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NOTES

A leading journal recently said this: "If civilisation is to survive, a super-national organisation will have to be set up in order to restrain the ambition and moderate the selfishness of competing national states. We can no longer afford political anarchy; the world is too small, industry too complex, science too powerful." (*Nature*, 25/9/43.)

What can better serve that purpose than the Kingdom for which we look? Christians are longing and praying for it. Men long for it, unknowingly. They realise that a strong hand will be necessary to restore order and justice on earth—and it will be forthcoming, although not in the way they expect. "Behold, the Lord will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." "And it shall be said in that day, 'Lo, this is our God. We have waited for him, and he will save us.'" That "super-national" organisation is the Kingdom of God on earth. Let us never desist from the age-old prayer, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done **on earth.**"

A series of discourses on Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians commences in this issue under the title "From a prison cell." It has often been that great powers for good or for evil have had their birth in such places. Paul's three years in Arabia taught him much concerning the philosophy of the faith, but it required the more astringent experience of the prison cell to teach him those deep things which have been of such inestimable benefit to those who have followed in these later years.

"THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE."

The continued demand for this booklet has made it necessary to produce a new edition, which is now available in stock.

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From a Prison Cell

A series of discourses on the prison epistles

T.H.

The Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians were written by Paul from a prison cell in Rome. Evidently his detention there was of a very mild nature, for, though under arrest, Paul was permitted to dwell in his own hired house alone, save for the presence of his military guard (Acts 28; 16). Pending the hearing of his case at Nero's bar, he was permitted to continue under house-arrest for two whole years; with no greater inconvenience than his chains. During these two years he was permitted to receive all his friends without check, so that he "received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28; 31). Thus, spared the awful severities of ancient prison cells, his own home became both a sanctum and a cell.

Under conditions such as these the mighty qualities of his master-mind blossomed forth into full flower. To his native in-born genius the operation of the enlightening influence of the Spirit of the Living God gave new and added powers, enabling him to develop and define those deeper things of God which mortal tongue had only once told before. No teacher save the Lord Jesus had trodden that path of truth. Even He had not spoken full and clear, because at that time none else could understand. The "many things" which He had wanted to say, but could not say (John 16; 12), were left for Paul to say, when hearing ears had been opened by the Spirit of truth. Then under the enlightening power of the promised Comforter, Paul was able to develop all those special features of the Lord's good news—now Paul's good news—and set them out in all their force and beauty, both in his conversations with his friends and in these letters to Ephesus, Colossæ and Philippi. We have in these three letters the very essence and cream of all extant Christian literature, reaching the loftiest heights of sanctifying expression of which human language is capable. To such incomparable altitudes of illuminating thought do some of these expressions soar that students are to be found who speak of these things as though they constituted another and better Gospel, distinct and

separate from all the teachings of Paul's own earlier days. Distinctions are claimed between the Gospel of the Kingdom, and the "fellowship of the Mystery," with suggestion that there is but little (if any) relationship between the two themes.

It will be our privilege to investigate both these themes as our studies proceed, and we hope to be able to find that Paul wrote to his friends exactly the same things which he spoke to those who visited his prison home (Acts 28 ; 31). It is possible to assign other reasons than that of another and better Gospel for the super-excellence of these Epistles without detaching them from earlier writings from the same pen. We have only to call to mind the unresting journeys of his active days, from Asia into Europe, from Europe back again, with scarce a moment's cessation from activity in which to concentrate and reflect. We only need to think of the footsore evangelist harried from place to place by relentless foes intent only on discrediting him, and of gathering to themselves the fruitage of his labours, to realise how impossible it had been for him to sit for long at ease in cool, calm consideration of the deeper points of the Gospel story. He had them in his mind, in germ and bud, and sometimes they flower forth from his pen, but not with the full bloom and beauty of the later ripened truth.

It was only when the rush and turmoil of an overcrowded life gave place to the safe peacefulness of his quiet prison retreat, first for two years in Cæsarea, and now again in Rome, that the undeveloped germs and unopened buds of earlier days blossomed forth into stately bloom, delightful to see and hear. Immature and rudimentary thoughts, difficult to express and harder still to pass along, assumed full-grown form and were clothed in words of rare beauty and great power.

God cut those restless wanderings short; not only that Paul might testify at the Roman Court, but that he might have time to rest, and open wide the portals of God's treasure-house, that all who later came to believe might see set forth the amplitude of their inheritance in Christ. Without that season of enforced rest Paul might have burnt away the wick of life too soon, before even he himself had grasped the full immensity of the mystery of the fellowship in Christ. Had that been so, not his alone

would have been the loss, but three-score generations since his day would also have been deprived of these deeper, priceless things of God.

Paul was a deep thinker, and that was exactly what the Christian Church needed at the time. All other Apostles were untrained fishermen—men who had received no special training for their task. The Pharisees classed them as ignorant and unlearned men. Jesus had departed from the world leaving these untrained, untutored men to represent His cause. And while the propagation of truth was not intended to be accomplished by human power or intellectual might, its deeper aspects needed to be comprehended and stated by at least one penetrating well-balanced mind. Paul was a chosen vessel into which and through which Jesus could issue forth the things which He had to leave unsaid. Paul's mind could not leave a theme till he had traced it back to its first cause, nor leave it till he had outlined its fullest sequences. Not enough was it for him to know that Jesus was the Son of God—he must dissect that statement into its component elements, and know precisely what it meant. Nor yet enough to know that Jesus died for sin. He wanted to know why and how that death could offset sin, and till he understood, he deeply probed the records of the Word of God. He had to do among believing men the work which Jesus Himself could not do, because men could not understand. Hence Paul had to say the things Jesus could not say. These things became the theme and topic of Paul's enquiring mind, and under the Spirit's influence the unsaid things of Jesus were said, in the main, by Paul. His writings, when arranged in chronological order, show that his mind was always getting deeper and still deeper into the things of his Lord, and truths, roughly and immaturely stated at first utterance, become developed and complete as the years rolled by. And with progressive thought, ripeness of expression kept step, giving to the later products of his pen a mellowness rich and mature. *Ephesians*, *Colossians*, *Philippians* and *Philemon* are the rich ripe fruits of Paul's mellow years.

We may well thank God for Paul's restraining chain, even though at times it may have deeply chafed his flesh. It set free his soul to soar up to the heavenly heights to give form and words to lofty thoughts, high as the heavens themselves, and more enduring than eternal

hills. Only God Himself can estimate the debt which all we of later day owe, but cannot pay, to this diminutive giant of a man.

From that little prison cell, the enforced home of a little wandering Christian Jew, set at the heart of the world's metropolis, with all the tawdry trappings of Imperial Majesty on every hand, the soaring mind of Paul swept forth throughout heaven and earth, and told, under the unseeing eyes of Rome's sceptred prince, in language superb and sublime, that God was creating a universal throne, and preparing an exalted Prince to fill that throne, at whose feet even proud Imperial Cæsar would have to bow.

No bricks nor walls, no chains or prætorian guard could chain down that Spirit-led mind of Paul, and make him mindful only of his little day and his fettered circumstance. Back to those times before the world began, then forward to those better days, when heaven and earth are cleansed from sin, the Spirit led that receptive mind, and as he grasped the great design, he wrote it down in rich superlatives. Ordinary diction was poor and tame—he must spin phrases of his own—phrases which seem meaningless to the profane, but phrases, each of which is a rich coronet clustered with gems to those who know the truth. Here are a few—“blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ”; “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world”; “holy and without blemish before Him”; “fore-ordained us unto adoption as sons . . . unto Himself”; “the glory of His grace which He bestowed on us freely in the Beloved.” This, and much beside, is almost all new coin, never issued like this from any mint before, but all required to set forth the abundant grace of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rome may have had her senators and orators, but no Cato or Cicero could speak like this. Rome may give her little men her franchise, and set them in her ranks of free-born men, but she could not make them sons of God! Rome may hoist her chosen Cæsar to her throne, but she could not lift her candidate to the heavenly Throne! Within the very shadow of Roman majesty itself, the words and thoughts which told of One who could elevate a beggar to joint-heirship in that Throne took shape and form. How near together, therefore, in that little cell

came the sordid and the sublime—only a length of chain, which, binding their ambassadors together, separated those two worlds. Guard and prisoner constituted together a miniature of this present world—one, the emblem of the supreme power of these Gentile Times, one, the token of the persecuted Christ, whose day of power is yet to come.

From that small spot, abounding with such great contrast, flowed forth doctrine which has changed the world. It has been both food and light to help God's child along his way. It has developed faith and gendered hope, and kindled love in many hearts. There is no contradiction between this and the earlier themes. Ephesians and Colossians are built on the broad foundations laid in Romans and Galatians. But times and conditions were under change. The nation as a whole was drifting to its doom, while the small elect remnant was growing up into Christ. In the early days Paul dwelt much on the first coming of the Lord as the point towards which the history and destiny of the Hebrew race had long been tending; in his later days it is the Christ Who is Lord of angels and worlds, and to Whose Second Coming the whole array of the universe is moving. In the first days he sought to convince his kith and kin of their opportunity to accept and rally to the Messiah whom God had sent into their midst. Hence, he stressed repentance and justification from sin. But when the nation was bent on plunging to its doom, it was to the treasure within the field he paid greatest heed. He dwelt less on the redemptive work of Christ, and more on its Head and constitution; less on the justification of the repentant sinner and more on the sanctification of the elect saint; but all these later things had been implicit in his Gospel from the first, just as the earlier themes were never wholly absent from the later and more explicit themes. Throughout his ministry the burden of teaching sought to show the union of the believer with his redeeming Lord, and for the description of this unity he has coined a whole vocabulary of phrases and illustrations: believers are “in Christ” and Christ in them; they bear relation to Him as stones to a foundation, as members to a Head, as a wife to her husband. This unity he shows to be “ideal,” for before time began the Divine Father made the destiny of Christ and the believer one.

∴ THE QUIET TIME ∴

Prayers : Big and Little

The great soul prays, "Lord, make me as big as my problem" while the little soul prays, "Lord, let me off easy." The giant soul asks, "Lord, give me strength sufficient for a hard day" as the small soul begs, "Lord, let me have a lighter load." The great heart prays, "Lord, let me stand firm when the fight is hardest," the craven heart cries, "Lord, let me escape." The crusader soul sends up the prayer, "Lord, stand with me until I finish my task."

Welcoming the Scalpel

"When a man is attacked for his loyalty to the Bible and Bible truth, he has a right to feel encouraged. The Bible begins to mean something to him then. Such an attack is evidence that he is really alive, for, as a well-known defender and expounder of the Bible as God's word has keenly said: 'The Bible is a living thing; and when it gets into you and your life, you will be under the scalpel of every little critic.' Criticism is not a thing to be sought; but when it comes as a result of getting the Bible into your blood, it is not to be feared."

Let us go on unto perfection—Heb. 6; 12.

Do not let your life be a constant subtraction, a continuous depletion, a steady draining away of spiritual vitality; but let it be an uninterrupted growth, a steady enrichment. Go from good to better and from better to best. It is impossible to give what you haven't got. You cannot lift others above your own level. Grow therefore in grace and in gladness. **Add, day by day, to your soul's rich store.**

For who is God, save the Lord? and who is a Rock, save our God?—2 Sam. 22; 32.

We can only trust when we cannot trace God's hand in all that is happening, and with Whittier we must be content to say:—

And mid the madd'ning maze of things
When pressed by storm and flood,
To one fixed ground my spirit clings,
I know that God is good.

Blessed be His name. He has not left us comfortless.
He has come to us, and His sure Word is our strength
and stay.

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God"—Matt. 5; 9.

First keep thyself in peace, and then shalt thou be able to make peace among others.

A peaceable man doth more good than he that is well learned.

A good and peaceable man turneth all things to good.

He that is at peace is not suspicious of any, but he that is discontented and troubled is tossed with divers suspicions; he is neither quiet himself, nor suffers others to be quiet.

If thou wilt thyself be horne with, bear also with another.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace."—Rom. 14; 19.

God is Ever Available

Let me know that especially in any time of trouble I can count on His nearness. He is, as the Psalmist says, a very present help in trouble, almost as though in troubled days God were more than ordinarily near, very present, as though our trouble made Him hasten to our aid. My need is my special claim upon His presence.

They saw no man, save Jesus only—Matt. 17; 8.

This upward look must always bring the earnest seeker into close communication with his Lord. It is thus that we shall find our approach into the secrets of the Most High, and prove the truth of His promise Who has said, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." The disciples had the upward look when they saw no man save Jesus only. All other lights must grow dim in the light of His glory and grace.

Waiting in Hope

How happy the hearts which in every situation place unbounded confidence in Jehovah's Word! Such may be hedged up on every side, and encompassed like Israel at the Red Sea with seemingly insurmountable difficulties, yet even here they will follow Israel's example; they will cry unto God and rely upon His mercy. They will "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Well may it be said, "By faith Israel passed through the Red Sea."

I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I hope—Psa. 130; 5.

The Binding of Satan

A.O.H.

Reflections upon a
familiar subject

The vision of the conflict between good and evil in the Book of Revelation comes at length to a time when a mighty angel is seen descending from heaven with a great chain in his hands, and having arrived on earth he takes forcible hold of the great red dragon which alone survives of the enemies of righteousness, binds him with the chain, casts him into the abyss, and seals the entrance with the sign of Divine authority that the nations should be deceived no more throughout the thousand years—the Millennium. Ardent longing for that day has led many to watch earnestly the signs of the times, and the questions “Is Satan now bound? Is he in process of being bound? Is he yet to be bound?” are common.

What is this binding? Quite evidently it is closely connected with the restraint of evil which is a feature of the Millennial Age. Rev. 20; 1 indicates clearly that its fulfilment is at the commencement of that Age. This does not necessarily mean, though, that the binding must take place simultaneously with the commencement of the Second Advent. The dragon of Rev. 20 is apparently the last enemy of righteousness to be dealt with after the other great enemies, the “Beast” and the “False Prophet” have been cast into the Lake of Fire. Now, since Rev. 19, dealing with the warfare between the Rider on the white horse and these two enemies, is evidently a phase of the Second Advent, the binding of the great red dragon, coming next in order, would seem to belong to a later phase of that Advent. That binding also coincides with the commencement of the reign of the saints, and since that reign does not commence until the saints have been “changed” and the marriage has been completed, and the Lord must first return “for” His saints before the marriage feast and His subsequent revelation to the world “with” His saints, it would seem clear that the “binding of Satan” is to occur after all these things, at the time of the establishment of Christ’s kingdom in power in the earth. That time has not yet come.

From that time onward, the practice of evil shall be restrained. “Nothing shall hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain” (Isa. 11; 9). Men will not be prevented from thinking evil thoughts or harbouring evil desires; some will yield “feigned obedience” (Psa. 18; 44, marg.); but the power to inflict evil or harm, physical, mental or moral, upon another will be lost. We do not know how Divine power will be exercised here in a fashion of which we have little, if any, conception today. But it will be true that although a man may formulate an intention to do evil to another, he will find himself physically or mentally powerless to put that intention into effect. That restraint will operate throughout the Millennial Age.

A little thought suggests that the same restraint must of necessity be placed upon Satan. He must be rendered powerless to influence the minds of men by evil suggestions. Hence the “binding of Satan” will be a restraint upon his power, at present enjoyed by Divine permission, of instilling evil thoughts and influences into the minds of men. His personal freedom of movement need not be limited, any more than is the personal freedom of evilly disposed men on earth during that Age, but he will find himself quite powerless to reach men’s minds in any way.

A glance at daily events should make it clear that the binding of Satan has not yet taken place, and it not yet even in progress. The powers of evil have greater control to-day in earth’s affairs than they have ever had, except, perhaps, in the early days at the period of the Deluge. Many of the devices and acts of certain classes of men are characterised by a cold-blooded ferocity and disregard for human suffering which can quite literally be said to be devil-inspired. The fearful experiences through which so many of earth’s peoples must pass to-day are evidences that the archangel of evil is still the god of this world, and that his subjects still render him service. It is sometimes suggested that these facts are the results of Satan’s struggles to resist his binding, and are evidences therefore that the binding is actually in progress but this idea is built upon a purely human conception of the binding, as though the Most High God finds it necessary to wage war and use the heavenly equivalent of physical force to achieve His end of render-

ing Satan powerless. Nothing of the sort. God is always master of the situation, and when in His wisdom the time comes for Satan to be bound and his influence to be restrained, one word from the Almighty, and it will be done. It will not require battalions of angels drawn up in martial array, archangels in command of detachments and some spiritual equivalent of carnal weapons, with which to wage an invisible conflict with the hosts of Satan in the fashion in which fallen man wages war to-day.

Against this view it is sometimes argued that the twelfth chapter of Revelation does contain a very vivid description of war in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting with the devil and his angels, resulting in the devil being cast out of heaven to the earth, and that this surely constitutes a detailed description of the binding or partial binding of Satan at the end of this Age.

It is suggested in this connection that Rev. 12 has nothing in common with Rev. 20, except that the same red dragon is a figure in the symbolism. The time of fulfilment of Rev. 12 is clearly much earlier than the end of the Gospel Age—the final verses show that much, the picture closing with the dragon going forth to make war with the remnant of the woman's seed, which is quite opposite to the idea of binding and restriction. Whatever the teaching behind this symbolism of war in heaven between Michael and the dragon, it has no connection with the descent of the angel to bind Satan at the commencement of the thousand years. By some this vision in Rev. 12 has been made the basis of a view of the "binding," which declares that at some specified time in history the Lord Jesus Christ did engage in combat with Satan and expel him from heaven, in consequence of which the latter has come down to earth and is continuing the warfare against his opponent with this earth as the battle ground. Whilst this view springs from a very sincere desire to explain the apocalyptic imagery of the Scriptures in terms of present-day events and expectations, it is none the less a form of interpretation which debases rather than enhances our understanding of the spiritual world to which we aspire and which we hope one day to enter. And Christians who believe in the propriety of war and conflict between spiritual beings, for the suppression of evil forces can hardly complain if

the powers of this world demand similar services in earthly armies, for the principle is the same.

It is important to realise that God is omnipotent. "He spake, and it was done: He commanded, and it stood fast." Although He allows His ends to be achieved by means of orderly development, "first the grain, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," and although He permits the continuance of evil up to a pre-determined limit for a wise purpose, yet when God's time to act against evil and evildoers has come, there is none that can resist His Will. The fortunes of war—in earthly or spiritual realm—have no place in the Divine order. He brought the evil of the antediluvian world to an end instantly without calling upon the help of Noah. He destroyed the Cities of the Plain without using His heavenly messengers other than to convey the news to Abraham of what He Himself was about to do. When the hosts of this world converge upon the Holy Land in the last great day of trouble it is to be God Himself, alone, Who will act. As in the days of Jehoshaphat, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle"; "For the battle is not yours, but God's" (II Chron. 20; 15-17). So with the binding of Satan. The vision is a picture of the power of God operating from the seat of His government to end, in one instant of time, every scrap of power and influence Satan may possess over man and spirit.

But, one may ask, is it not likely that Satan foresees this catastrophe, and is making preparations to resist his fate; and does this not imply something very much like war between him and the forces which will effect his binding? It may very reasonably be asked in reply whether Satan, a fallen being separated from God by millenniums of sin, really believes in his heart that he will be bound.

Consider man. Men to-day, in general, do not believe in God. They have lost their knowledge of God, and with it any vital belief in the power or at least the care of God. How common it is to hear "If God does exist, He either does not care or has not the power to alter things, or He would have done so and put the world right long ago." That sentiment fairly expresses the considered judgment of the natural man who has been separated from God's presence by sin for many thousands of years.

Yet man at the beginning knew God, walked with God, talked with God, and believed in the power of God. That is clear from the Genesis story. What has wrought the difference? The separation wrought by sin! "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over . . ." (Rom. 1 ; 28). So that to-day man does not believe that God can or will put things right!

Is it not reasonable to think that the same principle must hold good in the case of Satan? He, too, had the privilege of knowing God, walking with Him, talking with Him, and appreciating His mighty power. He, too, fell into sin, and since nothing that is of sin can stand in the Divine Presence, he, too, from that day must have been banished, separated from God just as truly as was Adam. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil!" For thousands of years, then, Satan has been as far from God as has man, and through all that time has enjoyed full liberty to work out his evil designs. It is true he witnessed the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and knew that He at least had escaped his power—but it is in the highest degree unlikely that Satan has any nearer access to the resurrected Christ than has man, and two thousand years have passed since the Lord passed out of man's, and Satan's, ken into the heaven of heavens from which He had come. Would it be surprising, therefore, if Satan, like man, blinded by sin, has concluded that God cannot or will not complete His work on earth, and that Satan's rebellion will, therefore, continue its apparently successful course?

If this be the right conclusion, the great enemy of man will be busy with his plans, continuing still to wage war against all that is holy and true and lovely on earth, unbelieving until the hour has struck. In the heyday of his power, attendant angels carrying out his dark orders, men on earth busy about his fell designs, the cry of his suffering prisoners going up to heaven, his powers will vanish as one snaps off the electric light. Like a certain modern dictator whose edifice of twenty years vanished overnight, he will stand bereft of power, of influence, of servants, of an empire—alone. Too late he will realise that the omnipotence of God has waited for this moment; that right has prevailed, and as the shades of the abyss close around him he will enter into the terrible solitude

of an evil mind left entirely alone with its evil.

