest in the coming of the Lord Jesus accomplishes two things. First, it gives us a salvation that is past, present and future. Second, it instructs us how to live worthy of such a great salvation. This instruction is both negative and positive. Negatively we are to deny, to renounce once and for all, two things. The first is ungodliness, all that is contrary to God, including a lack of reverence towards Him, sadly only too apparent in our assembly meetings. We are also instructed to renounce all worldly lusts, or passionate desires for things of this present age, showing that the amusements of this world hold no attraction for us. Positively we are taught our *inward* responsibility to be sober, our *outward* responsibility to be righteous, and our *upward* responsibility to be godly. It is these three truths we want to focus upon.

Inward Responsibility: Sobriety

To live soberly entails balance, discretion and self-control. It should not be necessary to add that to partake of intoxicating drink is to lose a degree of self-control and act in opposition to the work of the Holy Spirit who supplies self-control or temperance (Gal. 5.19, RV margin).

Outward Responsibility: Righteousness

The grace that saves us demands from us a right and just relationship with our fellow men, both saved and unsaved,

acknowledging the claims of others so as to have ‘a good report of them that are without’ (1 Tim. 3.7).

Upward Responsibility: Godliness

Negatively we were instructed to renounce ungodliness, but the Christian life is not merely negative. We should therefore be godly, because the godly person ever seeks to live as in the presence of His God, able to testify like Elijah, ‘As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand’ (1 Kings 17.1). It should be noted that the words ‘should live’ are imperative: not an option but a command to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil age.

3. The Local Assembly (Phil. 3.3)

The first three verses of Philippians 3 are an exhortation to the church at Philippi to be *joyful* (v 1), to be *warned of* that which is false (v 2), and to be *real* (v 3), for this verse reminds them of who they were and what features were to mark them.

Who they were

Having warned of false teaching Paul informs the assembly at Philippi that ‘we are the circumcision’, that is to say, we are God’s true people, for circumcision was the token of the covenant between Jehovah and Abraham (Gen. 17.11).

What features marked them as the people of God

There is once again a responsibility *upward*, *outward* and *inward*, but this time it applies to the assembly as a whole.

Upward Responsibility : ‘Worshipping by the Spirit of God’ (RV)

The word for worship is often translated ‘service’, for all service that brings to God is worship, the presenting of our bodies (Rom. 12.1), to ‘offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name’ (Heb. 13.15). Such true worship takes place both inside and outside the assembly. But all worship must be the outcome of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and He will only guide in accordance with the Scriptures. Any service that has not the authority of the Word of God cannot be of His leading.

Outward Responsibility : ‘Glory in Christ Jesus’ (RV)

A plainer translation is ‘we boast in Christ Jesus’. It was Paul who could write ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross

of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Gal 6.14). The church at Thessalonica knew something of this boasting for they bore the wonderful testimony that 'from you sounded out the word of the Lord' (1 Thess. 1.8)

Inward Responsibility : 'No confidence in the flesh'

What a challenge for us today! We boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. The flesh of course is that old nature which dominates all apart from the grace of Christ. But the believer has no settled persuasion in the flesh but rather has confidence in God (1.6). In verses 3 to 6, Paul lists all his natural gifts, plus his considerable personal achievements. If any man had reason to boast in the flesh it was Paul. Yet he counted all as one great big loss (v 7). No matter how talented we are in the natural man, it is still flesh. Let us therefore not look to the works of the flesh but to Christ for He only will enable us to fulfil our responsibilities upward, outward and inward.