Can one picture that lonely spirit through all the thousand years of earth's jubilee? Free to roam through the vast spaces of God's creation; free to observe, to meditate, to scheme, but powerless to affect or influence in any way the mind or the heart of the weakest or humblest of God's creatures. A being apart, seeing all, hearing all, unable to interfere. The seal of Divine authority marks him out and sets him apart like Cain—an outcast, an exile, one upon whom is the judgment of God.

Perchance his presence will linger around this earth until the knowledge of man's happiness under the Messianic kingdom, and the renovation of the once desolate earth, becomes unendurable, and drives him off to far recesses of our universe where other worlds in the making, other instances of Divine creative energy, recall to his dark mind the earlier history of our own planet when, a happy and righteous being, he may have been one of the morning stars who "sang together" (Job. 38 ; 7). He may translate himself from this material universe which glitters around us every night into that spiritual sphere which is beyond the scope of human sense or understanding, and wander through the celestial land as alone and as remote from the presence and the knowledge of God as when he presided over earth's destinies. He may come back, out of eternity into our realm of time and space, to find the thousand years of restitution still in progress; but wherever he goes and whatever he does, Satan will be bound, altogether unable to interfere further in the plans of God for His creation.

Of the loosing again at the end of the Age we cannot write, we know so little. It would seem that the thousand years of opportunity does not profit the Evil One, for a time is to come when freed from the restraints for a "little season" he attempts once more to deceive and enslave humanity. There is apparently no repentance, nothing but an irrevocable determination to fight against God.

And that determination, in God's due time, brings about the only possible sequel. "I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth . . . and never shalt thou be any more" (Ezek. 28 ; 18-19).

"My flesh I will give for the life of the world!"

Often do we interpret these words in terms of His crucifixion and death. But Jesus did also consciously fulfil the prevision of Isaiah: "He poured out his life unto death." For three and a half years the life of Jesus was given, in every possible sense, that the world might have more life. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

This is the call of the Church now, and in this Age. Our mission holds something more than a study of Divine philosophy, a growth in the knowledge of Scripture history and prophecy, a waiting for future glory and felicity. It is to give life that others might have life. It is to offer life **now**, as Jesus offered life **then**. True, we cannot heal diseases by a wave of the hand, produce food from stones wherewith to feed the hungry, drive out demons of hate, fear and all evil by verbal command—but, stay—is it true that we cannot do these things? Is there nothing that we can do for a sick or suffering one that will ease their lot and perchance assist them in their recovery; no power at all to relieve some little part of the hardship on those who suffer physical want in this unfriendly world; no word that can be fitly spoken to lift the mind of someone bound in the "bonds of iniquity" to higher and nobler ideals, and thus at least commence to cast out the demons that possess them? If we can do any of these things, in however little degree, we shall be doing, in our own small way, that to which our Lord Jesus devoted a great part of His life. And we are on safe ground when we find that "as He was, so are we, in this world."

ON MARS HILL

"Intolerance has had a very successful career, and it looks like having a brilliant future, but it has nothing to do with Christianity." ("Dick" Sheppard)

"The Church is my battle-ground, not my dug-out, and I feel I am to be envied by those who deplore the fact that they can only preach to the converted." (W. R. Burwell in "Christian Pacifist")

"In the past we have suffered from theologians who have lacked the spirit of evangelism, and evangelists who could have done with a little more theology." (Percy Sowerby in a broadcast talk)

"The primary characteristic of knowledge is not that it is for ever changing, but that it is for ever growing" (Sir James Jeans)

"The authority of emperors, kings and princes is human; the authority of councils, synods, bishops and presbyters is human; the authority of prophets is Divine." (Sir Isaac Newton)

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THE QUESTION BOX

?

Q. Is repentance rightly described as "re-thinking"? It has been suggested that God merely requires man to turn and start walking in His ways, and that this constitutes "repentance."

A. Nothing of the sort. Too many Christians to-day are whittling down the standards so as to make reconciliation with God easy and "respectable." Repentance implies a definite renunciation of sin, and sin is a very real thing, and is infinitely horrible. Some are genuinely puzzled because they cannot trace in their own lives any definite point at which there was a sudden and overwhelming consciousness of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin" and of their own fallen condition, leading to instantaneous repentance and conversion. That experience does not come to all Christians, especially in these more deliberate days. Repentance may be more of a process than an act, a growing realisation as time goes by, the "change of mind," which is the literal meaning of the term, taking place in step with increasing perception of the difference between the world's sin and God's holiness. But a change of mind there must be. There can be no effective change of conduct without it. "If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."

A reconditioned car may run less jerkily than before, but it can never be the same thing as a new one. This modern idea of the reconditioned life, in which the individual conveniently forgets all his past, and hopes God will do the same, polishes up his conduct, and sets out

afresh as though nothing had happened, simply will not do. God's purpose in the permission of evil is that from our experience we may learn why righteousness is the law of creation, and the first step in our education is to recognise the sin in ourselves, and formally renounce it, resolving that henceforth we eschew the Devil and all his works, serving and living for God alone, in the strength and by the grace of His Son Jesus Christ. That is repentance.

The word is *metanoia*, and it definitely signifies change of mind, not a "re-casting" of the mind, or a "thinking again." Its very usage drives home the reality of that change. John the Baptist's stirring call "Repent ye—for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3; 2); the repentance of Nineveh at Jonah's preaching (Matt. 12; 41); the joy that is in heaven when one sinner repenteth (Luke 25; 7); and Peter's final call "Repent, and be converted . . ." (Acts 3; 19) all cry out to heaven of the great change that takes place when one man turns from the power of sin to serve the living God.

Q. At the Council of Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15 there was "much disputing." Had the apostles and elders so soon fallen from the high ideals of John 17?

A. By no means. The usage of the word "dispute" has changed a little during the four hundred years since the A.V. was prepared. We associate the term to-day with wrangling and acrimony. The Greek word "*suzeteo*" used in Acts 15 has no such significance. It implies a mutual or co-operative seeking or discussion together. Our own word "discussion" would be a good equivalent. The same word is used in Acts 28; 29, where the Roman Jews, after hearing Paul's witness, departed and "had great reasoning among themselves." The Council where "the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter" was evidently an assembly of grave and sober men who discussed the problem before them in the spirit of Christ and under the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit—and their decision, as shown by history, was blessed accordingly. Would that in all our own discussions on debatable matters we could manifest the same disposition!

Suzeteo is defined by Thayer as "to seek or examine together" (as in Plato) and to "discuss or question" (N.T.); by Robinson "to inquire of one another, to seek together, to question with one another"; by Liddell and Scott "to seek or examine together." Disputing involving wrangling, as in Mark 9; 34 and Phil. 2; 14, is a different word, "*dialogismos*," meaning literally "diverse reckoning."



Many Witnesses

Bible facts illuminated by
history, research & discovery



There is a common belief—outside our own fellowship—that the God of the early Israelites was a bloodthirsty, war-loving Deity, the "tribal God of the Hebrews," as He has been called. The Book of Exodus presents the opposite view; the God Who led them through the wilderness told them to place their entire trust in Him, and eschew fighting and war, and He would lead them into the Promised Land. It was the people who were bloodthirsty and warlike, and they would not heed His words. Interesting confirmation of these statements in Exodus is afforded by the Greek writer Strabo (54 B.C.-A.D. 24), who says of Moses ("Geography," Book 16; 36): "Instead of arms, he taught that their defence was in their sacred things and their Divinity" (i.e., their God).

* * *

An almost complete skeleton of Aurignacian man was discovered by Dr. Leakey at Naivasha, East Africa, in August, 1940, and details have just been published. To us this is interesting. The Aurignacian remains, so far chiefly found in Western Europe, are those of men who lived before the Flood, and certain indications go to show that they probably represent the civilised races of that time. Their brain capacity and physical stature exceeded that of the best specimens of men to-day, a difficult problem for the Evolutionist, but quite understandable to those who believe in the progressive degeneration of the race through sin.

* * *

I Kings 22 : 39 refers to the ivory house which Ahab built at Samaria. The allusion was never really understood; the idea of a palace built of ivory hardly seemed within the bounds of architectural possibility. In recent years the riddle has been solved. Excavations at Samaria have revealed Ahab's palace, faced on all its walls with white marble, the loveliest of all building materials. No wonder the historian referred to it as an "ivory house."

Times and Seasons

Facts and figures
for chronology
students

Nearly all chronological systems have been built upon the assumption that the span of "this present evil world" is limited to 6,000 years, and that the seventh millennium will see the Kingdom established. This belief is admitted to be founded on tradition, since no such statement occurs in the Bible, and the sources of that tradition should therefore be of interest.

Modern writers suggest that the belief is reasonable, citing the six days of creation, followed by the seventh day of rest, as an analogy. It is thought that just as God laboured for six days and then entered into His rest, so man labours under sin for six days ("A day with the Lord is as a thousand years"), and then enters into the Millennial rest. Thus:

"When we go back into antiquity, whether Jewish, heathen or Christian, we find a general and deep-seated belief that the world shall endure 6,000 years in its secular and toiling state, and then will follow 1,000 years of rest, peace and joy—the Millennial Sabbath of the world" (Joseph Seiss, 1856).

"Though the Bible contains no direct statement that the 7th 1,000 will be the epoch of Christ's reign, the venerable tradition is not without a reasonable foundation. The law given to Israel, that six days of labour should be followed by one of refreshment and rest, seems fitly to illustrate the 6,000 years in which the whole creation labours, and the 7th, the grand Millennial Day in which the weary may come to Christ Jesus" (C. T. Russell, 1889).

"While there is no positive statement in the Scriptures declaring that the ending of these years marks the Second Advent, yet there is strong evidence to this effect.

As Israel was given the instructions that they were to rest on the Sabbath day, so this would be a strong hint that the 7th great 1,000-year day of man's history is to be a period of rest" (R. E. Streeter, 1920).

The earliest record of the belief seems to be in the writings of Theopompus (350 B.C.), a reliable Greek historian. The wise men of the Persians, he wrote, taught that the world was to endure 6,000 years, after which Death and Hades would be destroyed; and men live together in happiness. During the following centuries, up to the First Advent, the Jewish Rabbis taught likewise—for example, Rabbi Elias (200 B.C.), who said that the world endures 2,000 years without the law, 2,000 with the law, 2,000 under the Messiah, and in the 7th 1,000 the earth would be renewed and the righteous dead raised. The Kabbalists, Jews who interpreted the Scriptures in a "numeric" fashion, said that the six occurrences of "aleph" (first letter of Hebrew alphabet) in Gen. 1; 1 indicated the six thousand-year periods during which the world would endure, and that then would follow the period of rest. (In Hebrew numerals "aleph" with two dots written above signifies 1,000.)

A somewhat similar mysticism was shown in the Sibylline Oracles, a collection of pagan-Jewish-Christian writings of the First Advent, based largely upon Old Testament history. These Oracles declared that this world-order is limited to 6,000 years, after which Messiah shall come and reign as King over a renovated earth.

The early Christians evidently took these sayings to themselves, and, building their hopes on the Septuagint, the Bible then in use, began to expect the Millennium as due in about the fifth century. A few examples are given. The Epistle of Barnabas (first century) says (13; 3-6): "In the beginning of the creation he makes mention of the sabbath. . . . Consider, my children, what that signifies; he finished them in six days. The meaning of it is this, that in 6,000 years the Lord God will bring all things to an end. For with him one day is as 1,000 years. Therefore, children, in six days, that is, in 6,000 years, shall all things be accomplished." Again, the Gospel of Nicodemus (third century) says (22: 11): "We found in the first of the seventy books, where Michael the archangel is speaking to the third son of Adam the first man, an account that after 5,500 years,

Christ the most beloved Son of God was to come to earth." Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (A.D. 180), said: "If the day of the Lord be as it were 1,000 years, and in six days those things that were made were finished, it is manifest that in the perfecting of those things in the 6,000th year, the Lord shall come from heaven."

Many of the "Early Fathers" expressed themselves similarly, and some of these men had known the Apostles in the flesh, or at least had companied with others who had themselves known the Apostles. Lactantius, a Christian writer of about A.D. 300, says: "Because all the works of God were finished in six days, it is necessary that the world should remain in this state six ages, that is, 6,000 years. At the end of the 6,000th year all wickedness shall be abolished out of the earth, and justice reign for 1,000 years."

The tradition continued right through the Dark Ages, and, as can be seen from the quotations above, is expressed to-day in much the same terms as over 2,000 years ago—a remarkable instance of the persistence of belief.

I wonder sometimes what the years will bring,

But think it better that we do not know

Just what they hold to make us sigh or sing,

Just where we stay, or then, just where we go.

I wonder if the friends we love so well,

Will still be ours while passing down the years,

Or will they pass, in higher realms to dwell,

And leave a loss that lies too deep for tears.

I wonder, as life's story doth unfold,

And brings its changes to both form and face

(For it must needs be that we all grow old)

Shall we grow rich in kindness and in grace?

Of all the things I know, it is most sad,

To watch our loved ones pass to older years,

Yet, may the mind and heart and soul be glad,

Still may the sunshine rainbow-tint the tears.

I wonder, but I do not doubt the End,

For this I feel from all that has gone past,

That all the colours of our life shall blend,

To make one pure and perfect beam at last.

S.R.S., 1943.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Easter Convention.

The Warrington Friends advise that arrangements are in hand for the usual Easter Convention. Further details next month.

Notices of meetings, etc.

In future, all notices intended for this page should be in Bro. Hudson's hands by the 10th of the month preceding publication, instead of the 20th as hitherto. In the case of meetings for which full arrangements have not been made by that time, it will be sufficient if notice is sent by that date and full details given by the 20th.

New Style B.S.M.

Our new style will enable us to follow future changes in the Paper Control Order with greater ease. Compared with the last few months, there is no reduction in the amount of printed matter.

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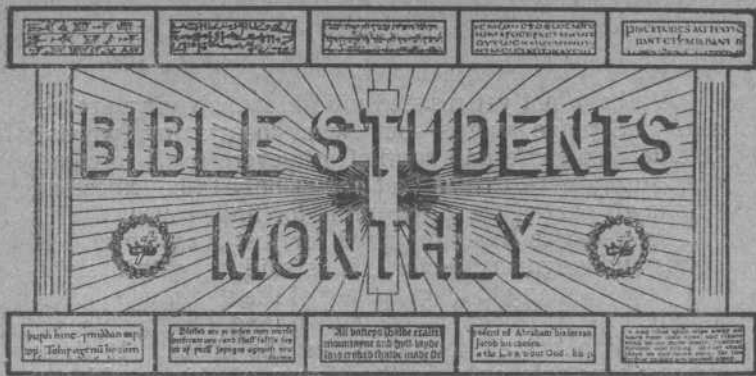
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NOTES

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Strange words—but what heartening words! Redolent of strife and conflict, of severe trials to come, they imply nevertheless that this is only to be expected; this is all part of the programme for final victory. This nation to-day is being prepared for just such a period of stress and anguish; victory, it is said, is within sight, but there is going to be great loss of life and much suffering before that victory is gained, and the people are exhorted to brace themselves for the shock. If those whose hope lies only in the things of this world can manifest such strength and resolution, with what greater tenacity should we, who have so glorious a hope built on things which are not of this world, wage war on behalf of the things we know will eternally abide? Our King is marching on; we know that; but some of us think of ourselves as members of the "conquering bands with banners waving, pressing on o'er hill and plain," without remembering that there can be no conquest without conflict. We, each one of us, must be tested and tried to the uttermost before the time when for us, as for Valiant in "Pilgrim's Progress," all the trumpets shall sound on the other side. We shall be victorious, there can be no doubt about that, but just as our Lord must needs be "made perfect through suffering," so will it be with us. But the suffering is only in time; the victory is in eternity.

* * *

Friends whose eyes are turned eastwards will be interested in a new feature which commences this month, and which it is hoped to continue. Under the title of "The Land of Promise" it is intended to take note of significant developments in the land which one day is to be the centre of the Kingdom of God on earth. Friends are invited to send in suitable items for inclusion under this heading, always stating the source from which the item is obtained.

* * *

Pressure of space has crowded out the "Question Box." It will appear as usual next month.



A NEW YEAR OPENS—1944

W.A.D.

A call to
re-dedication
of purpose.



"I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people."—(Psa. 116; 13-14)

The deeply spiritual writings of the Psalmist of old fit every experience of the child of God and at whatever period of the church's history that he, or she, may have lived. In the end of the Age, however, when special light has been given for the comfort and strength of the Lord's consecrated people amid severe tests of faith and patience, the Psalms are inevitably illuminated as never before. The great events of our Day are seen as, for example, in Psalms 46 and 97; the collective experiences of the saints are outlined as well as those of a more individual nature as illustrated by Psalm 55; and there are many Psalms of forceful and searching exhortation, prominent among which is Psalm 116. Nothing could be more encouraging at the opening of a New Year than a consideration of certain portions of this Psalm. The Psalm contains such a wealth of meaning that it would be impossible to deal with it in detail in the course of a brief article, but the points made will doubtless provoke thought and study of the sacred theme.

The striking language of this Psalm cannot fail to impress upon each one its basic theme of consecration to the Lord begotten of gratitude for His marvellous deliverance. The Psalm is divisible into three parts, as below:—

Verses 1-8.—In this opening section the Psalmist expresses his deep love for the Lord and gives his reasons for that love as manifest in the way in which he has been delivered from death.

Verses 9-13.—Here the Psalmist sets forth his resolution to serve the Lord and, in the fuller light of the Gospel Age, this was prophetic of the course to be pursued by the Lord's people in the "narrow way" of sacrifice.

Verses 14-19.—In this section the performance of his resolution is commenced. The language used is peculiarly apt and cannot but remind us afresh—as we stand on the portals of a New Year—of the binding vows

which we have made. May it ever be true of us to say, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people" (verse 14).

I love the Lord

This expression of the opening verse is the essential thought to be kept in mind throughout the Psalm. If this was the sentiment of the Psalmist of old, how much more so should it be true of us to-day in view of the great blessings that we have received. Each one who has been enlightened by Present Truth can assuredly testify that "he hath heard my voice and my supplications . . . he hath inclined his ear unto me." The Lord hath done **great things for us** whereof we are glad in this closing period of the Gospel Age, and we do well to meditate on this viewpoint of things at the opening of another year. Such a meditation cannot fail to increase our faith in the precious things that we have learned and of which we have been assured (2 Tim. 3; 14), and to drive away fear (1 John 4; 18—Weymouth) as we make progress in spiritual upbuilding as "New Creatures" in Christ Jesus.

The Psalmist outlines in verses 1-8 the ways in which the Lord delivered him, and we may with profit apply his utterances in a prophetic sense to the Anointed of this Age. He thought of physical death, whereas we may see that to be typical of the experiences of this Age when "I was brought low, and he helped me." We ought thus to be able to return unto our rest in God, especially as we review the past. As Moffatt aptly renders verse 7, "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Eternal has dealt lovingly with thee," so this is certainly the privilege of each one who has entered into a covenant by sacrifice of which the writer of the Psalm later speaks. We are living in difficult times, but if "I love the Lord" is our continual meditation, we shall be kept as contemplated by verse 8, "Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling."

I will walk before the Lord

With the background of gratitude for deliverances, we are then brought face to face with the effect upon David of old, who rightly recognised that such a God was worthy of the entire devotion of his being. Yet inter-

persed is the mention of man's falsehood and human weakness which so impressed the Psalmist that he records: "I said in my haste, All men are liars"—in his despair he felt the whole race of man to be a delusion. We are often in danger of thinking on similar lines, forgetful of our own shortcomings and weaknesses according to the flesh. It is for this reason that the Apostle exhorts us to know no man after the flesh, and the writer of old quickly breaks off from this theme to resume in those very well-known words: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" (verses 12 and 13). Moffatt renders verse 13 as "I will offer a libation for my rescue and proclaim the Eternal aloud." The cup of salvation is one of both joy and sorrow, and it is suggestive of the consecrated walk of the "New Creature" in Christ Jesus.

I will pay my vows unto the Lord

As already suggested, we do well to remember, at the opening of another year, the binding vows into which we entered many years ago when first we gave our all to the Lord in consecration, so beautifully expressed by the closing portion of this Psalm. It is surely the desire of each one to pay his vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people. This is illustrated in the water immersion performed before the assembled congregation of the saints, and that is, of course, a figure of the baptism of the Spirit, the effect of which is evident to the individual concerned, and to those around who walk in the same narrow way. This reminds us of the force of example and should stimulate us to greater efforts in the coming year that we may **walk in the light** of Present Truth, and also grow in grace, being transformed after the likeness of the perfect Image so that we may eventually pass beyond the veil to see Him "as he is."

Our vows are not for a few years, but unto death. We need ever to bear this in mind as recorded in Eccles. 5; 4-5: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it: for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay." Let us determine afresh to be prompt in the payment of our vows, being entirely devoted to His service and the

service of His people, in these days when so many are in need of strength and encouragement through the message of Truth now due.

There seems much spiritual instruction in the expression to be found in verse 16: "thou hast loosed my bonds." From the standpoint of the fuller light of the Gospel Age it is suggestive of the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free and we need ever to guard that liberty, which is perfectly consistent with "I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid." We serve Him, not by constraint, but by delight, just as the Hebrew slave at the end of his seven years of service refused to go out free, willingly serving his master for ever, because, "I love my master . . . I will not go out free" (Ex. 21; 5). We need to preserve the liberty of this Truth and not to be entangled again with any yoke of bondage, but this does not mean that we are at liberty to "think for ourselves" apart from the Word. The written revelation must always be our guide if we are to make our calling and election sure for the Kingdom, and we must believe in simple faith what is revealed to us in that Word by His Spirit even when there may seem but little outward evidence thereof at the time present. This has always been the case as, for example, when Noah built an ark although there had never been rain on the face of the earth; he obeyed God in faith, and his course and conduct with the reaction of the people around are mentioned in connection with the signs of the Lord's presence. This incident, therefore, is not without deep significance.

When the Psalmist mentions in the last verse, "the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee O Jerusalem" as the place in which his vows would be paid, he had in mind the literal temple and city of Jerusalem. We are privileged, however, to be members of the greater and more perfect Tabernacle, while the Jerusalem which is above is the counterpart of the earthly Jerusalem, as explained by the Apostle in Gal. 4; 26.

Precious . . . the death of his saints

Death is spoken of in the Scriptures as an enemy, but the death of the saints is different, for they have voluntarily covenanted to die after having first been released from Adamic death by their faith in God's Plan of atone-

ment. This daily dying of the saints culminates in the finish of their course on earth and the nearness of the consummation strikes us with added force as each year swiftly passes by.

We recall, in this connection, the words of the Revelator concerning the period "henceforth" from the time of the Lord's presence when he says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord **from henceforth**: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14; 13). We note that this promise applies to a special class—the dead (in consecration) who die (faithful in the Lord) from henceforth (from the time of the Lord's presence). This should be an added exhortation to each to pay his vows unto the Lord faithfully even unto the end of the way, so that an abundant entrance may be obtained into His everlasting Kingdom as we are changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Let this theme remain with us throughout the New Year—the payment of our vows. May we remember that we are utterly devoted to Him for ever because "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end" (Psalm 119; 112).

There are many dangers ahead, but His grace is both assured and sufficient in the case of those who have covenanted to serve Him in terms of the consecration vow of this Age. The Apostle warned the brethren that grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock, but he added a word of comfort which never fails to encourage us, and especially at the opening of the New Year. He writes: "Now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20; 32).

KNOWLEDGE OR CHARACTER?

So much stress is usually laid upon knowing the truth; so frequently is it asserted that the wise shall understand and not be in darkness, that there is a tendency continually to exalt knowledge unduly above its rightful place. Yet the fact is that truth, light, and understanding are dependent more upon our character than upon our knowledge.

Present knowledge, intermingled with error, is ever

changing and losing itself in greater truth. Eloquent tongues pass into silence, language becomes obsolete. Books and libraries must perish, and the endless and conflicting babble of human expression and reasoning will vanish gradually into eternal oblivion. What we know now is but a tiny fraction of what there is yet to know, and the wider our circle of light, the wider the wall of darkness that shuts us in.

But one day this partial and imperfect knowledge shall be swallowed up by the vaster knowledge of the kingdom of heaven, as the candle flame fades before the rising sun, and as the stream disappears into the boundless sea. In a moment shall our eyes be opened and the daybreak of revelation shall burst upon our obscured vision, settling once and for ever all the problems that have troubled us.

And then, where shall we be? Stripped of the temporary advantages that once gave us a feeling of security, our advanced knowledge now become the accepted and common property of all, our character alone will be left to represent us. The very knowledge in which once we boasted ourselves may be then used in evidence against us as a talent misused.

Whatever our activities or our opinions, whether we be well versed in Scripture or lacking in mental grasp, as day succeeds day, character is slowly but surely being formed and cemented into our personality. We may increase our knowledge and seek out truth, we may strive earnestly to spread these things abroad, but that inward work of transformation goes steadily on unhindered, for better or for worse.

What shall the result be? Everything depends upon it, for except we become as little children we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

—Forest Gate Bible Monthly

(Concluded from page 40)

tian way are those occasional partings of the veil which divides us from the things which are yet to be. May we give the more earnest heed to the sure word of prophecy, watching keenly for those shafts of golden light which, illuming the distant landscape, reveal to us some little more clear and definite impression of our goal, our future home, the "land of far distances."



The Land of Promise.



A monthly record of significant developments in the East.

The Sinai peninsula is to be afforested and irrigated! Trees are to be planted, canals and reservoirs built, to bring fertility to the land in which the children of Israel wandered for forty long years, the "waste and howling wilderness" in which they worked out their long sentence until all those who left Egypt, save Caleb and Joshua, had perished.

Sinai was probably more fertile in those days than it is now, but the record in Exodus shows that at best it was little more than a desert. During Greek and Roman times a number of populous cities were built in its northern part alongside the Mediterranean Sea, but for long centuries now it has been the home of none but a few Bedouin Arabs. At the present time it is a province of Egypt, and its population is officially stated to be between 5,000 and 6,000. In size it is about equal to Ireland, and when one remembers that Sinai comes within the boundaries of the land promised to Abraham there is great significance to be attached to this latest project.

Sinai is a wonderful country. To the geologist it is a veritable paradise. Ages ago there was much disruption of the earth's crust in this region, and, in consequence, the various strata of rocks were fractured, fissured, folded and crumpled upon each other, so that to-day almost every type of rock formation known to the geologist appears upon the surface in confused, intermingled and majestic variety. One comes across chalk cliffs reminiscent of the Kent and Sussex coast, but rising far inland sheer from the desert sand. Great crags and mountains of granite and limestone alternate with masses of slate and shale and sandstone, with fossils and sea shells of long extinct species embedded in the hardened mud which once formed the bottom of prehistoric seas. Flat plains of pebbles and boulders give place in turn to stretches of soft, yielding sand. To the traveller it is a terrible land, but—clothe those bare crags with close packed masses of pine and fir; cover the flat wastes with tamarisk and acacia; fill the deep ravines, or "wadies," down which the winter torrents rush foaming, with

willow and oleander and palm; and Sinai will become a place of beauty and grandeur, fitting province of the Holy Land that is to be.

Plenty of men have travelled through Sinai endeavouring to reconstruct the route followed by Israel at the Exodus, but scientific survey of the land has been greatly neglected until recent years. It is now known that the country by no means lacks water, the rainfall being quite abundant, although limited to certain seasons. The bare rock absorbs the water, which sinks underground, and is trapped by various strata of rock at different levels. Water can often be obtained from the cliffs and crags if one knows which strata to tap, and Arabs of to-day repeat Moses' act of striking rocks to produce water. It only needs trees and undergrowth to conserve the surface water, and reservoirs to store the winter torrents for summer use, to transform the sterile desert into smiling fields.

The Egyptian Government plans to put this work in hand. If future events reveal that the benefit of the work is reaped by the people who build the "land of unwallled villages," it will not be the first time that Israel has spoiled the Egyptians!

ON MARS HILL

"Great havoc is said to have been occasioned in Eden when man's first sinful parents knew that they were naked, but almost greater havoc seems to have been occasioned right through history through the devil drawing the attention of the righteous to the fact that they were clothed with righteousness."

Paul Gliddon in "Christian Pacifist"

"We all suffer from spiritual inertia, and are anxious to discover respectable reasons for remaining as we are."

—Percy Sowerby

"Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think."

—John Stuart Mill

From a Prison Cell

A series of discourses on the prison epistles

T.H.

In the opening verses of his letter to the Ephesians, after the short introductory greeting, Paul piles up statement after statement in an almost bewildering way. The reflective mind seems to be almost staggered by the immensity of the arguments as feature after feature is brought to view. This succession of amazing arguments presents, in the realm of religious thought, an appearance like a series of mighty mountain peaks towering up into heaven one up against the other, and stretching as far as the eye can see.

So closely do the sentences run into each other, it is not easy to separate them one from another in order to take them each singly to analyse and explain them in turn, or in detail. By very careful differentiation, it is possible to divide the section (vs. 3-14) into three smaller sections, each of which seems to have its own outstanding particulars of teaching to impart. These three sub-sections may be divided thus: Sub-section 1: verses 3-6; sub-section 2: verses 7-12; and sub-section 3: verses 13-14.

The first one begins with ascription of praise to God for all His favours in general to the believer through Christ; the second one begins with "In whom WE" have been blessed with a part in these favours; the third one begins with "In whom YE ALSO" have come to receive a share with those who first hoped (or trusted) in Christ.

The first one deals with God's fore-ordination to take to Himself a family of heavenly sons; the second shows them as a first instalment resulting from the operation of a plan of reconciliation embracing both heavenly and earthly things; the third places on record the bestowment of a token or pledge of Divine assurance that the full and complete inheritance for these sons of God is sure without fail.

Towering high above all these assurances is the assertion that everything forms part of God's unchanging purpose—"according to His good pleasure which He hath **purposed** in Himself"—"according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His

own Will" (vv. 9 and 11). In the words of a later section (Eph. 3 : 11) they were "according to the eternal purpose which He **purposed** in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Three times the Apostle makes reference to varying aspects of God's Will. First (in v. 5), he speaks of the process of adoption as being "according to the **good pleasure** of His Will." Next (in v. 9), he states that God has made known "**the mystery** (or sacred secret) of His Will," and lastly (in v. 11) he asserts that the whole scheme of reconciliation is "according to the **counsel** of His Will." Thus the outworking of God's Will is seen to be in absolute accordance with the counsel given by unerring Wisdom, and though at its first inception was in the nature of a God-kept mystery, known only to Himself, it has now been revealed, and shown to be in full conformity with God's unfathomed appreciation of all that is holy and true and good.

The prompting motive throughout, at every stage is God's free and unmerited grace—(v. 6.) "to the glory of His grace" (v. 7)—"according to the riches of His grace." Wisdom, Love and Power are thus set forth by the Apostle as the attributes behind the whole design, and as operating from before the foundation of the world towards the completion of the universal Plan.

At the centre of the whole plan God has set "One" upon whom He has placed His own gracious Spirit, and from which "act of placement" that honoured One has taken His title and His Name. That honoured "One" is called "The Christ." "The Christ" is rightly depicted as the recipient of an "out-pouring." In Mosaic times this "out-pouring" was represented in the anointing oil of the "chosen" person as God's High Priest. In those far distant times before the world began, this "out-pouring" consisted of the bestowment by God upon the honoured object of His choice of honours, preferments and pre-eminences, together with all necessary powers and characteristics to enable the "Chosen One" to attain to those honours, preferments and pre-eminences.

Hence, the Apostle can speak of privileges embodied and residing in Christ as from those distant days, but which became available to the follower of the Lord in these special days of grace. Thus we read of spiritual blessing in the heavenlies "in Christ," of God having

fore-ordained us unto adoption as sons "through Jesus Christ"; of the grace, which He freely bestowed on us "in the Beloved"; of God's purpose to sum up all things "in Christ"; and that those "should be unto the praise of His glory" who had first hoped "in Christ." Thus, in the far distant times, God had issued from His own possession and by His own sole authority, a whole galaxy of honours and preferments to and for His Chosen One when time and circumstances should cause that Chosen One to appear. "In Christ" the fullness ("pleroma") of Divinity was appointed to dwell (Col. 2 : 9).

But more than this, all other beings in heaven and earth—all things visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, principalities or powers, were created in relationship to Him, for it was God's will for Him to hold them together, as a sovereign prince might co-ordinate and hold together many subordinate thrones (Col. 1 : 17). Their honours and stations were created and conferred to be ready for them to bear subordinate relationship to more exalted authority when He should reach His lofty throne.

All this exalted superiority was vested "in Christ" before the world began, and forms part of God's primordial out-pouring for His coming "Chosen One."

Twice the Apostle refers to an enabling power bestowed by God, the possession of which would activate and empower the members of the "Chosen One" to achieve the destiny to which they had been called. "Blessed us with all **spiritual** blessings . . . ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise" (vv. 3 and 13). The Holy Spirit is God's creative instrument, which can bestow blessing upon such as are "in Christ"—(spiritual light, spiritual food, and intense spiritual desire)—and at the same time "mark" or "seal" them as God's "own." This is an outflow of Divine energy from the throne of God, in order to produce in His elect a disposition and character like His own—Divine power creating in the object of His choice a character that can contain and retain for ever attributes of Divinity.

But all save one of this elect company have been subject to the power of sin. Twice Paul speaks of redemption for all such. First, such redemption as is represented by the "forgiveness of sin." But that is not

the full measure of redemption contemplated. Full redemption belong to a later day, and will imply much more than forgiveness of sin. There is a **Day** of redemption provided for—"the year of My redeemed."

To redeem them from sin it was ordained to cost their Lord and leader His life—His blood! That leader had to die for them, to procure cleansing for them from their sins, and further to enfold them about with His own spotless righteousness. To each "forgiven" follower the privilege was ordained for him to win his place "in Christ" and "be found in Him" by partaking of Christ's sufferings—being conformed to Jesu's death.

It was thus necessary for the Chosen One—the Logos of creative days—to whom it pleased God to ordain pre-eminence in everything, to stoop down from his lofty place, and be found in fashion as a man, and become humbled unto death so that He might redeem the intended sons from sin and death, and then, when Himself raised from the dead, become their leader—as well as shepherd and bishop of their souls—to lead these many sons up to the ordained heights of glory, honour and immortality.

These, then, are the high peak points of Paul's opening argument in this great letter from a prison cell. Are all these points of doctrine new items of revelation never before enunciated till his prison days? Did Paul say nothing on these great themes in Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans? And had Jesus nothing to say on any of these doctrines?

We shall see!

"Let intellectual and spiritual culture progress, and the human mind expand, as much as it will; beyond the grandeur and the moral elevation of Christianity, as it sparkles and shines in the Gospels, the human mind will not advance."

(Goethe)

∴ The Ministry of Reconciliation

Notes on the
Christian's mission

There is grave danger that we Christians shall be shamed by the kingdoms of this world. At this present time both Britain and America are methodically selecting suitable men to be administrators and officials in the

occupied and subjugated territories at the end of the war. This, of course, is in the expectation that the war will result in military victory for the Allied nations. Likely men are called before selection panels and closely questioned as to their technical qualifications for the work in view. But this is not sufficient; they must also satisfy their examiners as to their general education and knowledge, the breadth of their mental outlook, their qualities of character. They are requested to describe their hobbies and leisure interests, the games and sports in which they excel, the public or social service to which they may have given time and energy in the past. In short, every care is being taken to secure men who will be fitted by training and character to supervise the work of reconstruction and education which is to be undertaken in Central Europe when the present conflict is over.

Now, we in our fellowship know that these plans are doomed to disappointment. Excellent though the intention may be, it remains that the new edifice is intended to be built upon the old foundation of man's self-sufficiency; and man is not self-sufficient. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." If these men, all of them, could add to their otherwise doubtless excellent qualifications a whole-hearted consecration to the service of Jesus Christ and an intelligent knowledge of His teaching, there might be some hope; but the candidates are not questioned to any extent upon their religious convictions and activities; these are not regarded as of first-class importance.

We believe—or profess to believe that civilisation is heading for disaster, and that after that disaster comes the Kingdom of God upon earth under the spiritual rulership of Jesus Christ the King. We generally accept the view that the establishment of this Kingdom—an event within measurable distance, to be reckoned perhaps in decades—is to witness the instalment into office of a body of trained and prepared spiritual administrators for the purpose of world conversion. That is the truth underlying Scripture references to the reign of Christ and His Church over the world. We say we are members of His Church. The question inevitably arises: "Shall we be fit for the work when the time comes? Are we so ordering our lives **now** that we are receiving the necessary experience to qualify us for the high duties of the future?"

Technical knowledge is not sufficient. We are, most of us, keenly alive to the necessity of faith in the Scriptures and a thorough knowledge of the principles therein outlined. But if the net result of our studies is to produce a company of amateur theologians who can agree neither with outsiders nor even between themselves, our time has been wasted. We shall require, not only a sound grounding in the principles of God's plan of salvation and the laws of the incoming Kingdom, but also that depth of vision and breadth of experience which comes only from a lifetime spent in the profession and practice of the Sermon on the Mount. We need to know and sympathise with the sufferings, the temptations, the failings, as well as the well-nigh inarticulate aspirations of sin-sick humanity, and we can gain that knowledge only in the way that Jesus did—by living amongst them and ministering to them. We have no need to join in the world's schemes of reform—they are doomed to failure anyway—but we have great need to go out and preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and comfort all that mourn. Only thus shall we be ever fitted for the infinitely greater work of the future, when God calls all the nations before Him.

One wonders how we would fare if a Divine selection panel was set up here and now, and we were called in one by one for questioning. The technical examination we in our circle might pass with flying colours—we can most of us expound the philosophy of the Atonement to our own entire satisfaction, and describe in well-turned language the precise meaning of the visions of Revelation. But suppose the Examiner turned to deeper questions of the heart, and probed into the manner we have manifested Him to our brethren and to others, how we have maintained the unity which is the hallmark of discipleship, how we have made known His teaching to those around us, preached to the castaways, comforted the suffering, preserved the sheep of His pasture, one wonders just how we would fare. One might come out from that Gracious Presence feeling far less smug and self-satisfied than when he went in.

And that might not altogether be a bad thing !

∴ THE QUIET TIME ∴

“ Wait my soul upon the Lord ”

Here is an important lesson for the “ Beloved of the Lord.” The Apostle testifies respecting our Lord, that He thought the Kingdom not a thing to be grasped or usurped. He waited the Father's time. He meanwhile humbled Himself in harmony with the Father's will and gave evidence that He delighted to do that will at any cost. This faithful and patient waiting was pleasing to God in the One who was to be heir of all things and highly exalted. Similarly, we, His followers and members, are to remember the Prophet David's words, “ Wait, I say, on the Lord.” Some of us have learned by experience that to attempt to go before the Lord in any matter is dangerous. We are not wise enough to guide ourselves. Indeed, as the poet has expressed it, “ We fear to touch Things that involve so much.

If we could recognise the delicacy of our situation at times, it would make us more modest and cautious. Not only are our own interests and eternal glory at stake, but also the interests of other fellow-members of the body of Christ. A rash word, a thoughtless action, inconsiderateness in any sense of the word might lead to unfavourable conditions of heart, and, even though we gained the promise, it might be by tribulation rather than by the way in which the Lord would lead.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.—1 John 3 ; 1.

The love of God in Christ is actually over us and around us now ! In it we live and move and have our being. Our remembrance of this will help us to cherish the right spirit in all God's providential dealing with us. On the rough road under dark clouds as well as on the pleasant path under the sunny sky we are to keep ourselves in the love of God, Who, in loving wisdom and power, both rules and overrules.

Peace, Peace !

Look for its bright increase ;

Deepening, widening, year by year,

Like a sunlit river, strong, calm, and clear ;

Lean on His love through this earthly vale,

For His Word and His Work shall never fail,

And “ He is our Peace ! ”

THINK NO EVIL

David sent a special message of appreciation to the men of Jabesh who had given decent burial to Saul and his sons. He wished them to know that he did not regard this as an act of enmity to himself, but rather as an act of decency and loyalty in which he himself would have been glad to have had a share. He said: "Blessed be ye of the Lord that ye have showed this kindness. And now the Lord show kindness unto you and I will also requite you this kindness." It may be contested by some that David's course was a case of policy, and that he was too wise to antagonise the men of Jabesh. Even if this were the case it would reflect credit on David instead of discredit. It would show that he had the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of a sound mind. We think, however, it is unnecessary to attack the motive of any person who wishes to do a kind act. Instead of attributing the motive to evil we should "think no evil." The same principle is applicable to the Lord's people. They should not attribute wrong motives to men who contribute money for benevolence, etc. It may, indeed, be true of some that the thought of gain associates with the gift, but it by no means follows that the act is destitute of generous motives and wholly sordid. We are the happier when we endeavour to think kindly of all the actions of life. A blind brother once remarked: "I have no doubt that my blindness saves me from many disadvantages. When I meet people I endeavour to think of them as looking happy and generous and good; whereas if I had my sight I might consider it impossible to think of them as favourably and generously as I want to."

—C. T. R.

Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God—Romans 6 ; 13.

May Thy great love O Lord, constrain—
To all our hearts this purpose give ;
That never to ourselves again,
But unto Thee alone we live.

The Land of Far Distances

"Which
hope we
have."

A.O.H.

"Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; they shall behold the land of far distances." (Isa. 33 ; 17 marg.)

These words were uttered by Isaiah at a time when invasion by the Assyrians threatened Israel. The people knew what to expect; no mercy would be shown to them by those who were the most cruel of all the ancient nations. The land would be rendered desolate, the fruitful trees wantonly and systematically cut down, the fields littered with stones and debris, the water channels and aqueducts blocked and broken up. They themselves would be despoiled and slain, those who escaped death being transported long distances to some new home in a foreign land, and all the treasures of their homeland carried off in triumph to Nineveh, the Assyrians' chief city. They were without strength to resist; unless God intervened to save there could be no salvation.

In the sequel God did save, and that in a most spectacular manner; but at the time of which this text speaks that mighty deliverance could not be foreseen. Isaiah sought, therefore, to impart to the people something of his own sterling faith and to remind them that God had not forsworn His purpose. As truly as He had promised to give peace and prosperity to Zion, so truly must the fulfilment come, in God's due time. So He bade them look away from the terrors and apprehensions of the present, and peer into the future with eyes of faith. Thus gazing, they would be able to "see the king in his beauty" and behold what Isaiah, in a fine flight of fancy, called "the land of far distances"—that glorious kingdom land of the future day when Israel would have passed the last of her trials and become enthroned at length the queen of the nations.

To us in this day this theme comes with the same appeal. We, too, are surrounded with terrors and dangers, the evil forces of this world appearing to be combining together for the destruction of all that we hold dear. The even course of our daily life has been rudely disturbed, and nothing seems the same. Men look forward into the immediate future, and declare that nothing will ever be the same again. Our meetings are

restricted, our fellowship is hindered by reason of restrictions on travel and the increasing demands upon our time by the powers that be. The general unsettlement reflects itself in our daily lives, and the effort to "provide things decent and honest in the sight of all men" leaves us with less time than we ever had for calm, unhurried consideration of the Truth, the faith which means so much in our lives. It is now, therefore, more than ever good for us that we try to close our eyes for a season to the immediate day of trouble, and allow our spiritual sight to feast itself upon the vision of the king in His beauty; to see in rosy aspect the enchanting vista of the "land of far distances."