PAPERS ON PROPHECY

by The Late W. W. Fereday (written in 1897/98)

VOLUME I

Paper 4b—The Apostasy of Christendom and the Antichrist

Another consideration is then presented. Before the day of the Lord sets in, the apostasy must take place, and the man of sin run his course. "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away" (more properly "the apostasy") "first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" 2 Thess. 2.3. This must not be confounded with other predictions. It is important to rightly divide the word of truth. In 1 Tim. 4.1 the same Apostle writes, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in latter times some shall depart from the faith." If the verses which follow be examined carefully, it will be seen that Popery is in view, with its Satanic hypocrisy and restrictions. The expression "latter times" therefore simply means times subsequent to the writing of the Epistle. 2 Tim. 3.1 presents a further stage in the development of evil: "in the last days perilous times shall come." We do not here read of *some* departing from the faith; the evil is much more general. Who can read the Holy

Spirit's language in 2 Tim. 3.1—5, and fail to see that it is our own day that is so vividly described? "The last days" are running their course now.

But 2 Thess. 2 speaks of a later and more solemn period still. Grave as are the features of the "latter times" and the "last days," *the Apostasy* is immeasurably more serious. It means nothing less than a universal renunciation of all profession of Christianity. The Lord's true ones having been removed, and the Holy Spirit having left the scene, what is to preserve the mass from headlong ruin? Not that the nominal profession of Christianity will necessarily be abandoned immediately the saints are taken away. It will doubtless be maintained for a time. Many a religious building will be opened as usual, many a Christless sermon will be delivered then, as, alas! too often at the present time. But it will not continue very long. Liberal-mindedness (so-called) will prevail. It will no longer be deemed necessary to contend for this truth or that; the union of Christendom (of which one hears so much even now) will then be more than possible, only to be followed, under Satanic leadership, by the throwing up of the very name and form of Christianity.

Many really sincere souls find this hard to believe. They have so long cherished the thought that the Gospel is destined to convert the whole world to God, that it seems inconceivable that Christendom itself will become more corrupt and evil than even the heathen world beyond. But the testimony of Scripture must be honestly faced. Nothing is to be gained, but the contrary, by buoying ourselves up with false hopes and expectations. We really thus give the enemy an advantage, because a measure of blindness must inevitably result as to our present pathway in the midst of growing darkness and evil.

It cannot be denied that things are rapidly moving onward to the apostasy. God forbid that one should present a gloomier picture that is just, but the facts are patent to all. On every hand the inspiration of the Scriptures is called in question or denied; many indulge in the loosest and gravest speculations concerning the person of Christ; the fundamental doctrine of the atonement is set aside by multitudes; the eternal punishment of the ungodly is widely repudiated; and many more sorrowful details might be added. This is a day of compromise and surrender. Truths that

our fathers suffered for gladly are lightly yielded now, as if they were the merest trifles; and those who suffered for them in the past are regarded by not a few with a kind of compassion, as over scrupulous and narrow, which a little nineteenth century enlightenment would have helped!

If such is the condition of things while the saints of God are here, what will it be when we are all gone? Scripture answers, *Apostasy*. Arising out of this is the revelation of the Antichrist, the man of sin. Man is a religious being naturally, and must have an object of worship. If God is thrown off, a Satanic substitute is accepted. This we have long seen in heathendom; presently it will be witnessed in Christendom. Satan will bring forward his man when the suited moment arrives, and present him to his dupes. Let it be distinctly understood that the Antichrist is *a person*. Some have thought the Apostle's remarks in 2 Thess. 2 to refer to the Papacy, but this is a great mistake. It is not a system, nor a succession of men, but an individual. The Popes, however arrogant and evil, have never gone to the lengths described here. The man of sin sets himself up above all that is called God or that is worshipped. He sets aside all objects of worship, true and false, and claims sole Divine honour. His seat will be in Jerusalem. "He sitteth in the temple of God shewing himself that he is God." Only on Mount Moriah has God ever owned a temple of a material character. During the Church period the temple of God is a spiritual thing. The saints themselves form His temple and the Spirit of God inhabits it (1 Cor. 3.16,17; 1 Pet. 2.5). But when the saints are removed to heaven, this is necessarily at an end. Then the material temple will come into view again. It will happen thus. A goodly number of the Jews will be found in their own land at the end of the age (indeed, many are returning at the present time). They will set about to re-establish their old system of worship, with its sanctuary, priesthood, and sacrifices. At the appointed moment the man of sin will introduce himself to them, claiming to be the long-expected Messiah. It will happen then as the Lord foretold, "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, *him ye will receive*" (John 5.43). His pretensions will be admitted by the blinded mass, the godly remnant, on the contrary, saying within themselves, "The words

of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords" (Psa. 55.21). The elect are not deceived; a stranger will they not follow, for they know not his voice.