How can we visualise that land? Is it not said: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2: 9)? Assuredly so: but the Apostle goes on to say, blessed word, "But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit." True, mankind in general sees not these things, neither can they know them, for they are spiritually discerned; but those who by reason of a whole-hearted and unreserved consecration to God have experienced baptism into Christ and have received the illumination of the Holy Spirit have these things revealed to them. We should expect, therefore, that the "land of far distances" will be a very real thing to us; a land to which we look as the place where we ought to be, a home prepared for us by our loving Master, and to which we shall be quickly taken when at length He can look upon each one of us and say: "It is enough; come up higher."

Our eternal home, however, is not confined to the heavenly world. There is a great work yet to be done here on earth, and after our glorification to be with Christ there are to be many long years during which our mission is the reconciling of humanity, "whosoever will," to God. Even when that work is finished, for aught we know there may be further marvellous works of material creation in other parts of God's universe with which we shall be directly concerned. Our "land of far distances," therefore, must of necessity include some very clear-cut vision of life on the material, or earthly, plane of being.

It is good for us that it is so. Even although we have

the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit, we still "tabernacle" in the flesh, with all its limitations, and we still find it difficult to picture in our minds any state of being or any kind of world other than our own. It helps, therefore, for us to think first of earthly things and from them to reason concerning heavenly things. That was the principle upon which Jesus talked to Nicodemus (Jno. 3: 10).

Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ, he saw it and was glad (Jno. 8: 56). We, too, like him, can call up before our mental vision brief glimpses of the earthly kingdom; and, like him, as we view these transient pictures, we, too, can be glad.

The twenty-first chapter of Revelation speaks of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. The dwelling-place of God is to be with men, and, at last, he will (figuratively speaking) dwell with them. That beautiful city is pictured as being adorned with gold, precious stones and pearls, as though the mystic land of Havilah in the Eden story had come back to earth again. Call to mind how the ancient chronicler told us of the river of Eden that compassed the land of Havilah, where there was gold; and the gold of that land, he said, was good; and there was bdellium (pearls) and the onyx—precious stones. Just one aspect of the picture of Eden—a place of precious things, lost by the Fall, restored when the New Jerusalem comes down to earth. More than this. The River of Life is to flow again; the river which flowed through Eden and gave nourishment to the trees of life upon its banks, so becoming the means of continued life to man; all is to be restored and the twenty-second chapter of Revelation shows the restoration accomplished. A symbolic river, symbolic trees of life; central features in the scenery of the land of far distances, prepared for the nations which shall come so eagerly for food and for healing.

"And there was no more sea!" (Rev. 21: 1). When shall we fully enter into the depth of meaning enshrined in those simple words? They meant so much to the simple-minded Christians of the early Church, accustomed to believe what the scientific men of their day had told them, that the earth was completely surrounded by a mighty ocean which no living being could ever cross, and that the Elysian fields, the eternal abode of

ANNOUNCEMENTS

the righteous, lay beyond that sea, away in the golden west into which the sun sank every night. The first heaven and the first earth passed away! No more sea! Then the way to the blessed land would lay open before them. No more separation from the place to which their Lord had gone and in which He was preparing heavenly mansions for them! That was the golden promise which they took to themselves as these early brethren of ours looked away into the land of far distances beyond the impassable sea which, one day, would be "no more."

As if to assure we who live in the closing year of this Gospel Age that He is not unmindful of our own desire to see clearly the things of the incoming Age, the Heavenly Father caused to be recorded by the ministry of Ezekiel a representation which can probably convey more to us than it has done to any of our predecessors in the Christian way. The vision of Ezekiel's temple enshrines much truth—much of it not yet perceived—respecting the Millennial reign on earth. The cherubim and palm trees sculptured and delineated on its walls and doors are rich in symbolic teaching. From the descriptions of the cherubim in Scripture we know that these symbolic creatures each had four heads—of a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle respectively, and that the Divine attributes of Love, Justice, Power and Wisdom are thus pictured. The cherubim in Ezekiel's Temple are sculptured so that two heads only are visible—the man's head and that of the lion. Divine Love and Divine Justice are thus indicated, each facing the sculptured palm trees, symbolic of righteousness and righteous men (Ezek. 41: 18-19). This is a characteristic of the Millennial Age. The cherubim are guardians of God's holiness, but they are also the messengers of God's grace to the children of men. It is from this Temple, furthermore, that the River of Life is pictured as flowing, conveying Divine blessing to all who will partake. There will be a "multitude of fish" (Ezek. 47: 9), and no symbol can better picture the exuberance of life which will characterise that Age. Even the earth is to "cast out her dead" (Isa. 26: 19).

Glimpses! That is all we can expect whilst as yet we are limited to seeing "through a glass, darkly." But what an incentive to fresh zeal and courage in the Chris-

(Concluded on page 26)

Gone from us. Brother Walton, father of Brothers Ralph and Percy Walton, of Coventry, and well-known to many, passed away after a short illness on 14th Dec. The brethren will cherish many happy memories of a life well spent in the service of the Master he loved so well, and of the example he set, helpful to those who follow him in the Christian way.

Sister Morgan, of Pontypool, has passed into her rest after a few weeks' illness. Our sister was connected with the Pontypool class for a number of years and to the brethren there her memory will remain as one who endeavoured to follow the mind of the Lord and be a blessing to others.

Anonymous. We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation the receipt of anonymous donations of £1 (Dec.), 10/- (Dec.), £1 (Jan.)

The Memorial. The appropriate date this year for the observance of the Memorial is Thursday, 6th April, after 6 p.m. (7 p.m. British Summer Time).

Memorial Emblems. We sincerely regret that owing to the difficulty of obtaining supplies we shall not be able to continue our custom of sending the emblems to isolated friends this year. It will be necessary for all friends to make such arrangements as they can locally.

Easter Convention. It is hoped to hold the usual Easter Convention at Warrington. Arrangements have not yet reached the stage at which details can be given but will, it is hoped, appear in the March issue.

Doctrinal Essays. Last September the Committee invited the submission of essays on debated subjects for publication in booklet form readers' comments in a subsequent publication, to provide a means for the wider discussion of advancing understanding and clearer light on our faith. To date there is insufficient response to justify publication and the offer is therefore repeated. Serious essays, presenting new considerations and not merely traversing well-known arguments, are desired, and the following brethren, representative of our whole fellowship, have agreed to form, in conjunction with the Committee, a selection panel to choose the essays which appear likely to be of principal interest. Some have been known to suggest that there is no avenue for the consideration of worth-while new thought. Here is the opportunity! Names of the scrutineers, in addition to those of the Committee, are: F. H. Guard (Forest Gate), A. Kirkwood (Glasgow), J. H. Murray (Grays), W. Reid Sharp (Newcastle), A. Spain (Gravesend). Writers should send to Bro. Hudson for copy of the original notice.

Bibles. We have secured a stock of Bibles suitable for use as a child's first Bible, having stiff cloth covers, good large print, without references. Elderly folk may also find the large print useful. The type is Ionic 16mo, size 7½" x 5" x 11½", weight 1½lb., and the price 4/6 post free. Please order as K11 Bible.

The Diaglott. We are prepared to accept orders for this much sought after translation, for delivery as the books can be obtained. The price is 15/- plus 9d postage, and books will be despatched in rotation. Be prepared to wait anything up to six weeks for delivery.

"Streams in the Desert." We can also supply this book under the same conditions, price 8/6, postage 9d. We can import only a limited quota of both these books each quarter, hence the possible delay in despatch.

Bibles and Translations. See last month's issue for prices.

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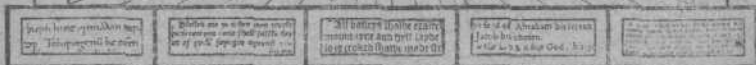
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NOTES

An authoritative pronouncement recently made before the American Philosophical Society is significant in the light of our expectations. The speaker is a specialist in the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, and he was presenting the results of an elaborate investigation into the post-war tendency of European populations. He showed that whereas, after 1945-53, the populations of all western and southern European countries may be expected to progressively decrease, that of Russia would experience a season of rapid growth accompanied by a corresponding increase in national power. He made this statement: "It is difficult to escape the view that the Soviet Union in the coming decades will be the strongest single Power in the world." This opinion is based, not upon any political or military successes which that State may achieve, but upon her economic position as a rapidly developing country possessing vast natural resources and the ability to maintain a relatively contented and prosperous population. This testimony goes far to confirm the conclusion so many have drawn from the Scriptures—that the Russian power is to figure very prominently in those events which bring the Age to its end. A further reflection is suggested. If the Soviet Union, working admittedly for an ideal, but an ideal of the earth, earthly, can achieve such striking progress in a few decades, with what rapidity can we not expect the Holy Nation, inspired by the consciousness of its Divine mission, to set about the task of building the "land of un-walled villages" when the time comes? The Holy Land is still trodden down by the Gentiles, but at any time now we may expect the fortunes of politics to bring about some striking change in the affairs of that land and the door be thrown open for those who, with more enthusiasm and even greater power than the Russians, will commence to "build again the old wastes." A more immediate question presents itself to us, too. This Holy Nation must be composed of individuals who have a clear knowledge of their mission and have given themselves intelligently to God for the purpose. They will constitute the earthly phase of the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah. From whence shall they obtain that knowledge of their destiny which will lead them to the point of yielding themselves for the Divine purpose? Surely, only from those who already have that knowledge of "things to come" which has to be imparted to these. It is a sobering thought. We hold the torch of Truth: it is our duty to pass it on to those who follow.

From a Prison Cell

A series of discourses on the prison-epistles

T. H.

"According to His good pleasure which He has purposed."
—Eph. 1: 9

The assertion that God is working to a Plan or Purpose is several times stated in the group of letters written from Paul's prison cell. The words just quoted are proof that God is following out His own designs, and that all that He does is "according to" a purpose drafted before He began to engage in His great work. Again, Paul follows this assertion by another which says that all who are in Christ were "pre-destined according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His Will" (v. 11).

Then in a great statement indicating that the principalities and powers in the heavenly places are learning more of God's diversified wisdom through His dealings with the Church than they had hitherto been able to learn, Paul states that even this is "according to the eternal purpose (the plan of the Ages) which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3, 11.)

Another reference to the activities of Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of His Will" is found in Phil. 2: 13. "It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (R.V.). This mighty energy which works creatively in the saints is linked at two points with the assertions in Ephesians. In both cases it is God that "worketh"; in both cases it is according to His "good pleasure"; hence the creative work in the hearts of the saints is part of His own great Plan.

But Paul had already made known to the Church, before his prison days, that God was working to a Plan. This was no new feature of his doctrine. In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul states that both the death and resurrection of Jesus took place in conformity with previous evidences given in the Scriptures. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures . . . and hath been raised . . . according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15: 3-4.) Whatever occurred "according to the Scriptures" is proof of conformity to a design. He who caused the Scriptures to be written also designed, prior to the inspiration of the prophetic testimony, that Jesus should die as an offering for sin, and that afterwards He should be raised again. Again, on the same point, Paul says, "while we

were yet weak (R.V.) "in due season Christ died." (Rom. 5: 6.) What occurred "in due season" also conforms to design. This same thought is also applied to His birth "When the fulness of time came God sent forth His Son, born of a woman . . ." (Gal. 4: 4.) "Times" also, as well as the form of Divine activity, were incorporated in the Plan. Then in Rom. 8: 28, this thought of design comes out in great prominence. The control of the affairs of life by Divine Providence is assured to all who are "called according to His purpose."

Again, in the distant days of Isaac, in conformity with the purpose of God it was said that the elder son should serve the younger! "That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth . . ." (Rom. 9: 11.) That incident therefore in Rebecca's life was also accomplished in conformity with a "Plan."

Thus it is abundantly demonstrated that God is no mere opportunist, no strategist or tactician, waiting to seize and exploit some flaw in his opponent's methods and activities, but the Lord and Master of every circumstance, the originator of every cause, and the director of every effect.

That this is so is proved by the fact that God was working to His Plan before sin came in. It was not the act of sin by Adam, nor yet the previous act of sin by Satan, that brought the plan into operation. It was in operation untold Ages before sin began. God did not require to make any strategic move to checkmate the tactics of the great rebel who had become His open enemy. His plans were already made, and to those plans the Most High strictly adhered throughout.

God's plans began to be executed by the creation of His first-born Son. He was the first-born of every creature (of every created thing) far back in the unfathomable depths of undated time. (Col. 1: 15.) It was according to God's Plan to create Him first, so that He might enjoy the pre-eminence as first-born in the great family of God. Thenceforward, each created angelic "being" and every instituted dignity was created and set in its place to bear some relationship to Him. Paul says they were created "by" Him. But they were also created "for" Him—just as an instrument is made for a man to use or employ. But even more than this, every created being was created "in Him"—"in" a combined fellowship under His control, to accomplish a great design which had been entrusted to the great first-

born Himself to be brought to full accomplishment when a certain course of Ages had run. They were to be as working members or limbs of a body, over-which He was to preside as the directing brain or Head, each member being responsible, and yielding allegiance to, Him and His command.

Every grade of power or rank was instituted with special relationship to what He had to bring to full accomplishment when the fulness of the appointed time should have arrived. And of the agencies *in the earth* which have been or will yet be found in harmony with righteousness and truth, this is also true. For *in Him* were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him and unto Him. . . . (Col. 1: 16.) "He is before (prior to and in advance of) all things (in the creative and authoritative procession) and in Him all things consist (are held together) (v. 17).

Perhaps this may best be illustrated by reference to the co-ordinated offices blended together in the king's government. In the affairs of State whereby the government of the people is carried out, several distinct offices are blended together, each of which has its own province or sphere of operation. First, we might mention the legislative sphere, by means of which the laws are made. The nature of the legislative body may vary from dictatorship on the one hand, to an open deliberative assembly. The dictator (advised by his council) will *decree* law, the deliberative assembly may *enact* it, but for the purpose of this illustration it matters not which system is in operation. Laws are promulgated either for the King (by his Parliament) or by the King (as an autocrat). That is one office. Next we may cite the Constabulary office, whose duty is to see that the law is observed by the King's subjects. If the subject fails or refuses to observe the law, the Constabulary cites the offender before the Judiciary. The members of the Judiciary Office "try" the case presented against the offender and, if the occasion requires it, mete out punishment upon the offender. When the offence so warrants the Judiciary hands over the offender to the "detention" officers, and the offender is sent to prison for the period specified by the Judiciary.

Only the legislative body make the laws, but all the others apply them. The Constabulary is composed of many

ranks and grades of authority, from the supreme chief at the centre of the Administration right down to the humblest village policeman. The Judiciary is also composed of many ranks or grades of authority, from the Attorney-General or Solicitor-General (or other designation as the case may be) right down through every court of justice to the humble local magisterial court. In like manner the "detention" system has its ranks and grades of office, from the high chief down to the lowest prison officer. In addition to the legal machinery there is also the customs and excise, taxing and rating authorities, health authorities, etc., etc. Each department is separate from its fellows, yet each and all is representative of the King. They all function in the King's name, and exercise his authority. Each and all are "in" the King's confidence, and do the King's business in his stead. They are thus "in" the kingship—"in him"—yet while they are all held together "in" him and "by" him, he is "before" them'all—higher in rank and prior in time. He is "first" in procession and "first" in prerogative.

Thus it was with the first-born Son of God in relation to the whole range of authorities, dominions and powers in the heavenly realms. All these sons of light were created to bear relationship to Him in the government committed to His care. By Him each had been created; by Him each had been commissioned and authorised to act in His name; dignity in rank, and splendour in person, according with the allotted sphere or task.

One member of this hierarchy, a being of high and illustrious rank, appears to have been accorded vice-royalty over this earth, to act first as representative of his Lord and next as overseer and caretaker of man. Of him alone could the words of Ezekiel, 28: 12-15, be true. He only had been in Eden the Garden of God—and had been full of wisdom, and perfect in his beauty. He had been the cherub that had "covered"—that had spread his wings of authority over man. But iniquity (lawlessness) was found in him. He wanted to sit, not as viceroy for his appointed Lord, but as king and ruler in his own right. The story of his fall, and of the seduction of his charge also from loyalty to God is too wide a story for this present exposition. Suffice it now for us to note the fact.

Here, by the rebellious act of Lucifer, that ideal oneness was broken. Sin had appeared both in the heavens and in the earth. Afterwards other discontented heavenly

messengers, rebelling against the Creator-Lord, left their own and sank down to a lower estate, to gratify evil desire. In due course the Heavenly Powers put these rebels under restraint, thus to remain until the Judgment day. (Jude 6.) Thus sin and rebellion spread itself in the heavenly sphere and throughout the earth.

As that ideal "one-ness" in and under the first-born Son was the great design with which the creative work began, that "one-ness" is still the goal towards which all subsequent developments are being directed. There is no alteration in the nature of the great plan, for it is still God's purpose "in the fulness of the times to sum up (to head up) all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon earth." (Eph. 1: 10.)

Not even the rebellion of Satan nor the fall of man changed the fore-ordained design. Before the world began arrangements had been made for the call and elevation of beings from the human plane to the highest heavenly plane. . . . He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him. . . ." (Eph. 1: 4.) That is proof that the entrance of sin had been foreknown, and that every step from the tremendous step-down from His exalted place by God's first-born Son (and who in course of time came to be known as Jesus of Nazareth) right on through the throes of death, until He was raised up to His Father's right hand again, as the first-born among many brethren, was all fore-known and fore-ordained. Even the defection of those of the angelic host produced no alteration of the plan, for the government of heaven and earth carried right on without their aid, carried on in spite even of their bitterest opposition. At every step of the development on earth, the evil discontents of heaven have sought to thwart and overthrow the Plan, and seem destined to fight it to their bitter end.

One Scripture may seem to indicate that after His awakening from the dead, but prior to His ascension to His heavenly home, our Lord went and preached to the spirits in prison, who had been disobedient in the days of Noah. (1 Pet. 3: 19.) Just what this means is not easy to say—but it might be assumed that His approach to them, and the message He proclaimed, was intended to open a door of hope for them in a later day, if they would henceforth cease to interfere in human affairs and wait in patience for the day when judgment would begin.

Sure it is that all irreconcilable things in the heavenly sphere as well as on this earthly globe are to be reconciled to the supreme Lord of the great Plan, and to the great Designer of this sweeping universal Purpose. "For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him (the glorified Lord) should all fulness dwell, and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself . . . whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens." (Col. 1: 19-20.)

Thus the unreconciled "sons of darkness" are to have opportunity to become again "sons of light," and return to the sphere from which they fell, and dwell again "in Him" and "for Him" for evermore. Refusal to return will bring upon them utter destruction.

And all the rebellious sons of men, who likewise, on invitation, leave the ways of sin, will be accepted into His dominion, and as the earthly viceroy of Him who is the head of all power and dominion and every dignity that can be named, rule the earth in His name, and establish universal peace for both man and beast, "according to the good pleasure which He purposed in Him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up (to head up) all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things in the earth." (Eph. 1: 9-10.)

In that happy day every creature of every rank in heaven as well as in earth will occupy his allotted place, and fulfil his allotted task. This is great doctrine—broad and deep and wide, yet it was not exclusive to Paul's prison days. He knew of it in an earlier day. While he does not enter into so many details in his earlier exposition, he covers all the ground relative to the subjugation of all enemies of God and righteousness, until all things are under the First-born's feet. Then the Son surrenders the whole subjected and purified dominion to His Father and His God, so that God Himself may be all in all. In his letter to the Corinthians, written several years prior to his imprisonment at Rome, Paul wrote: "Then cometh the end (envisaged in the Plan) when He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all (antagonistic) rule and all (contrary) authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. . . . And when all things have been subjected unto Him then shall the Son also Himself be subjected unto Him (God) that did subject all things unto Him (the Son) that God may be all in all." (I Cor. 15: 24, 25, 28.) This is the early germ of this great thought—Ephesians and Colossians give the full rich fruit, matured and complete.

THE QUIET TIME

"COMFORT DWELLS WITH HIM."

"How good, how full of blessedness is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Comfort dwells with Him, in all ways His nature awaked the sense of compassion and with it strength and comfort. I am comforted always in the great dangers and trials which now beset me and that which upholds and supports me continually throughout these buffetings serves also for your support and comfort. I know your trials, but God is comforting us. The sufferings of the Christ have this compensation; though all our lives are included in them and they abound in us, there goes along with them the same divine comfort and strength which comforted Him." (2 Cor. 1: 3-5.)

(*Cornish.*)

THE INFECTION OF WRONG FEELING.

A vexation arises and our expressions of impatience hinder others from taking it patiently. Disappointment, ailment, or even weather depresses us and our outlook or tone of depression hinders others from maintaining a cheerful and thankful spirit. We say an unkind thing and another is hindered in learning the holy lesson of charity that thinketh no evil. We say a provoking thing and our sister or brother is hindered in that day's effort to be meek. How sadly, too, we may hinder without word or act. For wrong feeling is more infectious than wrong doing; especially the various phases of ill-temper, gloominess, touchiness, discontent, irritability. Do we not know how catching these are?

(*F. R. Havergal.*)

God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best: His state
Is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

(*Milton.*)

"Bear in the might of Jesus Christ
Life's burdens as they fall,
Nor care nor grief can crush thee down
If Jesus share it all."

PERFUME VERY PRECIOUS.

Those who bring the alabaster boxes of perfume of praise and thankfulness generally have little to ask. Rather they realise that they are already debtors to such an extent that they can never show properly their appreciation of Divine favour. Properly they recognise that day by day they are receiving at the Lord's hands exceedingly and abundantly more than they could ask or wish, and that in the spiritual blessings alone they have what satisfies their longings as nothing else can do. Such more nearly follow the course of Mary and bring alabaster boxes of perfume to the Lord—their prayers and thanksgiving of heart; and asking nothing, but giving thanks for all things, they receive from the Master such an outpouring of blessing that they are not able to contain it.

Those who view the matter rightly must certainly feel that none of us have anything worthy to present to our Lord—that our very best, our most costly gifts or sacrifices, are not worthy of Him and but feebly express the real sentiments of our hearts. How glad we are if our humble efforts are accepted of the Lord, and how we hope that ultimately we shall hear the same sweet voice saying of us, "He hath done what he could," "She hath done what she could."

"Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits,
But he was dead, and there he sits,
And He that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears."

THE CHIEF END OF MAN.

"The older I grow," said Thomas Carlyle, in his eighty-second year, "the older I grow, and I am now on the brink of eternity, the more there comes back to me the sentence which I learned when a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes: 'What is the chief end of man? TO GLORIFY GOD AND TO ENJOY HIM FOR EVER.'"

Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

"THY WILL."

Father—Thy will be done in me,
As it is done above;
Cheerfully, always, from the heart
So, may I prove my love.

Father Thy will in me be done,
Just show me Thy bequest,
What ere Thou chooseth—I will choose
Always, Thy will is best.

I would resign my will to Thee
Feeling Thou knowest best,
Then perfect peace shall fill my mind
And holy joy my breast.

Father I know that all things work
Together for my good,
If called according to Thy plan,
And love Thee as I should.

Help Thy dear chosen now to be
Copies of Thy dear son,
Keep them all faithful, loyal and true
Till Thou shalt say, "Well done!"

Times of refreshing soon will be,
Lord! Let "Thy Kingdom come,"
Then restitution—to mankind.
World wide, "Thy will be done."



The Land of Promise.



A monthly record of significant developments in the East

Some attention has been given recently to the fishing possibilities of the Sea of Galilee. Simon Peter was once a fisherman on that sea; men have fished its waters off and on ever since; and it has now been established that the historic lake is capable, under skilled attention, of making a very substantial contribution to the food supply of Palestine. The Fisheries Office at Haifa reports that for the twelve months of the 1942-43 season 420 tons of fish were taken from its waters and that this represents the heaviest catch of fish per acre of water in the world. This is the lake from which the miraculous draught of fishes was taken nineteen centuries ago; now it holds the world's record.

It is also reported that the climate of Palestine is such that the production of fresh water fish in artificial reservoirs can be from two to two and a half times as heavy as in the best reservoirs of Europe. For centuries no man in Palestine concerned himself about such matters. That attention is being paid to them now is a sign of the times. "Israel . . . shall blossom and bud . . . and fill the face of the world with fruit. (Isa. 27: 6.)

✦ The Ministry of Reconciliation Notes on the Christian's mission

Some of our brethren become greatly discouraged because of their inability to speak in study meetings or to take other prominent part in the service. They listen to the two or three brothers who seem to have so quick a mind and so ready a tongue, and feel by contrast that they themselves contribute nothing to the Truth they love so well.

Nothing? From whence do our speakers and leaders of studies derive the sustaining power which enables them to carry on? To lead a meeting of any kind where the spirit of truth and the spirit of enquiry is present involves heavy strain. The brother who speaks gives out mental energy, and it needs to be made up again.

That making up comes largely from the silent handshake, the quiet words "I have enjoyed your talk, brother; it just fitted my experience"; "That thought you gave in

the meeting has answered the question in my mind; thank you"; the love-inspired fellowship around a simple meal; the consciousness of sympathetic comradeship. These are the things—simple in themselves—which mean so much to the one who is trying to use his few gifts to the spiritual profit of the flock. These things inspire encouragement. One feels that the endeavour is not fruitless, that some hearts are feeling blessed by the ministry, that the work of God is going on in the hearts of His people. It is not too much to say that a real transfer of quiet strength takes place; that the quiet, unnoticed one so conscious of personal inability to speak fluently of the deep things can and does convey to the more active one a reserve of power which is given forth again from the platform or the desk. And so it is true that the hand cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of you," for without the quiet ones who impart their passive zeal and strength to the active ones, the work of the ministry could not go on.

ON MARS HILL

"The difference between theology and revelation is great and must not be confused. The latter is the work of God's spirit in man; the former, the work of man's mind reflecting on God's work."—George Tyrrell.

"Let intellectual and spiritual culture progress, and the human mind expand, as much as it will; beyond the grandeur and the moral elevation of Christianity, as it sparkles and shines in the Gospels, the human mind will not advance."—Goethe.

"He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that."—John Stuart Mill.

"A guide at the Sorbonne once said, 'This is the hall where Doctors of Divinity have disputed for over four hundred years.' 'Indeed,' said the visitor, 'and pray what have they settled?'"—"Dick" Sheppard.

"We are moving fast toward a world community, a world civilization in which a Jewish national community will have a part to play similar to those within other nations of local Jewish communities."—Dr. James Parkes.



We have often sung the hymn "Rock of Ages cleft for me." It is an example of Trinitarian hymnology. The title "Rock of Ages" definitely belongs to God Himself as being a tower of strength, immovable, secure, whereas the hymn gives the title to Jesus, who suffered that we might live.

In the Hebrew Scriptures God was often referred to as the Rock. Some of the references are found in Deut. 52: 4, 15, 18; 1 Sam. 2: 2; II Sam. 22: 2, 3, 32; Psa. 18: 31, 46; Isa. 17: 10; and Hab. 1: 12. A consideration of the circumstances around some of these references should be interesting and helpful.

SONG OF MOSES Deut 32; 1 to 43

"He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." v. 4. Moses likens his God to a rock, suggesting solidity, firmness, sharpness, strength, and security. The work of God is perfect, He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind. Moses, in this song, gives a wonderful survey of God's care and preparation for His people Israel, even from the time when the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." This watch-care was not appreciated for "Jeshuron" (another name for Israel) waxed fat and kicked." In spite of their many blessings they forgot God and lightly esteemed the "Rock of their salvation." Further, they provoked God by serving strange gods, or rather no-gods (vs. 15 to 18). God would punish them, and indeed, were it not for the even worse nations round about He would scatter them for ever (vs. 19 to 25). The children of Israel were "void of counsel . . . O that they were wise . . . that they would consider their latter end," the retribution coming in due course. "How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight?" Was it not because the Rock of Israel had sold the enemy into their hands? Had not God put fear into the hearts of the enemies of Israel? "For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." This, then, was a truism. The nations around

conceded that Jehovah was a greater God than theirs. He was feared by all (vs. 27 to 31).

SONG OF HANNAH.

We are all familiar with the story of Hannah, the mother of Samuel. She was one of the two wives of Elkanah. The name Hannah means gracious, merciful, prayer, and she was true to name. An instance of her silent prayer is given in 1 Sam. 1: 11-13. She was childless and felt the reproach. The other wife of Elkanah had provoked Hannah sorely, but there was no thought of retaliation in the mind of Hannah. She just made a vow to the Lord that if He would grant her request and give her a son she would present him to the Lord to be used in His service. A purer motive for a prayer cannot be imagined. After thus unburdening her heart to the Lord at Shiloh, "she went her way, did eat, and her countenance was no more sad." A prayer of faith indeed. She had no doubt of the answer to her prayer, she expected her request to be granted—and it was. "The Lord remembered her . . . she bare a son and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of God."

The child was weaned, and at the age of twelve Hannah took him to Shiloh with more than the appropriate offering, and presented him to the Lord there, saying, "As long as he liveth he whom I obtained by petition shall be returned" (1 Sam. 1: 28). How easy it is to pray for something ardently desired. How easy to forget the granted petition. But not so with the mother of Samuel. Mother's pride and joy given up without needing a reminder. The story is told so briefly that the point of it can easily be missed. Hannah was not content with just handing over the lad; no, she expressed her gratitude in the Psalm recorded in 1 Sam. 2: 1 to 10. In v. 2 she says, "There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God." The thought of a rock suggests something firm, sure, abiding, everlasting. The faith of Hannah rested in a real God: a God who could not fail. Her prayer was answered, she was satisfied. To be given the child and to present him back to God to be used in His service was blessing enough. Her reproach had been removed: but that was not the end of the story. God is debtor to no one. "The Lord visited Hannah so that she bare three sons and two daughters." She received back far more than she gave. The same is true with us; we receive back "manifold more in the present time, and

in the world to come life everlasting." (Luke 18: 28-30.)

SONG OF DAVID.

This song is first found in 2 Sam. 22, and repeated in Psalm 18, where it is edited by Hezekiah and contains some variations. The song was written after David became king, and was inspired by his troubles, chief of which were the persecutions of Saul. David had been an outlaw and had fled from Saul to the hills and rocky places on three occasions.

David had a wonderful mind. Perhaps not what we should term a spiritual mind, but at least one which could spiritualise his experiences; experiences which inspired pictures of God. "The Lord is my Rock, my fortress and my deliverer." Rotherham's translation is more forceful. "Yahweh was my mountain crag, my stronghold, my deliverer, mine. My God was my rock, I sought refuge in him. My shield and my horn of salvation, my high tower, and my refuge. My saviour, from violence thou didst save me." (2 Sam. 22: 2 and 3.) *God, says David, is my Rock, my mountain crag.* That is, the steep rocky mountain-side or summit, suggesting the strength and majesty of God. Inherent strength, power to withstand. My stronghold, giving the advantages of defence, view from above, hiding places, caves, ambushments, all unknown to a stranger. *My deliverer*; David had evidence of this when he was being hunted by Saul. First, at the time when he was almost surrounded in the wilderness of Maon (1 Sam. 23: 19 to 28), when things looked black indeed for David. Just at the critical moment word came to Saul that the Philistines had invaded the land. Saul gave up the chase for the time being. There was, however, only a short respite, for after dealing with the invaders, King Saul proceeded to the wilderness of Engedi (1 Sam. 24), with 3,000 picked men to seek David and his men among the rocks of the wild goats. It happened that Saul entered a cave to sleep, the very cave in which David was hiding. While Saul was sleeping it was suggested to David that he slay the king. David rebuffed the suggestion, saying that he would not touch the Lord's anointed. Instead, he cut off a piece of the king's robe to show that Saul's life had been in his hand. When this was made known to Saul he wept and said to David, "Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil" (v. 17). David's magnanimity had sobered Saul. That was the

second deliverance. Evidently Saul's repentance was merely emotion, for it was not long before David was again being hunted and experienced his third deliverance. This time the scene is laid in the wilderness of Zith (1 Sam. 26). Saul is found sleeping with all his 3,000 men around him. This time David sent one of his men to take away Saul's spear and cruse of water, "for a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them." David wakens the king and tells him that his life has been in danger, but that he, David, had spared him. Again Saul's heart is touched. "Behold," he says, "I have played the fool and erred exceedingly," and gives up seeking the life of David, "and Saul returned to his place." Then David had a reaction. Here, at the height of his faith, and following his third deliverance, he becomes depressed and says, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." He then went away and lived with the Philistines, the enemies of God and of Israel, for sixteen months. By force of circumstances, at the end of this time David and his men found themselves marching with the Philistines to make war with Israel. God delivered David from this anomalous position through the overwhelming distrust of the lords of the Philistines, who compelled his return to his dwelling place. Perhaps we can take a warning from this, lest our disagreement with some of the Lords' people should make us feel at home with the worldly minded and those at enmity with God.

David had so many experiences to prove the Lord's care over him that he sings, "My deliverer, mine." My God, who watches over me. The same thought of loving supervision is shown in Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

"*My God was my Rock, I sought refuge in him.*" A similar expression occurs in Psalm 91: 2: "I will say of the LORD, he is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust." God, a fortress, a refuge, always at hand to answer every call. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

"*My shield.*" David pictured God as standing between him and his enemies, so that he was guarded from the arrows of malice and spite from his foes, so that they could not harm: guarded also from blows that were close up, from those who would endeavour to press home their attack. This shield, however, is according to faith. If we have no faith in God as a shield, then He can be no shield to us.

"My horn of salvation." The source of power and strength, strength that is made perfect in weakness.

"My high tower." High place, position of advantage, all seeing, foreseeing: there are no second causes to the people of God. "As for God, his way is perfect, the word of the LORD is tried, he is a buckler to all them that trust in him. For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?" "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation. (2 Sam. 22: 31, 32, 47.)

This God, Jehovah, the Rock, stronghold, fortress, refuge shield, and deliverer was David's God, Zion's God, is our God, our Father, "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," and we are seldom out of trouble here. We are promised help in trouble, but not freedom from it. God was the Rock of natural Israel. He is the Rock of spiritual Israel. His work is perfect. We may fail: God never fails. He is omnipotent. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This is possible through a simple faith in the Rock of our Salvation.

"Trust ye in Yahweh unto futurity, for in Yahweh is a Rock of Ages." Isa. 28: 4.—*Rotherham*.

THE QUESTION BOX

Q. Is it right to say that God is not now working through sects and denominations?

A. The statement is not right, although it is based upon a partial truth. The Heavenly Father employs in His service individuals who are wholly devoted and consecrated to Him, and where a particular sect includes a number of such people, having joined themselves together for the purpose of serving God in the way which they are agreed is His Will, He is obviously working that particular work through that particular sect. The degree to which God can work through a sect is conditioned by the proportion of sincere and instructed consecrated disciples it contains. Every Christian fellowship whose standards of belief or

conduct render it distinct from other Christian bodies is a sect within the meaning of the term, and it is incorrect to claim, as do some, that one can withdraw from the denominations of Christendom and form a separate fellowship having its own standards of belief, or its own definition of fellowship, without that fellowship in its turn being a sect. Thoughtful members of such a body realise that their membership in the Church of Christ is not affected by their adherence to that or any other fellowship, for their standing in Christ transcends all earthly arrangements; but that knowledge does not debar them from zealous service in company with their fellows with whom they see "eye to eye." Similarly, any such body may well pursue with vigour and enthusiasm the aims and ideals which led to its creation without feeling bound to proclaim itself the only medium through which the Father can reach mankind.

An Example to Avoid.

In his book "A Pilgrimage to Palestine," Dr. Harry Fosdick tells of his visit in 1928 to the High Priest of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim. The tiny remnant of this people, who once had a Temple on the Mount in rivalry to that at Jerusalem, still holds to the traditions of their fathers and still treasures a copy of the Pentateuch—the five books of Moses—which experts consider may date from the time of Ezra, and in that case is easily the oldest manuscript of the Old Testament in existence. The point of Dr. Fosdick's narrative is the striking resemblance between the complacent bigotry of the old High Priest and the attitude of some Christians of to-day, quite sure that they, and they alone, have the monopoly of Divine Truth and that all who differ with them must of necessity be in error. His narrative runs:—

"As guests of the High Priest we sat in his tent and through a skilled interpreter talked with the venerable old man about his religion. His complacency, his sense of superiority, his certainty that these few Samaritans alone among men knew the truth about God and practised it, were fascinating. The millions around him, he said, were forgetting the Divine Law; only his little group of despised people were keeping it. He nestled comfortably into that conviction. From every point of view, he said, the Samaritan religion alone was perfect. Could Jews or Chris-

tians divide their edition of the Ten Commandments into two tables so that the same number of words and letters would be on each? Never. The Samaritans could with their edition! He had visited, so he said, London, Paris, Constantinople, and had always tried with open mind to welcome new truth, but had come back to Gerizim certain that no religion was so flawless as the Samaritan. All others were simply more or less pleasing superstructures; only the Samaritans had solid foundations in the Mosaic Law. So the old man, venerable of aspect, amiable in spirit, talked on into the night, archaic as the blood sacrifice he had just administered."

Surely we need to be watchful that we, who have such wonderful opportunities for advancement in the knowledge of Divine Truth, do not fall into the same petty, narrow groove. How different the exultant words of the Apostle, when, comparing our position with the blinded people of old, he cried:

"We all, *with open face*, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory unto glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." (II Cor. 3: 18.)

"Father. I know."

Father, I know how loving, wise and tender, John 14: 21.

How true Thou art in ALL Thy ways to me, Rev. 15: 3.
Thine own dear child, bought with the blood 1 Pet. 1: 18/19.
of Jesus,

Called by Thy grace, an heir with Him to be. Rom. 8: 17.

Father, I know though TRIALS oft beset me: 1 Pet. 1: 7.

These test my love, and prove if true I'd be, James 1: 12.
As my dear Lord was perfected through Heb. 5: 8.
suffering,

So for my good shall these work out for me. 2 Cor. 4: 17.

Father, I know the HINDRANCES I meet 1 Thess. 2: 18.
with.

When, where I would I find I cannot go, Rom. 1: 13.
Restrained by Thee! But oh, what patience James 1: 3.
worketh,

If calm and still, what faith in Thee can Psa. 46: 10.
show.

Father, I know the INFIRMITIES I suffer, Rom. 6: 19.
If rightly borne, will bring me nearer Thee, 2 Cor. 12: 10.
The God of grace, Who hath designed a Rev. 20: 6.
Priesthood
To bless the world in loving sympathy. Psa. 49: 14.

Father, I know NEGLECT a blessing
bringeth, Acts 6: 1.
When I'm alone, forsaken by my friends, Psa. 27: 10.
Ah! then it is my heart is linked the closer Isa. 49: 15.
To Thine own self, on Whom my soul John 13: 23.
depends.

Father, I know the GATHERINGS attended, Heb. 10: 25.
If in Thy name, will always blessed be, Matt. 18: 20.
Because each one, possessing Thine own Acts 2: 4.
Spirit,
Will aid and cheer, till gathered home by John 16: 23.
Thee.

Father, I know when SEPARATIONS cometh, John 11: 21.
I'd suffer more to part with those so dear, 1 Thess. 4: 13.
Did not Thy Word sustain and keep and cheer 2 Pet. 1: 19.
me
With this sweet thought, that Thou Thyself Matt. 28: 20.
art near.

Father, I know ALL THINGS for good are Rom. 8: 28.
working
To those, the Called, according to Thy will, 2 Tim. 1: 9.
Not one word fails, oh, heart-inspiring Joshua 23: 14.
message,
Dear faithful One, Thy Word in me fulfil. 2 Thess. 1: 11/12.

(J. W. W., 1943.)

* * *

**He who would valiant be, 'gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy follow the Master,
So shall discouragement
Ne'er make him e'er repent
Of his avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.**

(John Bunyan)



Many Witnesses

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We do not easily realise how great is the debt we owe to some of the Assyrian monarchs whose names are familiar in the Old Testament. The Israelites were chiefly concerned with those ruthless invasions which made the Assyrian name feared and hated throughout Canaan; and the Scriptures tell us little about these men beyond recounting their victories and defeats when they came into contact with the chosen people. But many of them were men of literary tastes, and accumulated vast libraries which have survived in part to our own day. Much of our knowledge of ancient peoples, their history, their ways of life, and their origin, has come to us from such records, and from these things has come much light upon the Bible record. The great library of Agade, founded by Sargon I, who lived several centuries before Abraham, was stocked with thousands of books, many of which had been translated from earlier tongues. There are catalogues now in existence instructing the readers in Sargon's library to write down the number of the book required and hand the tablet to the librarian, for all the world like a reference library in any of our great cities to-day.

Writing in "Nature" of June 30, 1943, and outlining a thesis regarding the origin of the earth, Sir James Jeans reaches a conclusion which is expressed, happily, in plain terms. The evidences are of no moment to us, but the conclusion is interesting when viewed in conjunction with our own beliefs. He says: "A far larger proportion of the stars than we have hitherto imagined must be accompanied by planets; life may be incomparably more abundant in the universe than we have thought." The chances of a system of planets being formed from a central "sun," he says, are about one in six. Compare this with the conclusions of scientific men of little more than a generation ago, who were convinced that this solar system of ours was unique in the universe, and could not be repeated elsewhere, and see how modern thought is moving steadily forward toward confirmation of our own views regarding the Creator's intentions as to ultimate abundant life throughout His material creation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anonymous. We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation the receipt of anonymous gifts of 10/- (Jan.) and two of £1 each (Feb).

"The People's Paper." Our Australian brethren advise us that the subscription price for the "People's Paper" has been raised to 3/- per annum. We are happy to handle British subscriptions to this little magazine.

Pocket Mannas. The well-known Pocket Manna which is also published by the Australian friends, has had to be increased in price. We can now supply from stock at 2/3 each, 2/6 post free.

The Memorial. The appropriate date this year for the observance of the Memorial is Thursday, 6th April, after 6 p.m. (7 p.m. British Summer Time).

Memorial Emblems. We sincerely regret that owing to the difficulty of obtaining supplies we shall not be able to continue our custom of sending the emblems to isolated friends this year. It will be necessary for all friends to make such arrangements as they can locally.