Antichrist will soon display himself in this true colours. At the first, he will form a covenant as the leader of the Jews, with the great power of the West for protection (Dan. 9.27). The godless mass will glory in this, saying, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through" (referring to their powerful Northern foe), "it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves" (Isa. 27.15). But this will not hold good long. In the midst of the week, *i.e.*, the seven years of the covenant, the Antichrist, backed up by the Beast (the Roman head), will turn upon them, suppressing their worship, and will seek to force idolatry upon them. If it be asked, "How can this affect all Christendom?" the answer is, that Christendom's political chief and the evil one in Jerusalem are in league, consequently where the one has influence, the other has also. Christendom and the Jews will be together in apostasy, in the last days, strange as it may sound in some ears now. Has the reader ever weighed up 1 John 2.22? "Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." Here we get the two forms of evil distinctly connected; the first part of the verse being Jewish unbelief, the second part Christian, or, more properly, Antichristian apostasy. Solemn thought! Where the light has shone the brightest the darkness will be the most dense very shortly.

There is restraint at the present time, as the Apostle shows: "And now ye know what with-holdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He Who now letteth will let, until He be taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2.6,7). Evil intruded itself into the sphere of Christian profession very early, but though it is steadily but surely working, there is restraint, that it come not yet to a head. The "what" in verse 6, unnamed by the Apostle, is probably government. It is still true that "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13.1); and while this is so there is at least a measure of check on human will. But presently Rom. 13.1 will cease to be true, for

the supreme power in Christendom will receive his throne and authority direct from the Dragon (Rev. 13.1—4); then the way will be open for evil to show itself in its most extreme form.

“He” in verse 7 is the Holy Spirit. He dwells in the Church of God and in the individual Christian, and is here to guard the interests of Christ. He will not suffer the fearful impiety of which we are speaking to take place while He is present. But when the Church is removed He will quit the scene, and man will be left to the evil of his own heart, and to the devil.

Those will be days of fearful delusion. To help it on miracles will be performed, and these in great variety. Miracles are not necessarily proofs of Divine authority, whatever Papists may say; the devil can perform them, when God thinks proper to allow it. The coming of the man of sin is “according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2.9). Perhaps the most serious is the appearance of fire called down from heaven. This we find in Rev. 13.13. This was Elijah’s great sign that Jehovah was the true God, which caused the people to fall on their faces and own “Jehovah, He is the God; Jehovah, He is the God” (1 Kings 18.38,39).

The judicial hand of God will be put forth in that day, as well as the power of Satan. It is righteous retribution from Himself. Men in Christendom have had the truth, but have not loved it; instead of believing it they have had pleasure in unrighteousness. God will remember all this in the day to come. His hand will be upon them. He will send them a strong delusion, that they shall believe the lie of the enemy. The truth not having been received (though known), the lie shall be to their eternal ruin. Some find it hard to believe that the (so-called) enlightened men of this day will soon bow at the feet of the man of sin; but it is solemnly true. Men who affect to despise their ignorant ancestors for bowing down to stocks and stones will presently be found doing what is immeasurably worse. Probably the strictly religious Jews of the Lord’s day did not care to be told that the unclean spirit of idolatry will return into their midst with sevenfold virulence (Matt. 12.43-45). The last state of Judaism will be worse than the first, and Christendom will be in the same condition. The two systems, so opposed in principle, will be together in evil in the dark day that is at hand.