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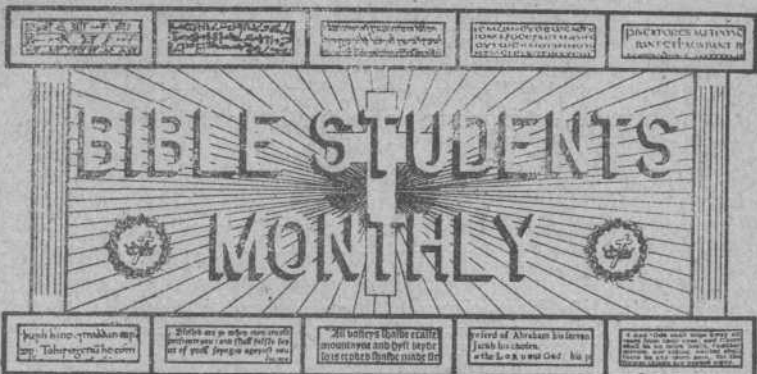
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NOTES

"Till He come!" Again do we assemble under the spell of those thrilling words, to handle anew the symbols which mean so much to us in our fellowship. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" "Lord, we are able." In the love and rapture of that moment we feel sure that we are able, and sure of the sincerity of our love for the brethren. It is afterwards, when the cold light of day has succeeded the warm glow of the meeting-place, when the sights and sounds and activities of daily life have thrust themselves in front of that familiar circle, that the rosy vision fades a little, and it becomes more difficult to live up to our profession. And yet we must do it. We can in no wise share in the promised Kingdom power if we have not partaken of His cup now. And we do not partake of His cup now unless we are at one with our brethren, unless we have put into active practice the injunctions of our dear Lord. "Love one another as I have loved you." Those were His parting words. If we really did carry them into practice there would be no unkindness toward each other, no suspicion, no derogatory talk. Our meetings would be true love feasts, in which the warm atmosphere of brotherly love would enkindle a flame such as would no other influence. Our message would go forth with vigour and confidence, so that men, taking note, would be compelled to admit the evidence of a power that is not of this earth. We cannot begin to manifest that power until we have truthfully come into the Divine family, and we can only do that by partaking fully of the spirit of Christ.

The world is rushing into dark days. Great trial lies before all people. We shall not be exempt. Can we not resolve that this Memorial season shall witness the commencement of a new life in each one of us, a life in which all that savours of lovelessness toward our brethren is banished, and our words and actions be inspired only by the spirit of love and service? We know that we have passed from death into life, says the beloved disciple, because we love the brethren. Let that word be our keynote as we set forth together into the unknown, preserving us until, still together, we emerge into the light of the Kingdom.

Let us keep the Feast.

Once more the hour of remembrance draws near in which those who love the Lord will draw aside from the cares and duties of this life in order to show to each other their deep regard for His death, and all that it stands for in the believer's own life. Another year of Divine watch-care lies behind us—a year of intense strain and conflict, but withal a year of vital contact and communion with the things that make for peace; with God, with Jesus, and with much sanctifying truth.

Each and all of us have lived away another measured round of time, and have grown one year older in the way of the Lord. Our days have gone from us never to return; their opportunities have passed away beyond recall, and we stand to-day another year's march nearer home. The wool on the skein is shorter to-day than when we last took the cup; its thread has been woven into the pattern of life, or else clipped off and cast away unused; some of the warp may have run faultily into the woof, but it is too late now to correct the mistakes. The loom passes on—it cannot be stopped. What is done is forever done; if it has been well done we can rejoice; if it has been ill done we may repent, and propose to ourselves (and to our Lord) that we will do better in the years to come.

It is no light thing to realise that life's moments are flitting away with every setting sun, and with each evening prayer something has passed right over the stage into our increasing yesterdays. There is an increasing accumulation behind, with a constantly decreasing amount before, and nothing we do can redress the disparity between what has already been and what has yet to be ere the journey's end is reached.

But there is no need to repine because Father Time cuts swathe after swathe of our days and years, if so be we are walking with the Lord. Even though there was smut on the corn, or if it was short in the straw, because our souls were dry, we need not despair. And if, instead of tilling the soil of our hearts purposely, we lazed away our time, allowing weeds and thistles to smother up the grain, even then we need not sink into despondency. And if, moreover, we failed through

irresolution to maintain the fences of our mind, and destructive trespassers broke in and ate up our unripened corn, there is still no need to sink down and drown in the quagmire of distress. And though all these faults—and many more—were found in every swathe of yester-year's sowings and growings, the child of God can still take heart and look up to the skies. The God of grace and comfort foreknew and foresaw the handicap of all such frailties and perversities, and made provision to meet them all. Unerring Wisdom understood how extensively sin could sap the morale and determination of the human heart, and made its own plans to meet that need. God knew that weeds could choke the corn, that scorching adversity, and even sunny prosperity, could dry out the soil and that the grain might wither as it grew; and then because He knew and understood all the hindrances, the wealth of grace outflowing from His heart devised the means to counteract them all.

If then, beloved in the Lord, the year behind us has such failures to record, the evening of remembrance can open out a clean new page for each and all. As we obey the Master's word, and seek access to the table of the Lord, we can bethink us of that dark night, and that solemn scene, where on the threshold of Gethsemane and Calvary, our beloved Lord told His scarcely-heeding followers what He was about to do. Sincere reflections concerning the price He paid in suffering, pain and death, during those dark hours, surely cannot fail to unlock the flood-gates of the heart and cause the fountain of repentant tears to flow—if so be repentance is the key to restored fellowship. But if instead of such apathy, our conscience has been keen and quick, and every lapse from rectitude at once confessed, even then we need the gifts of grace, and must approach the tokens of His sacrifice with humility and self-abnegation, seeing that with so little to give we have so much to receive at His hand. The very frequency and magnitude of our blunderings, together with the utter stupidity of our occasional waywardness, even for the most alert and conscientious souls in our company, are reasons more than enough for humbling us to the dust, what time we venture forth to seek communion with such unsullied holiness. Even if by His grace there have been days and weeks, and even

months of conquest in the good fight of faith, or of unwearied labour when accorded the privilege to serve Him and His; and if to our own thinking we have brought armfuls of fair sheaves to show for our husbandry, still have we need to approach humbly to the table of the Lord. We have not repaid the debt we owe—we are still servants without profit to the "Cause." Our standing is still a debit one—we still have need to receive a grant of righteousness from Him, and realise that were it not for Him we would never stand approved before the all-seeing eye. Seeing, then, we all need His righteousness, let us draw near to this special hour of deeper fellowship with keen desire, greatly chastened by our sense of need, yet, always the while deeply assured by a keen sensibility of His power to meet that need, and that in these moments of intense expectation, and of ardent up-reaching desire, He does meet that need; and bestows satisfaction, full and deep upon every seeking soul.

Then, having received the gifts He has to bestow, we may have reached the mood to heed attentively what He then asks us to give up to Him. Having surrendered all for us, He asks our "all" for Himself, and looks and waits expectantly till we have renewed our vows to be "dead with Him." Can any consecrated child of God, who knows, of old, the sacred hush of this solemn hour (and who, believing that highest Heaven is bending down to this sad earth to bless this trysting hour), not long with strong desire to take again the "remembrance tokens" of His death and be thus linked up again with the unseen things of that higher world? Here the Christian breathes his native air; here he enters the holy place; here he takes the Bread of Life; here he walks in the Spirit's light—for him these exclusive things have been prepared, and for the enjoyment of these exclusive things he too has been made.

Here, in this exalted state, spiritual things give vitalising energy to the spiritual man, and they who begin the hour in weakened weariness may go forth therefrom, made strong and resolute to live and walk each coming day with Christ.

For this occasion we have approached the remembrance night from another point of view. We have not

made allusions to the Egyptian basis of the Israelitish feast—we have not traced the observance through the centuries before Jesus came, nor have we even stressed the features of that crucial night when Jesus superseded the observances of the Mosaic Age, but we have covered and considered all the essential facts of our standing with the Lord. We have surveyed the same body of essential truth, but have dressed it up in other words appropriate to our daily needs. In our memorialising we stress the fact that Jesus died, and that His sacrificial death threw open wide the way to God. His sinless body broken for our sake is to us the token of life-giving Bread—of a new Loaf, to be broken to satisfy our need. His moral excellence (His untainted blood—His life) we take as transferred from Him to us, and because of our mystic union the life that was in Him we believe is now in us. This is the mainspring and source of a new life for us—our new life, native to a loftier sphere.

But the new life is in a fallen human receptable, which tends to blunt and dull its sensitivity to its own higher destiny, and leads it, betimes, to neglect and overlook its heavenly interests for those of this lower plane. That is why our field is often but ill-cultivated; and why the corn is short in the straw, and parched before it is full grown; and why the weeds abound profusely, and why the fences are broken down, and open to all vagrant intruders.

Of course we see these things in our lives all through the year, and any time is the right time to repent and confess our frailties in the kindly ear of God. This we should do morning, noon or night when the uneasy consciousness of such a state is brought home to our mind. But this one night is a special night because of what it commemorates, and because of the simple ceremonial which the dear Lord Himself appointed for a "remembrancer" and because sincere observance of the Lord's desire brings such satisfaction to the deeper needs of the inner man that they who drink deep thereof can never thereafter forget.

Let us come together again, therefore, beloved in the Lord, to remember Him—to remember His unique super-excellence as a man; to think of His incomparable essential sacrifice as the Man of Sorrows—as the "perfect" Man, and as we ponder and reflect say "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." 64

✻ In the Garden. ✻

On a fateful night nearly two thousand years ago, an observer in the valley of the Kidron might have seen a little procession making its way by the fitful light of lanterns down the rocky descent to the stream, then up the other side toward the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. Between that Mount and the city there lay a grove of olive trees, the Garden of Gethsemane, and before very long the handful of men which had set out from the upper room was winding its way between the trees to the Master's favourite spot.

The high lights of the story are familiar to all, but there are shadows in the background which have not featured so much in our meditations, and it may be well at this time to dwell awhile upon some of these fleeting figures which seem to be shrouded by the darkness which lay over that garden that night. The behaviour of the disciples has often engrossed attention. What about the other more shadowy figures who were also there?

Perhaps the most interesting of these is that of the young man, having a linen cloth cast about his body, and who, when seized by the rabble, left his linen cloth in their hands and fled naked. Who was he? What was he doing there? Why is the story recorded in the Gospel of Mark, and in that Gospel alone?

He was not one of the disciples. That is clear from the account in Mark 14; 50-52. "They all forsook him, and fled. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him; and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." The disciples, all of them, had left their Master before this incident occurred, so he could not have been one of them. And at this point another question may well come to mind. Who heard and recorded the Master's fervent prayers? Not the disciples, for they were all asleep. Three times did He pray, and three times did find them asleep, a sleep from which they were apparently awakened only by the advent of the armed host which had come to take Jesus prisoner. The conclusion seems irresistible that someone else was in the garden that night, someone inspired by a love and

devotion for Jesus of an order that led him to take a precaution that not one of the Lord's disciples had thought of taking.

In Palestine, as in most tropical countries, although the days are hot, the nights are bitterly cold—often approaching freezing point. No man would go abroad at night clad solely in a linen cloth without some very pressing reason. And the reason is an obvious one. That young man entered Gethsemane that night expecting to be in danger of capture and determined to avoid capture. He adopted a ruse which is an old one in many parts of the world. He greased his body all over, and then enveloped himself in an easily shed garment—the "linen cloth" mentioned was the burial garment or "winding sheet" in which bodies were laid in the grave—so that when grasped by hostile hands he could easily wriggle out of the garment and, the hands of his would-be captors being quite unable to hold fast his well-greased body, be able to make his escape.

Who then, outside the circle of the twelve, could have foreseen the coming tragedy? Even the disciples only half believed the Master's words about the imminence of His arrest and death. They would certainly have never slept had they had any idea of the events which were about to take place. It seems, then, that this "young man" might well have been one who, not belonging to the twelve, and therefore not at the Last Supper, followed the little band at a distance, and hiding in the trees, all eyes and all ears, alone heard these never-to-be-forgotten words, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee. . . . Nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14 : 36).

The word rendered "young man" in this verse is one which is best rendered by our colloquial "boy," or "lad." It almost certainly denotes a youth in his teens. Was there such a youth in the following of the Master?

If tradition be true, Jesus had only just come from the house where lived such an one. Early Christian testimony says that the "upper room" in which the Last Supper was held was in the house of a certain Mary, the same house which afterward became the centre of the first Jerusalem Christian Church, and where many were gathered together in prayer when Peter had been

thrown into prison by Herod (Acts 12 ; 12). This Mary had a son, John Mark, who at the time of the Lord's ministry was about fourteen years of age. In after years he accompanied Barnabas and Paul on their missionary journeys as a personal attendant, and later became profitable to Paul for the work of the ministry (II Tim. 4 ; 11, Phil. 24). He worked with Barnabas, who was his uncle, and eventually was privileged to write the first of the four Gospels to see the light of day—the Gospel according to Mark. Early Christian historians say that he introduced Christianity into Egypt, founded the Church of Alexandria, and ended his life as a martyr three years after Paul had sealed his own testimony with his blood on the Appian Way outside Rome.

There is more than one hint in the Gospel stories of a lad who hovered on the fringe of the crowd surrounding the Master, drinking in all that his hero said, watching with adoring eyes all that He did, storing up with the receptive memory of youth the vivid detail that emerges so freshly and clearly in the second Gospel. It is a solemn thing to realise that perhaps, under the providence of the Holy Spirit, we owe our knowledge of that sublime scene in the garden, with all that it has meant to us in understanding of the reality of our Lord's sacrifice, to the quick-witted devotion of a fourteen-year-old boy. Realising that something terrible was going to occur, perhaps boyishly contemptuous of the older men's failure to realise the danger threatening their Master, he waited his time and left his home in the wake of that mournful little party. Then, when the worst had happened and the Master, alone, was being taken to the High Priest, the boy would be running hard down the valley and across the River Kidron to his home, there to tell his tragic news to the little knot of faithful women.

It is Luke who tells the story of the angel who came from heaven to strengthen the Master in His hour of trial. It is a strange little interlude. "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22 ; 43). Luke does not say that anyone apart from Jesus saw the angel; the words rather denote that no one else did see him. Several of the best manuscripts omit this and the follow-

ing verse ; nevertheless, there are reasons for thinking that both verses form a genuine part of Luke's gospel. The 44th verse reads : " And being in an agony he prayed the more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." This verse contains four words such as a medical man would be likely to use, and there is presumptive evidence that the verses were actually written by Luke.

Did an angel really come from heaven to comfort and sustain our Lord ? And if He alone saw the angel how could anyone else ever know about it, except the fact were revealed by Divine inspiration.

It is perhaps likely that the lone watcher in the trees, gazing intently at our Lord's countenance in His hour of distress, saw the intense agony of mind displayed upon those loved features give place to a wondrous calm, a look of steadfast peace. That change must have taken place in the outward appearance of Jesus as His communion with His Father brought the rest and confidence of faith which His soul sought. The inward conflict was over, and He knew that He could go through the ordeal to the end in the knowledge of His Father's care and strength. To the watching one that wonderful change in the Lord's outward demeanour could mean only one thing ; an angel from heaven, invisible to other sight, had appeared to Him for strength and encouragement.

Who shall say that the expression is not a true one ? Surely the Holy Spirit of God was sent to that garden that night, bearing anew the strength-inspiring message, " This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Surely God's messenger did come to Jesus and in the strength of that revelation He went forth calmly to suffering and to death.

Luke was not a disciple at that time. He gained all his knowledge of Jesus' life from others—much of it from the women. The disciples, asleep in the garden, could not have told him of this incident. He probably had it from the women ; and they, in turn, from the young watcher who, having seen and heard all, left his garment in the hands of the guard and fled naked.

A COMMENT ON THE FOREGOING

If, then, it may be taken as a reasonable suggestion that the unnamed young man who ventured into the dark shadows of Gethsemane was indeed Mark, then surely the hand of Providence was preparing first-hand testimony for later days. It is agreed by critical expositors that Mark's Gospel was the first, and bears witness at many points to an actual observation of the events described, especially towards the end of the story. But a considerable period elapsed before the sayings and doings of Jesus was committed to paper. During this period the Gospel story was dependent upon the oral testimony of those who had seen and heard Jesus, or of others who received the facts from them (see Heb. 2 : 3). A witness, like Mark, who had seen so much, and, if the suggestion is correct, had seen some things that no one else had seen, would be of special importance.

A few words from Paul's pen throws much light upon the part this young man had played. In his last letter Paul beseeches Timothy to hasten to his side, and as he journeys to pick up Mark and bring him with him, for, says Paul, he is useful to me for the ministry (II Tim. 4 : 11). Paul had not always looked favourably upon Mark. Barnabas and he had taken Mark with them on their first missionary journey through Cyprus, but, for a reason not stated, he went not with them to the work in Pamphylia. Brought up in the comfort of a wealthy home, perhaps he shrank from the roughness of the open road. On the other hand, since this was the time of the persecution at Jerusalem, it may be he went back to be with his now elderly mother in the time of trial.

What part had Mark played on that first journey through the isle of Cyprus ? We find the clue in Acts 13 : 5 : " *... they proclaimed the work of God in the synagogues of the Jews, and they had also John (Mark's Hebrew name) as their attendant.*" The word here used, "*huperetes*" does not mean just a bearer of baggage, but shows a relationship to the work far more important than that. The same word is rendered " attendant " in Luke 4 : 20, and is there applied to the keeper of the sacred rolls in the synagogue. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew "*chazzan*" or minister of the synagogue. It was his duty to teach the exact wording of the sacred text, and

be the witness, in case of need, of the real testimony of the Word.

As Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the story of the Cross, and told the unheeding Jews of the life and death of the Lord, they had with them a keeper of the sacred truth, one who had witnessed with his own eyes what no other human eye had seen, and who could speak with quiet assurance of that sublime scene in the Garden when the Son of God fought His final conflict, and won.

Mark evidently lived to regain the aged Apostle's esteem. "He is useful unto me" in the Greek means "he is easy to use" for the ministry. Evidently Paul had used Mark many times in the years between, and now in his final hours wanted him close at hand. How many times Mark had borne witness to what he saw and heard in the shadows of Gethsemane none can say, but sure it is that what no eye but his had seen, became the firm belief of the whole Church, and was woven also into the text of the Gospel of an Apostle who himself had slept through the moments of his Master's bitterest agony.

THE QUESTION BOX

Q.—Jesus said: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the deeds of your father ye will do." Are there then two seeds in the world? Did not Jesus purchase the whole world of mankind when He gave His life a ransom for all?

A.—Yes, Jesus did purchase to Himself the whole race of mankind that He might lead "whosoever will" back to reconciliation with God. But there are many of the human race who at present have a greater sympathy with evil than with good. They do consciously practise wrongdoing for the sake of some worldly advantage it brings them. Some of the Pharisees in our Lord's day were like that. Such were termed by our Lord "Children of the devil," not that the devil was literally their father, but that they partook of his spirit and disposition. We are termed the "seed of Abraham" (Gal. 3; 29), but it does not follow that we are literally descended from Abraham, and in point of fact there will be many members of that "seed" who are not of the literal stock of Abraham. So in this matter. The evilly disposed are the seed of the devil in a theological sense only. Should they repent and become reconciled to God

they will cease to be of the devil's seed. They are all children of Adam, owing their human life to God through him, and will owe their renewed life to God through Christ.

Q.—John 17; 12. Jesus said to His Father: "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." Who is the son of perdition?

A.—Judas. Jesus said on one occasion: "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (Jno. 6; 44). Paul tells us that men live and move and have their being in God (Acts 17; 28), and when a man comes to Jesus it is because a little of that original bond which linked the perfect man to his God has remained and begun to draw that one toward his Father in heaven. That feeble turning of the heart to things Divine is the "drawing" of the Father which brings the repentant one to Jesus. Now the disciples, including Judas, were all men who had hoped and waited for the coming of Messiah, and, unlike the majority of their fellow-countrymen, saw in Jesus of Nazareth the One Who would redeem Israel (Luke 24; 21). It was natural, therefore, that the Father should give these men, already in a consecrated attitude, to Jesus for His first and closest followers. When we read that Jesus chose His twelve disciples, we can be sure that it was only after prayer and communion with His Father on the matter, so that He was undoubtedly guided in His choice from above.

Now at that time Judas was as sincere as the others. Jesus could not possibly have taken him otherwise. It was afterwards that Judas allowed other considerations to undermine his sincerity and to draw him from good to evil. The word "perdition" means destruction. He was the "son of destruction" in that instead of ranging himself with Jesus on the side of the things that are life-giving and preserving, he chose to ally himself with the forces that make for death and destruction. Instead of following out his wonderful opportunity to become a life-preserver to mankind, he became a destroyer, and is therefore fitly spoken of as a son of destruction. The expression does not refer to his eventual eternal destiny, but to the position he assumed at the time of his great sin. (For an exposition of the question of Judas, see "The Tragedy of Judas" in the B.S.M. for June, 1942.)

XXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXX

GALATIANS 6 ; 2

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." The law of Christ is the law of love ; and Love says, "Bear ye one another's burdens." There are times in the experience of almost everyone when the surges of trouble roll high, and the timid, shrinking soul is almost overwhelmed by them. Then how soothing is the sympathy and counsel of a fellow-member of the body of Christ ! Worldly-minded friends may sympathise, but their counsel is almost sure to be wrong. Hence the necessity of fellowship in the body of Christ.

It is not always necessary to tell one's sorrows and perplexities to another, in most cases they are better unfolded except to the Lord. But Love's quick discernment is always watchful and ready with the word in season, the cordial friendliness, and the helpful hand if need be, to help bear the burden.

Dearly beloved, bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ—the law of love ; and so bind up the body of Christ that it be more and more knit together in love. Let this blessed law of Christ rule more fully in all who have taken the name of Christ ; let its hallowed influence shine out upon the world, showing them how it brings peace and harmony and happiness—how it makes more tender and devoted wives, more noble, good and kind husbands, more loyal and loving children, more kind and good neighbours ; and how it puts oil upon all the troubled waters of present experience, and prepares the heart for the enjoyment of all the fruits of righteousness.

"HIDDEN SERVICE"

It is in the hidden service of the hidden life that God inspires one to write a cheering letter to a lonely soul ; to speak a word of encouragement to the weary ; to spend a few moments of praise to brighten up the drab and dreary existence of some poor soul ; to listen, advise, instruct and strengthen the faith of the weak ; to point to the Cross of Christ as the only Hope of salvation. God inspires to prayer, for this above all else, means a life of fellowship with Him.

(Forest Gate Bible Monthly)

LONELINESS

My God, the way is difficult ; the road is lone and dark ;
I find things so uncertain ; temptations find their mark ;
The evil shadows cling to me, I would that they did not !
I long to live as Jesus did, e'en though a cross my lot.
I've counted up the cost, dear Father, and I take the cross ;
The natural to the spiritual seems nothing more than dross.
And yet, as I'm away from home, my friends, my brethren's love,
The natural makes it hard for me to keep my thoughts above.
O Thou who understandest me, Thou Wondrous, All-wise Lord,
Enlighten Thou my eyes, I pray ; Thy tender grace afford
That I may see the path to tread—the way that leads to Thee.
And give me grace to help Thy flock and those who cannot see.
I can do nothing by myself, but if I have Thine aid
Then nothing can o'ercome me, and that is why I've made
My mind up to accept Thy call : Yet humbly I must pray
That Thou wilt guide and strengthen me, yes, love me, day by day.

And what a thought ! Thy wondrous Love ! Thine awe-inspiring grace !

And shown to even me at that—I shall behold Thy Face !
With reverence deep I pray to Thee to ask Thee if I may
Be cleansed and purged and TRIED WITH FIRE, against that Holy Day.

And so I ask for suffering Lord : ironic though it seems
That I should ask and then complain about Thine all-wise means.
Please help me keep my mind on Thee ; my heart filled with Thy Love.

And lift my thoughts ; that I may think and see from up above.

V. R. C. (1944).

A NEW JOY

"They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name."—Acts 5 ; 41.

We find these once disappointed men suddenly invested with a joy that was unquenchable. Look at them, filled with radiant joy, eating their meat with gladness. There was a holy hilarity about their life ; no dragging footsteps now ; there was a buoyancy about them that was in strange contrast to what they had been during those days after their Lord was crucified. Their joy could not be quenched ; imprison them and they sang hymns, and made the earth quake ; beat them and they rejoiced at being counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name. What was the explanation of that marvellous transformation ? The answer is : "They were all filled with the holy Spirit."

The Ministry of Reconciliation

Notes on the
Christian's mission

Passing through a city side street, thoughts were interrupted by the sight of a building evidently originally designed as a place of worship. High up on the facade, above stained glass windows, was set a chiselled stone, inscribed "**Christian Meeting House, 1866.**" But it was a Christian meeting house no longer. Lower down, a painted board announced these as the premises of the ——— Engineering Co., and the notice on the great door where worshippers once entered every Lord's Day declared its present function, the Goods Receiving Entrance. From within came the clank and whirr of machinery, and men passed hurriedly to and fro.

There are many such places in this same city. Used now for factories, offices, warehouses—anything but their intended purpose. In olden time that which once had been dedicated to the service of God could never afterward be used for any profane or secular purpose. The gift could not be taken back. The linen curtains of the Tabernacle, the white robes of the priests, when worn out had to be made into wicks for the lampstand in the Holy, that they might be utterly consumed in the service to which they were first devoted. Men do not reason that way nowadays; they are quick to claim for sordid commercialism the buildings which were in all likelihood erected by the prayer and self-sacrifice of earnest disciples, labouring to win men and women for Christ in the back streets and the dark alleys of the cities which commercialism had created.

Will it always be thus? Must the faith of Jesus for ever retreat before this advancing Colossus of world materialism which destroys in its stride all that is beautiful and enduring. We who look for the Saviour know that it will not be so. We look for the speedy coming of a Kingdom in which the Gospel will be proclaimed from the housetops, and all men will listen. **"It shall come to pass in that day that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it."** When at last the kingdoms of this world have perished in the Armageddon which they have themselves created, the standard

of the Cross will advance quickly to final victory. It is then, perhaps, that some of these forgotten chapels will come into their own again—will witness once more the thronging of eager crowds to listen to a message such as they have never heard before. Restitution must begin with the living nations, before the dead can begin to be raised. World order must be restored and a start made with the reconciliation of men, without delay. Can we not imagine the enthusiasm with which Christian men and women will enter into possession of every building which can possibly be used for the preaching and practice of the Gospel, setting up the standard for so long desecrated, each little centre a beacon light shining in the world's dark night? Surely earth's new King will see to it that every building that was built in His Name and for His work is restored to its proper purpose, and from churches, chapels, assembly rooms, all over the land, cleansed, restored, rededicated, will arise the beginnings of that great Hallelujah which is to encompass all the earth and all humanity at last.

From a Prison Cell

A series of
discourses on the
prison epistles

T.H.

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world."—Eph. 1; 4.

One of the most wonderful and astonishing of the great thoughts with which the Epistle to the Ephesians begins is that embodied in the words of the text. Quoting the small section in full, we read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love, having fore-ordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus unto Himself" (vv. 3-5).

There is far too much in this short section for this present study, and we must confine attention to just the few words in the head text, for they contain much food for reflective thought. It is a wonderful and solemnising

thought to realise that the faithful of this Gospel Age have been chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, and that we, also, of these strenuous days, if found faithful unto death, may also win Christ and be found "in Him" when the ever living God makes up the number of His elect.

The context tells of many great positions of authority and power created for those high heavenly beings which were brought forth to be helpers and assistants to the worthy first-born Son of God in the great Plan entrusted to His care, and into which they will enter in the fullest sense, when all things in heaven and earth are "headed-up" by Christ. In the words of the text Paul has transcendently great news for those from the human family who follow faithfully in the footsteps of their beloved Lord. In the far unfathomable depths of ages gone by, the same almighty sovereign God who framed the great all-comprehensive universal plan for the various gradations of heavenly beings, also fore-ordained that a company of earthly beings, born as members of a fallen race, should be redeemed from the power of sin and death, and follow their Saviour and Redeemer from the confines of this terrestrial plane up into the highest place of the heavenly realms to be His own family of sons. This phase of the Divine intention took shape at the same time that Divine wisdom devised the great Plan for the heavenly realms—that is, it took shape even before the creation of the heavenly beings, for their respective places in the Plan. By this fact, we are informed that ages before man was created God had purposed that man should be created. And by the same evidence it was foreseen that circumstances would arise among men whereby a way would be opened so that beings of one sentient plane could be transformed and carried up from a lower to a higher plane. There must be some deep and unique reason for this procedure, otherwise, like all the native members of the heavenly hosts, they could have been created, at first move, for those heavenly realms. To be first born as men, and then changed and adapted afterwards to heavenly conditions is an experience without parallel in the vast creative Plan. So far as one can say there can be no other reason for such a course, than to give them contact with sin, on the lowest plane where the evil moral consequences of sin could

be experienced and understood, and then for some great purpose, too deep at present to understand, have been lifted up to the highest place as companions and brethren of the first-born Son. Divine fore-knowledge was fully equal to the task of knowing that man would fall into sin, and be allowed to die, and framed its Plans accordingly. That knowledge would not implicate the Divine Creator as conniving in man's fall, any more than that He was responsible for Satan's fall. With full knowledge of the heavenly realms and of universal law, Satan fell by deliberate choice. He exercised the freedom of his will, and decided to rebel against high authority. So also did man—though within more circumscribed circumstances.

Divine foreknowledge could foresee the fatal swing away from righteousness of man's free-will, and planned to save man from the consequences of his fatal choice, and under the same circumstances call from among man's progeny a company to be transformed and then transferred to the higher sphere. Right back there in that distant past, God purposed that man should be redeemed, and at that distant time made choice of One to be man's Redeemer. That is what Peter says when he writes: ". . . ye were redeemed . . . with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ, who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world" (I Pet. 1 : 18-20). This statement is an exact parallel to the words of Eph. 1 : 4-7. Right back there in the unfathomable depths of time God purposed that man should be redeemed, and not only so, but that from among fallen men He would invite such as were right-hearted before Him to follow His well-beloved Son through death to His heavenly throne. This is what Jesus means in His great committal prayer, "And now, O Father, glorify thou Me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was . . . Father, those whom Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, there they may be also, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17 : 5 and 24).

This is the transcendental thought that amazes all who can comprehend it, and stirs their hearts to the very

depths with emotions too deep for words. It is not easy to think back into those distant times and ponder on the Divine purposing, but, whether we can comprehend it or not, this inheritance in Christ was made secure by the sovereign Will of God. And, more wonderful still, the fore-ordination of this purposing actually gave God joy and delight. Long ages before He would look upon this company of sons, God found pleasure in anticipating the day of their coming, and in the good pleasure of His Will deliberately ordained and chose this company and arranged its acceptance into His presence through His well-beloved Son. That great pleasure sprang out of His great love for His unborn family, for it was "in love" that He predestinated it to be adopted. That all-seeing eye of God could look forward down the long distances of time, and as He saw what would come to pass among men as the story of His grace was told, He felt the warm movements of His loving heart expand towards those who believed and responded to His call.

Full sonship and full access to the Father's glorious presence belong to a later day, when every trace of sin and selfishness has been cleansed away, and when the clinging tendrils of this earth have been cut away once for all. No trace of unholy thought or defiling desire can be carried up into His heavenly home. Hence His future sons must be set free from these undesirable things here and now. To that end He most graciously forgives their sins—covering them with the precious blood of the worthy Lamb of God—and thus looks upon them approvingly through the abundant merit of His Son.

Then, to help them break the power of sin in their lives God has sent His Holy Spirit into their hearts, as a source of energy and strength, upon which they can draw in time of need. It is as though the Divine hand reached down to snap all the fetters of sin and to lift His prospective child over every stone and obstacle, by making every right impulse and desire stronger every day, and impressing the mind of His beloved with firmer resolve to live always and only for this purpose of God. Thus, holiness is engendered in the adopted one's heart—first, a desire to be free from sin; next, a determined resolve to become devoted in every sense and degree to the Will and purpose of his Father and his God. Thus holiness becomes complete.

Who would not go through fire and flood, and fight down every foe, for such an inheritance—as this? Who would not relinquish every earthly prize and count it as unworthy refuse to win such a place in Christ? Do we wonder that Paul writes words which glow with living fire, as he contemplates what that future inheritance will mean (Phil. 3; 7-14).

God grant this thought to lie heavily on our hearts so that in the few years of this earthly life it may penetrate and permeate us through and through with deeper longing to be accounted worthy to go up into the higher realms to see and share the glory of the worthy Lamb.

Brotherly Counsel.



If we look into the record given us in the Acts of the Church of the first days, we find several outstanding characteristics that marked their collective life, as the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. First, we are told that they waited constantly upon the teaching of the Apostles. There was no printed Word of God then, as in the Lord's Providence there is now. In our case this would mean that our Church fellowship would function round the open Bible, where the Apostle's teaching, and that of the prophets of old are recorded for our instruction. More important still, it is here "the Saviour's welcome voice, sheds Heavenly peace around and life and everlasting joys attend the blissful sound." Let us, like these early Christians, cherish the spirit of fellowship, not regarding ourselves as isolated units, but as members of ONE BODY, of which the LIVING HEAD IS CHRIST. Let us regard no sacrifice or inconvenience too great to surmount in order to meet regularly together and exhort one another, and enthuse one another in the Christian way. The early Church persevered in fellowship, partaking often of this privilege in each other's homes, and over the hospitality of a simple meal.

* * *

Then there are a few remarks to be made concerning

the chief characteristics of our communion together. First, there should be reverence. Reverence is the pervading tone of Heaven; it predominates over every other characteristic, save Love alone. There is nothing so real as true Piety, or Godly fear. It introduces us into that which is within the veil. A sense of God's Reality, of His holiness, of His right over us, of His concern for us, of His glorious designs for us and for all. This is the foundation of all Piety and therefore of all Peace. In this spirit we view one another; not as in the flesh, but as in the Presence of God, endeavouring to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, forbearing with one another in Love, recognising in each other those who have been reconciled in Christ and called and chosen by God, as His peculiar people, a people for a purpose. How careful this would make us, so that in nothing would we offend one another, but rather sacrifice self in order to serve one another in Love, viewing our service for one another as rendered unto Him.

* * *

A Christian Church ought to be an exhibition of heaven upon earth—a manifestation of Christ below—a witness for God in the midst of the world, so that the world looking at the Church may be able to say: "This is a specimen of what that which is called the Gospel can do; this is a model of what the Christian teaching can achieve." And so all with whom we come into contact in our intercourse in life will say: "That man does not say much about his Christian beliefs when transacting his business, but there prevails in all that he does an integrity, a singleness of eye, a simplicity of purpose, a faithfulness to his engagements, and a superiority of trial, that proves he must have some fountain of peace and comfort and joy that we have not; we will go and hear what he hears, learn the lessons he has learned, and taste, if it be possible, the happiness which we see in his character." Such an one becomes to mankind either the salt that silently keeps a society from corruption, or the light shining on the hilltop that illuminates the earth with a ray of the glory of heaven.

(*Forest Gate Bible Monthly*)

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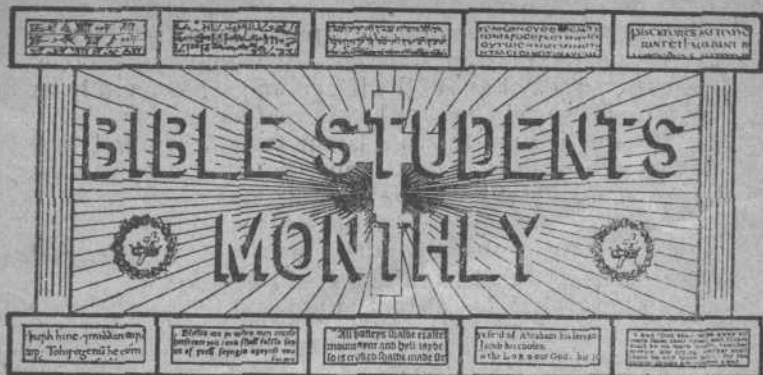
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Our annual commemoration is past, and we are started upon a new year of Christian hope and experience. Hope, because we see not as yet the Kingdom glories; and hope must needs sustain us until it is realised in fulfilment. Experience, because this life is our training ground, and it is here and now that we must be fashioned into the image of the Master and gain so thorough and intimate a knowledge of the principles of God's righteousness that we may be fitly entrusted with the task of teaching that righteousness to earth's millions "in due time."

So often do we forget that grand end and aim of our life in Christ Jesus. So apt are we at times to concentrate thought upon our personal acceptance with Him that we fail to bear in mind the purpose for which He is choosing us. To eat and drink in His presence; to hear His voice teaching in our streets, is not sufficient. These things minister to our intellectual development, and make us familiar with the wide scope and magnificent beauty of the Divine Plan for human salvation; they do not of themselves fit us to be "merciful and faithful priests" for the ministry of reconciliation which is yet to turn "whosoever will" from the error of his way. These things form the basis of our hope. They do not minister to our experience.

That experience can be ours only if we set up a working model of the Millennial Kingdom in our own midst; if we honestly attempt to set up and maintain within our own fellowship the standards which we proclaim shall be preached amongst men "in that day." It is to be feared that we do not do this; that our daily life is tinctured much more deeply than it ought to be with the standards, the methods, even the hopes and aims, of the world around us—that world which does not know our God. Shall we not resolve, each and every one of us, that the dawning of this new year in the way of the Truth shall be marked by a new determination to play our own part in the creation of a real miniature of the Kingdom, a fellowship which shall be marked by the spirit of mutual understanding and respect, of joint service and self-sacrifice, of united witness to the world around? Is not such an ideal worth working for? And we can make it a reality—if we will!

GOD SPEAKS

B. J. D.

God speaks! So begins the epistle to the Hebrews; and without the customary apostolic greeting; and properly so, for the writer's qualifications and his blessing on his readers must be left unmentioned while God is speaking. He speaks to a people whose first great leader exceedingly feared and quaked when the voice of God once shook the earth, and from whose ranks arose those mighty men of word and deed of whom the world was not worthy. He speaks to a people who had heard his voice through many centuries; to a nation which could rightly claim that to them were committed the oracles. The olden prophecies had not come by the will of man for often the will of man was contrary, nor did the prophets proclaim together, but spoke at sundry times when the burden of the Lord was upon them. Being of Adamic descent they died like their hearers, yet their words have not died, and they still speak to those who listen, and appropriate quotations are made in this epistle from their writings. And the passage of time has by fulfilment of their prophecies revealed that for all their frailty they are truthfully referred to as holy men of God who spake as moved by the Holy Spirit.

But a great change of procedure is announced at the opening of this epistle. God is speaking again, and the new channel of truth is the greatest He could desire or find, or man need. We all know through whom He now speaks, but the apostle, apart from speaking of Him as the Son of God, does not immediately announce His name. He first mentions some of His glories and greatness, and when he has thus prepared the minds of his Hebrew readers, he declares Him, in chapter two, to be Jesus. He is not of sinful stock as the early prophets, yet his words do not abrogate the prophecies of his predecessors, for all spoke by the Spirit's direction. But this will emerge from the comparison—that if God had of old spoken through the faithful several and is now speaking through one, His Son, then He must possess outstanding qualifications and virtues. He has; and the first seven chapters of Hebrews tell, among other things, how much better, how much greater is this faithful and true witness than the stalwarts of the past. And note

how, in these chapters, the faithful servants of old (the very ones revered in Israel) are one by one surpassed by Jesus the Son of God.

Early in the first chapter we see the close association of the Son and his Father, so complete that He is spoken of as the reflection of the power, the character, the voice of God. But there are two facts in which the Son must necessarily differ from the Father, yet they also prove how glorious is the union of Father and Son, and they are that it is the Son who by himself purges our sin, and having done that great work sits down on the right hand of the majesty on high. This is the channel through whom the message of God now comes, and it will be noticed that this new prophet is also priest and king. And he excels all previous holders of these offices in that He possesses the power of an endless life, enough to fit Him for all Israel's and the world's many needs. That he holds this immortality is seen in this chapter by his gaining by inheritance a more excellent name than the angels.

The remainder of the first chapter has as its theme the proving of the Son's superiority to the angels, and ample quotation is given from the voices of the past, which look forward to His coming and faithful performance of His Divine mission; and these in turn seal the old writers as prophets of God. The apostle propounds the question—to which of the angels said he at any time, "thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." No answer is given, for there is none. His superiority to angels is so marked that the apostle uses that strong figure of speech—erotesis—where the unanswered question is more telling than any reply. Further quotations show the Son's work in the beginning of laying the foundations of the universe. Some of the work erected on those foundations will perish, but the founder will endure and bear a righteous sceptre in the coming kingdom.

Not to angels is assigned the great work of subduing the future habitable, affirms chapter two, yet it reasons that if the word once spoken by angels was accompanied by severe penalties we ought to give more earnest heed to the words which first began to be spoken by this new voice of God, which God himself has confirmed by gifts of the Holy Spirit. Great indeed must be the responsibility of the hearers now that the last and greatest voice

from God is speaking! And, leaving the subject of angels, the apostle mentions the superiority of the Son to man. This may be an obvious truth, yet if we recall that the Son was once of high heavenly rank and became a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death or in other words that he might redeem man by dying for them, then his superiority to man can never be called in question. And his superiority to the devil is apparent, for by the same act of death He will render him powerless.

And then the comparison changes. Though superior to angels and man in general, He is shown as better than man in particular from chapter three forward; and the first great man in the list of worthies is Moses, one of the faithful voices of the past. It will be remembered that Moses the servant of God and of Israel the house of God, prophesied that he himself would be succeeded by another to whom they would hearken without fail; and thus he became a testimony or illustration of those things which were to be spoken after concerning Jesus the Son. But though Moses heard the voice of God and faithfully served the words to Israel, it was necessary for the house of God to be constantly prompted to loyalty by the insistent words, "To-day if ye will hear his voice." And all know that the word preached did not profit, for it was not mixed with faith in them that heard. Then the apostle mentions two more leaders in Israel, Joshua and David; yet both failed to give rest to Israel. The word of God had come to Israel through such as these at sundry times and in divers manners with but little result, and the word of God being quick and powerful spoke again and said, "They shall not enter into my rest."

It will then be reasoned that now that God is speaking by his Son, who surpasses Moses, Joshua and David, we ought to give the more earnest heed. It is as though the writer was saying, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, and how shall we escape if we neglect?" Yet, the warning note of chapters 3 and 4 is tempered by the announcement of the new voice of God being a faithful high priest Who was, apart from sin, tempted in all points like as we. So we may come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help. But we must listen to the voice.

The mention of high priest will remind the Hebrews of their first and greatest, Aaron. He did not take the honour to himself, but was specially called for the post, as was Moses called to his service. In fact, each of these leaders of old time was called to his service, and it was proper that Israel should heed them in those days when they spoke from God; but their superior has come, the princely leader of salvation, the Son, and they must listen to Him. They had looked to Aaron as model high priest even as they saw Moses as the great prophet, but both are succeeded by One, in whom combines each office held by Moses, Aaron, Joshua and David. When the apostle has compared one by one the leaders of the past with their one successor they must perforce accept Messiah. Again the writer points out their responsibility (in chapter 6), but again he has comforting words to speak, for he is persuaded better things of them, even though he must speak strongly.