—to be continued (D.V.).

EPHESIANS EXPOUNDED

by A. D. THROPAY (California)

Paper 20

II. THE BEHAVIOUR OF GOD'S MASTERPIECE 4.1-6.23

E. Walking in wisdom 5.15-6.9

2. *Submissive life* 5.21-6.9

a. *Wives and husbands—picture of Christ and the church* 5.22-33

NOTE: Being filled with the Spirit, verse 18.

1. Affects the tongue and lips of the BODY. (Verse 19a)
2. Affects the HEART. (Verse 19b)
3. Affects the attitude of our SPIRIT. Verse 20, "Giving thanks always."
4. Affects the actions of the SOUL (Verse 21 forward) in its relationship towards others, in Marriage (v. 22-33); Family 6.1-4); Employment 6.5-9; spiritual warfare 6.10-23.

Verse 22

—**Wives submit yourselves:** (hupotassomai) Middle voice as verse 21. The word means "to rank under." It is a military term. The one who submits recognizes that he is responsible to and for others, (Rom. 13.14; I Cor. 8.1-3). He may be equal to others in intelligence, understanding and ability, but for the purpose of order, the other may have a higher position. He honours others better than himself, (Phil. 2.3); and acts for the sole benefit of the other person, (Phil. 2.4). The present tense indicates that this is a habit of life.

—**unto you own:** (tois idiois) "It conveys the idea of what is special." (Expositors) It adds emphasis and intensity. He is her own exclusively.

—**husbands, as:** (hōs) like as; as it were; just as.

—**unto the Lord:** (tō kuriō) "To the Lord." In submitting to her husband, the woman is ultimately submitting to Christ, trust-

ing Him to work all things out for the benefit and well-being of all. She is to obey her husband as if he were Christ.

Verse 23

—**For:** (hoti) Because of the fact that. He is about to state why the wife should submit to her own husband.

—**the husband is head:** (kephalē) 1. This word is used literally of that part of the body that guides and directs all the bodily function for the benefit, honour, and preservation of every member. 2. This word is also used metaphorically of headship.

—**of the wife even as:** (hōs kai) “Just as also.”

—**Christ is the head (Kephālē) of the church:** Christ serves the church as the physical head serves the body. That this is the meaning is proven from the next phrase.

—**and He:** The word is emphatic showing dependability of Christ as Head.

—**is saviour:** (sōtēr) A Saviour, Preserver, Deliverer.

—**of the body:** The church is also called the “body of Christ.”

Ephesians 4.12. Husbands have the same responsibility as head.

They represent Christ. The husband is to save, deliver, and preserve his wife. The emphatic can be translated, “He alone.” Christ alone does this completely.

Verse 24

—**Therefore:** (alla) this word is used when showing a contrast and is usually translated “but” or “nevertheless.” The meaning seems to be, “although Christ alone does all for the preservation of the body, and the husband may fail in his duty . . .”

—**as:** (hōs or hōsper) even as.

—**the church is subject:** (hupotassō) as verse 21, 22. To submit requires faith in the one submitted to. One trusts the one to whom she submits not to hurt her but to do everything with her best interests in mind.

—**to Christ:** The church is subject to Christ in the sense that it looks to Him for everything. Col. 1.18 in discussing the role of the body to the head, explains what is meant in the last

phrase of the verse, “And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.” The word preeminence is from the Greek word, *arxē*, meaning “first place, at the beginning, in the eminent place, in the place of leadership.” The church is subject to Christ to the extent that He is put at the beginning of everything.

—**so:** (*houtōs*) in this way, thus.

—**let the wives be to their own husbands:** The wife is to treat her husband as though she were the church and he were its head.

—**in everything:** The wife is given no options. Everything that is done is to be subjection to her husband as the head. This gives no authority to the man but rather a perspective for the woman. She is to give her husband first place in everything. She is to treat him as a leader.

1. A leader is given the chief seat at a meal. 1 Samuel 9.22 And “Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlor, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons.”
2. He is given the best portion of the food. 1 Samuel 9.23, 24 “And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.”
3. He is spoken of in the best possible way. Exodus 22.28 “Thou shalt not revile . . . nor curse the ruler of thy people.”
4. He is addressed in the language of respect and honour.
1 Peter 3.6 “Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.”

Verse 25

—**Husbands:** (*hoi andres*) “You men” or “You husbands.”

—**love:** (*agapate*, present imperative tense of *agapaō*) Intelligent

affection, based on reason, choice and decision. It is not motivated to love by anything; in the object loved. The person loves regardless. Appearance, faults, and circumstances do not affect the love in any way. This love is manifested by actions. Love without action is useless, 1 John 3.18. Withheld love is hatred, 1 John 3.17. The word used is the present imperative tense. This tense calls for a long term way of doing something as a continual habitual action.

- your wives, even as:** (kathōs) “just as, in accordance with, being measured and characterized by . . .”
- Christ also loved:** (ēgapēsen, aorist indicative active tense of agapaō) The aorist tense is used to indicate an action viewed as complete at a point in time. It shows an action wrapped up as a single package. It indicates effective or successful action. It may be translated “loved effectively, successfully, completely.”
- the church:** (ekklēsia) A company that is called out and called together. In this context it is used of every person who is born into God’s family.
- and gave:** (paredōken, aorist indicative active tense of paradidōmi) “To give up, deliver up.” (The word is a compound word made up of “para = by the side of, and didōmi = to give.”)
- Himself:** The Lord Jesus gave Himself up in death.
- for:** (huper) on behalf of it:

Verse 26

- That:** (hina) To the end that, with the purpose that.
- He might sanctify:** (hagiasē, aorist tense of hagiazō) “To make holy, to set apart for God.” It refers to deliverance from sins guilt by the blood of Christ. Please see 1 Cor. 6.11; Heb. 9.13,14; 10.10,14,29.
- and cleanse:** (aorist tense of Katharizō) “To make pure, cleanse.” It expresses “the way in which the sanctifying takes place.” (Expositors) It is used:
 - a) for physical cleansing
 - b) moral cleansing or separation from evil. 2 Cor. 7.1 Having

therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. James 4.8.

- c) forgiveness, freeing from the guilt of sin. Titus 2.14; Heb. 9.14; 1 John 1.7,9. 1 John 1.7 But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.
- it with the washing:** (loutron) a washing, a bath, or the water used for taking a bath. This word is only used here and in Titus 3.5.
- of water:** The Lord cleanses His church in water. Paul explains what he means in the next phrase.
- by:** (en) “in,” giving the sphere in which this cleansing takes place.
- the word:** (rhēma) The spoken word. This refers to the word of God spoken in power to the heart. The Lord Jesus made a similar statement to His disciples in John 15.3, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” Water baptism is important for a person after he is saved from sin. However, it has no ability in itself to cleanse anyone. The blood of Christ cleanses us from sin and makes one fit for Heaven. The word of God cleanses the daily behaviour of the believer.

Verse 27

- that:** (hina) “In order that . . .”
- He might present:** (parastēsē, aorist active tense of paristēmi) This is a compound word made of two parts, “para” = “by the side of;” and “histēmi” = “to make to stand, set, place.” It means literally, “to set beside, to make to stand by the side of.”
- it:** (autēn eautō) Literally, “it Himself.” That is, He will be the one that does the presenting.
- to Himself:** It is Christ Himself who presents the church, setting it by His side. It is also to Himself that He present her. “The idea . . . is that of the bridegroom presenting or setting forth the bride.” (Expositors) she is placed by His side so that He himself can enjoy her as well as everyone else be able to see her.

- a glorious:** (endoxan) (From “en” = “in”; and “doxa” = glory, honor) Literally, “Honoured, glorious, in resplendent array, splendid, gorgeous.”
- church, not having spot:** (spilos) “Spot, speck, fleck, stain, blot, or moral blemish.”
- or wrinkle:** (rhutis) “Wrinkle, fold, a disfiguring wrinkle, flaw or blemish. “The word referred to a wrinkle or fold on the face.” (Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament)
- or any such thing:** (tōn toioutōn) “The article gives the force of anything belonging to the class of such things as deform and defile.” (Expositors)
- but:** (alla) denoting a contrast
- that:** (hina) “in order that”
- it should be holy:** (hagios) As 1.1. To be set apart with God who sets eveil apart from Himself by His glory.
- and without blemish:** (omōmos) unblameable, without disgrace, without a stain.

How did and does the Lord show His love for His bride the church?

How many things does the Lord take responsibility for regarding His bride as presented in verses 26 and 27?

1. Sanctification (conscience) 2. Cleanliness 3. Presentability 4. Beauty 5. Youth 6. Holiness (fidelity) 7. Reputation (without blemish i.e., unblameable, or without disgrace).

A FORTHCOMING SERIES

On a number of occasions we have been requested to introduce a series of articles dealing with those things which are fundamental to assembly life. We are very pleased therefore to announce that in the will of the Lord, we intend to commence an Assembly Testimony Bible Class. We are delighted that our esteemed brother Mr. John Riddle has agreed to undertake this task on an ongoing basis. It is expected this series will commence in the next issue and we have no doubt it will prove to be most valuable to all our readers, especially the young in Christ. Young believers should be encouraged to take a special interest in these articles.

MY CONVERSION AND CALL (31)

by the Late S. Patton, Ontario, Canada

I was born and brought up in Dromore, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland. There I went to Sunday School in the local Presbyterian meeting house, and learned the Scriptures which are able to make one wise unto Salvation, 2 Tim. 3.15. My mother was the first to be saved in the home, then my father.

They started reading the Scriptures for themselves, and as a result discovered things should be different.

Mr. Alex Cooke, a servant of the Lord came to Ballywatermoy Gospel Hall for a week of ministry meetings. He visited my parents and invited them to come and hear the Word.

The truth of the Word gripped their hearts, and the result was they were baptized, and gathered out and unto the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. That meant a move from the Presbyterian meeting house to the Gospel Hall.

As a lad I learned my sinnership and need of being saved through a faithful Sunday School teacher, Mr. Peter Herbison. However, it was in September, 1947, when Harold Paisley came for Gospel Meetings that the Holy Spirit took a dealing with me. I was convicted of my sin, and on the twenty third of September was converted to Christ through Eph. 2.8.

In April 1948 I was baptised and gathered out to the Lord's name. Soon after I became active in Sunday School work and open air meetings in the village of Kilrea, and other places.

I left Ireland in the year of 1953 and went to Canada where I worked for a few years, but kept busy in gospel work. I helped in gospel efforts and for a number of years in children's work in Lindsay, Ontario.

In the year of 1968, I felt the Lord was calling me to a wider field of service. It was in 1970 when I stepped out in faith with the fellowship of the Assembly in Peterborough and Oshawa.

I have tried to do the Master's will, spreading the good news, and strengthening the things that remain. God has blessed in salvation over the years and up until the present. So one presses on in the great work, what a joy it is to serve Him.

He deserves to be served with all the energy of which we are capable.

We shall find our best reward in the Lord's work if we do it with determined diligence.

(Our brother went to be with the Lord on 21st June, 1994.)

ERRATUM—In the Sept./Oct. issue, page 157, the last sentence of the second paragraph ought to have read, “brethren Sydney Maxwell and John Gray (both late of Canada) and Tom Bentley (Malaysia).” We apologise for any embarrassment caused by the printer's error.

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This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people. (No member of the committee, author of articles or any other person connected with the magazine receives payment, remuneration or gratuity of any kind).

All cheques, money orders, etc., should be made payable to “Assembly Testimony Magazine.”

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