There seems to be only one more name in Israel to which they would cling now that each of their leaders has been superseded by Jesus, and he is the father of them all and in whom inhere the promises—Abraham. And as we expect the apostle shows how he too is superseded by the same one. None of them are superseded in the sense that they have been discarded by God, but the new channel of God's word and promise and deed is so much better than they, great though they were, and most worthy to be revered in Israel. Abraham received blessing from one of unknown descent and whose appointment as high priest came not in the fashion that Israel was accustomed to. Abraham gave him tithes in acknowledgment of his honour. Consider how great this man was, for he was made like unto the Son of God and he received tithes of Abraham and therefore of Levi and the whole house of Aaron, who in their turn received tithes of all Israel. Of such rank is Jesus the Son of God.

The apostle begins the eighth chapter as though the previous seven chapters are given to describing the glories of this One high Priest, for he says, "Of the things we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest," greater than angels, than man, than Moses, than Joshua, than David, than Aaron, and greater than Abraham. He it is through whom God now speaks, and we must give heed, for no better can ever be found.

THE QUIET TIME

THE HELPING HAND

How often do we feel, while travelling on the sands of time

That we are sinking, sinking fast, away from things sublime?

How often do we feel discouraged, ready to despair,
To go back to our worldly ways and cease to think or care?

'Tis on occasions such as these the Father intervenes
And turns our minds back to His Plan, its everchanging scenes.

He demonstrates so clearly His Providential Power
And tells us, if we trust Him, He'll be with us, hour by hour.

So don't let's worry over trifles, though they seem so big,
Our Father knows just what we need; He'll help us then to dig

So deep into His Scriptures that the blessing there we find

Will far outweigh life's troubles and leave them miles behind.

V. R. C.

Disappointment is like one of those sharp showers which sometimes burst on the garden out of a clear spring sky. For a minute or so the driving rain beats down, and the bright flowers which a moment before were lifting up their heads to the gay sunshine are wilting and bending beneath the crushing load. But the shower passes, and the sun shines down again upon flowers that are bent indeed beneath their load of bright raindrops, but are giving forth a fresh fragrance that could never have been distilled from them without that short tribulation.

**"Disappointment—His appointment,
Change one letter, then I see
That the thwarting of my purpose
Is God's better way for me."**

PRAISE

To give praise is very becoming for the believer. It becomes as natural as breathing is to the physical body. Thankfulness and praise are twin sisters and where the one is found the other follows close in its track. Realising the deep need of love and mercy and being the recipient of the same causes the heart to overflow with gratitude to its donor. Like the Psalmist, the language is: "**I will bless the Lord at all times : His praise shall continually be in my mouth.**"

SAUL AND DAVID

This is the principal difference between Saul's course and that of his successor, David. Outwardly, perhaps, Saul was as noble in character as his successor ; but the latter, putting God first and submitting his own will to the Divine will, had the advantage, so that whatever natural blunders he made, whatever natural defects he shared in common with the remainder of the human family, were offset by that heart loyalty to God which never permitted him to stray far, and which after every transgression caused him to weep bitterly and to seek Divine forgiveness and therefore a closer walk with God. Thus, David was a man after God's own heart, not because of his perfection of the flesh, but because of his perfection of intention and heart's desire.

DEVOTION

Dear Father, hear my humble prayer, as close I come to Thee I want to try to thank Thee now for all Thour art to me. I do appreciate so much the ways in which You show Your deep-set Love and watch-care over me whilst here below. I thank Thee for my weakness, Father, now I understand— If I weren't weak I should not seek to grasp Thy powerful hand. I pray each day for guidance, for I know my steps would stray Without the Wisdom of Thy Word to keep me in Thy way. Thy faithfulness ! Thy Gracious Love in helping such an one, Poor and unreliable, to be like Thy dear Son. O keep me humble always Father, so that I may see The depth of Thy great kindness, as shown to even me. My heart o'erflows with gratitude whenever I think of Him Who left His lovely home with Thee to habitate with sin ; Of all the sordid sufferings His loving heart went through In order to redeem His scourgers back to peace with You. My Father, give me faithfulness, and zeal for Thy great cause, That I might live a life like Jesu's, free from self-applause. Give me strength, I pray Thee, day by day that I may be As spotless and unselfish and as glorious as He. V. R. C.

† RESIGNATION †

A.S.

In the midst of overwhelming trouble the Psalmist cried: "Oh for the wings of a dove to fly far away and be at rest ! Fain would I fly from it all and live within the desert." Jeremiah, horrified at the wickedness and deceit of his fellows said, " Oh ! that I had in the wilderness a wayfarer's lodge, that I might leave my people and go from them."

Who is there among us who has not at some time or other expressed similar sentiments ? " Oh, to be away from it all ! " we cry, when the experiences of life threaten to overwhelm us ; but when the emergency is past we can say with David, " He knoweth our feeble frame, he remembereth that we are dust." or with Jeremiah : " It is through the Lord's kindness we are not consumed, because his mercies have no end." Why, then, do we sometimes, like these men of old, lose our grip on all the precious promises which belong to those who reverence God, and seek to avoid those very experiences which our Father, in His mercy, sends us ?

Maybe it is because we have not learned to be completely resigned to His will. Resignation is defined as " calm submission or acquiescence." To be resigned is " to be reconciled to accepting the inevitable." Now, what is " the inevitable " to a follower of Christ ? To ascertain this we must remind ourselves, briefly, of the experiences which came to Jesus whilst He was here upon earth. Whilst His inner life was one of constant communion with His Father and the study of His Word and law, His outward experiences were a mingling of joyous service on behalf of others on one hand, and a constant buffeting from an alien world on the other, leading to the intense suffering which He endured during His last few days on this earth.

At the beginning of this journey His sentiments were : " Lo ! I came to do thy will, O my God." and at its conclusion He cried : " Father, to thy hands I entrust my spirit " ; thus throughout the whole of His " learning to be obedient " He was completely resigned to His Father's will. So then, whilst we share in His joys of

service and communion with His Father, it is "inevitable" that we should share in His sorrows too, for did not He Himself say, "In the world ye shall have tribulation," and "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord." To follow Jesus, the man of sorrows, means trials, tears, misunderstandings and cruel misjudgments, in fact, if we would follow Him faithfully we must be prepared to accept as "inevitable" the complete destruction of self and the loss of all that self holds dear. But the flesh sometimes finds it hard to acquiesce, to rest satisfied when trials and sorrows press heavily upon the soul, yet this is the lesson set for us to learn.

How, then, can we become completely resigned as was Jesus, ready to accept the inevitable and to rest satisfied in the knowledge that God's way is best. Surely this can only come as we gain complete confidence in Him in whose hands we are held, and it is this confidence which the Adversary does his utmost to undermine. We would not place our mundane affairs in the hands of anyone in whom we had not complete confidence, so we cannot fully resign ourselves to God's will until and unless we have gained complete confidence in Him. The Apostle Paul says: "I know in whom my trust reposes, and am confident that He has it in His power to keep what I have entrusted to Him safe until that day." In case we should feel discouraged because we have not reached this happy state, we would point out that when the Apostle Paul wrote these words to Timothy he was very near to the end of his course. It was only after a lifetime of hardships, trials and disappointments, during which time he came to know and feel the keeping power of God, that he could say, "I know in whom my trust reposes." If we could say this with the same conviction, surely we should be completely resigned to God's will, able to remain calmly acquiescent even when all seems dark and forbidding.

We need, then, to know God. How can this knowledge be obtained? By studying His laws and His written Word? Yes. By getting to know how He dealt with His people of old? Yes. Such experiences are bound to bring to us a knowledge of God; but we can gain a much more profound knowledge, a more intimate

acquaintance, by plunging into the unknown with a determination to accept as best for us, all that He sends, be it weal or woe.

It was in thick darkness that Moses found the Presence of God, but he came down with shining face, so it is in the darkest hours that we shall really get to know God, and we shall come out illumined with a heavenly light. "But," you say, "my experiences are not like Paul's or Moses'. It is not given to me to lead God's people or to have 'the care of all the churches,' neither am I hauled before governors or cast into prison." This is true, nevertheless, if we are true followers of Christ we do find that (to use a common expression) we are often "up against it," and the more we find ourselves in difficulty and doubt, the more we have the opportunity of getting to know God.

David had many dreadful experiences, but in his Psalms we find so many utterances which reveal his trust in God and his determination to resign himself to whatever lay in the unseen future. On more than one occasion he had to fly to the caves of Engedi or Adullam for refuge, but neither the darkness within the cave or the danger without dulled his sense of security, for on one occasion he sang: "In the shadow of thy wings I shelter, till the deadly danger passes. My heart is ready, ready, O God, for song and melody. Awake my soul! Awake my lute, my lyre!" (Psalm 57; 1-7 and 8; Moffatt.) It may well have been these rocky strongholds which inspired the Psalmist to sing on more than one occasion: "Thou art my rock, my fortress"—my "mountain crag." This similitude is apt indeed, especially so to us at this time, for there is in a mountain crag something permanent and enduring, contrasting vividly with the crumbling institutions of men in which they still put their trust. To some it may appear awesome, overwhelming, but to others it is majestic and inspiring, providing rest and protection in its shadow. To many people to-day God may appear awesome and overwhelming, but surely to us He is majestic and inspiring, and in His shadow we find rest and freedom from fear.

Dwelling thus in the shadow of his "mountain crag," the Psalmist sings: "Leave it all quietly to God, my soul, my rescue comes from him alone: Rock, rescue,

refuge, he is all to me, never shall I be overthrown. My safely and my honour rest on God; God is my strong rock and refuge. Always rely on him, my followers, pour out your prayers to him; God is a refuge for us." (Psalm 62; 5-8; Moffatt.)

Kingdoms may fall, every human institution perish; we may dwell in the very shadow of death while the storms of life rage about us, but dwelling under the shadow of our "mountain crag," we can sing with another poet of later days:

**"I cannot see, with my small human sight,
Why God should lead this way or that for me;
I only know He said, "Child, follow me."
But I can trust.**

**I know not why my path should be at times
So straitly hedged, so strangely barred before;
I only know God could keep wide the door,
But I can trust.**

**I cannot know why suddenly the storm
Should rage so fiercely round me in its wrath;
But this I know, God watches still my path—
And I can trust."**

ON MARS HILL

"Both teachers and learners go to sleep at their posts so soon as there is no enemy in the field." *J. S. Mill*

"Absolute truth can have nothing to fear from the dis-integrating influence of time." *Sir James Jeans*

"I do not believe that a Christian who wishes to make his faith real needs anything except Christ's understanding of God, a mind that is not afraid to think, and a love of the brethren which comes from his knowledge of how he himself needs a Saviour." *Dick Sheppard*

"Attractive as is the proposal, we cannot "cut" repentance and get on with the Kingdom, for things will not be taken out of their Divine order." *Paul Gliddon*

"This world will not be saved from its madness by a church asleep. It needs a church aflame,

Percy Sowerby

THE QUESTION BOX

Q.—In the light of Luke 4; 78 ("Sunrising," Variorum), Luke 1; 17 and Matt. 17; 10-12 is the prophecy of Mal. 4 to be considered as fulfilled at the First Advent, or are we to look for a greater and wider manifestation at this Age end?

A.—The promise that "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" is one that links the First and Second Advents with each other and with the visions of Isaiah. Moses and Elijah were the two great prophets of Israel—~~one~~ one made them a nation and led them to the Promised Land, the other converted them from Baal worship to serve the living God. Both prophets died "supernaturally," one upon a mountain top, alone, and "no man knoweth his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. 34; 6), the other carried into heaven by a whirlwind. Jesus said of John the Baptist, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matt. 11; 4), but John said of himself that he was a voice crying in the wilderness as spoken by Isaiah the prophet (Jno. 1; 23). Isaiah in turn links the "voice in the wilderness" with his grand theme of the "suffering servant" who is destined to lead mankind to reconciliation with God. Can we see in all this a further illumination on the two-fold nature of that "servant"—a heavenly part, the Church, "sent" before the great Day of Trouble to witness before men and convert some, to be caught up to the spiritual realm and completed during the troublous days of the End; and an earthly part destined to become the nucleus of the Kingdom on earth, to organise mankind into one great holy nation and lead them into the greater Promised Land? Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head over both the heavenly and earthly phases of the "Servant," and is Himself the fullest expression of that same "Servant." If this be so, there may be a pointer here for our own future work—for how will the earthly part of the Servant Nation receive the knowledge of their opportunity and high destiny if not from those who are already, in this Gospel Age, the custodians of the oracles of God? Without doubt the prophecy does have reference to events at this end of the Age and would well repay deep study and earnest discussion; for a right understanding must be capable of shedding much light upon our way just at this time.

From a Prison Cell

T.H.

A series of discourses on the prison epistles

"Having fore-ordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself." (Eph. 1 ; 5.)

There are two different viewpoints in the Word of God concerning the mode whereby we become the Sons of God. One of these is based upon the process of spirit-begettal and ultimate spirit-birth. This thought originates from the words of Jesus in His conversation with Nicodemus, "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3 ; 3 and 5). This is the viewpoint also of Peter and John (1 Pet. 1 ; 23 ; 1 John 5 ; 1, 4, 18). Paul presents another view. He speaks not of begettal, but of adoption into the family of God. This view is based on a Roman custom which allowed a man of noble birth and standing to take into his family and account as his own son a youth of lowlier birth. This was all done in proper legal form. The first step was to take the intended son before a public notary and there give due notice of his intention, subject to certain conditions being forthcoming at a future specified time. These centred in the response of the young man himself to the training and tuition, necessary for his prospective position, to which in the meantime he would have been subjected. If he had responded satisfactorily, then at the appointed day the status of full sonship would be publicly conferred, and from that day the adopted son was accounted as fully a son as though he was a child by birth.

But, at the time when the father intimated his intention to adopt, a public token of his good faith in the matter was made in the presentation of a robe or ring or other gift to the intended son—a kind of pledge that he would be faithful to his promise, provided the young "adoptee" had so improved in education and general bearing as to be a credit to the house and standing of his kindly benefactor.

The Greek word here translated "adoption" literally

means "placing as a son." It is the "placing as a son" one who is not such by birth, and entitling him to the peculiar privileges of such a connection, as fully and completely as a child by birth. Thus, there were two stages to the legal process of adoption. First, a provisional stage, with certain conditions applicable to both parties, but mainly contingent upon the good conduct and progress of the intended son. Thenceforth, the whole Roman world would treat him as the father's true son in every act in which duty caused him to become involved.

This illustration is the scaffolding upon which Paul builds his great theme of Divine Fatherhood and saintly sonship. God is the beneficent and kindly Master of a great house, who desires to find fitting companions for His one true Son. It was in His own unchallengeable prerogative to choose to do this thing. Nothing could compel or obligate Him so to do, had He willed it otherwise. To Him belongs the right to say who shall be invited, and on what terms they may be acceptable before Him. It is for Him to determine what tuition, and of what kind, every invited candidate must receive to make them fitting companions for His only begotten Son. And to Him belongs the right finally to decide who among the invited ones had reached up to the standard of worthiness sufficient to qualify for the position involved.

To whom did God make this gracious offer of adoption into the closest circle of His family? To the resplendent sons of the morning? No! They could not be a spectacle to man. Humankind could never have understood all that this most intimate sonship means if God had adopted His sons from them. It was from the lower plebeian level of men, and not from the patrician ranks of heaven, that God condescended to choose His sons.

As proof of the Divine good faith, the worthy Father decided to give a pledge, in the bestowment of His own good Spirit, to all who among men should respond to His call. This was to be accounted as an "earnest"—"a pledge-gift"—to every responding soul assuring them that if they diligently applied themselves to the necessary education and refinement to fit themselves for acceptance into this elect position in God's great house,

the gracious Father would be true to His promise and pledge and accept them as His own true sons.

The Greek word for "earnest"—"*arrhabon*"—**primarily** had to do with "exchange," and so had reference to a mutual pledge exchanged between two parties when making an agreement; a token payment when the transaction was first agreed, to be returned to each party on fulfilment. But later usage changed its meaning to an "earnest"—a part of a price, given as a tangible promise that the whole would be paid in due time. Paul tells us that the "earnest" which God bestowed upon His invited sons is His Holy Spirit—the Holy Spirit of promise—which is a pledge to stand good until the day of redemption of God's own—translated in the A.V. as "until the redemption of the purchased possession." This privilege of sonship belonged primarily to Israel, as Paul states in Rom. 9; 4. . . . whose is the adoption . . . " this same thought is asserted again in Gal. 4; 4-6: "When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son—born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as Sons. And because ye are sons (first-stage sons) God sent forth the Spirit of His (well-beloved) Son into your hearts crying 'Abba, Father.'"

The Galatians were sons of fathers who had at one time been under the law, but were divorced from it for unfaithfulness. Some among them were in danger of being enticed back under the law by Judaizing teachers. Paul wanted them to realise that God was now calling "sons," not servants—children of the free-woman, not of the bond-woman! Only a remnant in Israel was found sufficiently responsive to heed the heavenly call, and thus the privilege was extended to the Gentiles. It is in this larger sense that Paul describes the privileges of the sonship in Rom. 8; 14-16. Here he writes to a mixed church in a Gentile city, in which Gentile believers predominated. To these he says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye received not the Spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father." The full thought concerning this spirit of adoption is brought out in the words of Eph. 1; 14. It is the

promise of God that those faithful souls, who mortify the deeds of the body (Rom. 8; 13), thus responding to Divine tuition and refinement, shall receive, in due time, the full inheritance of sonship as heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ.

Deep in the counsels of eternity God purposed to win from among men a company of sons who should be raised to the highest place in the heavenly realm. The fall of man into sin necessitated the descent to earth of His first-born Son to become man's Redeemer, and, after that, become the Princely-Leader of "many brethren" up to those heavenly heights. The great privilege of sonship in this exalted closer sense was offered first to the sons of Abraham. As a people they rejected the invitation, only a remnant according to the election of grace being found in Israel. The invitation was then offered to those among the Gentiles whose hearts the Lord opened (Acts 16; 14). To such as made response with good and honest heart God gave the pledge-gift of His Holy Spirit, to be at once the earnest of their inheritance, and the transforming power within to enable them to become trained and transformed, and thus made ready to become companions in full and complete sonship with His well-beloved worthy Son. That is the story of adoption, planned before time began, but worked out in the little lives of such among men as have been found responsive to the love of an all-wise creator and Father.

Brethren in the Lord! Your calling is no small hole-in-the-corner affair in the sight of God. It is an integral part of a great plan spanning ages for its sphere. It is part of a plan which includes angels as well as men, and which, when complete will place creatures which once were sinful human dust among and above the spirits which surround the heavenly throne. The eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, long ages ago looked down the long distances of time, and with joy and delight anticipated the homecoming of His sons. The door to that heavenly home still stands ajar to-day, for all who are ready to follow in the steps of our beloved Lord. What do you think of it all, dear brethren in the Lord? What do you think of such a benefactor-Father, and of such a call? And, if you have received the earnest of your inheritance, the Holy Spirit of promise, are you still

assured that this is the token of your future sonship and joint-heirship with the Lord ?

There need not be any doubt, for " He is faithful that has promised." Think it out again, and let that thought inspire to greater faithfulness day by day. Put your present little day into its insignificant relationship to the exceeding and eternal weight of glory which that heavenly invitation opens up ! Then thank God for His unspeakable gifts and calling !

Gracious Words.

The tongue is a little member, but it wields tremendous power in both natural and spiritual relations. Indeed, the natural is a picture of the spiritual, just as man was made originally in God's image, but on a lower plane of being, while the human body is used in the Scriptures to illustrate the mystical Body of Christ—Head and members. It is good to consider this subject again in a more determined endeavour to bring " into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ " (2 Cor. 10 ; 5), by which the tongue will be controlled accordingly, as every word spoken is but the result of prior thought.

The Natural Man

As a preliminary, meditate upon the function of the tongue in natural affairs. A few words graciously spoken to comfort those around may be more precious than any material comfort, for " a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver " (Prov. 25 ; 11). The gentle touch, the sympathetic voice can often do much to assist where compulsion would be useless, awakening dogged determination to continue along a wayward course.

Again, the tongue may stir up endless strife, for " how often have evil words, unkind words, slanderous words, done gross injustice, assassinated reputations, etc., or, as the Apostle declares, " set on fire the course of nature " awakening passions, strifes, enmities, at first unthought of." (*Manna Comment, August 1.*) Many wars have been caused by ungracious words ; estrangement of friends and relations—sometimes lasting for many years even until death—may be traced to the same root cause.

All this is closely bound up with what we term different dispositions, which may be either natural or acquired. Leaving aside the smooth-tongued individual who poses as such to accomplish evil designs and any other type of hypocritical outlook, dispositions fall into several distinct categories. There is the sweet disposition which exudes sympathy in kind words and deeds, performing much good in the world. On the other kind, some people none the less sincere are so " direct " that their frankness sometimes expresses itself in ungracious words which inflict needless pain on others. Then there is the cold, calm, frigid disposition which seems incapable of being moved, but which is often changed completely with sympathetic handling. Lastly, some people are hard and unfeeling, sometimes combining with this outlook one of awkwardness in a determination to make others as unhappy as possible. Much depends upon racial background ; indeed, heredity and environment are the two main factors at work in every case.

He who is Spiritual

In the case of those who come into Christ, God uses our natural talents and so shapes our experiences that we are eventually fashioned after the perfect Pattern of whom we read " all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth " (Luke 4 ; 22). By the mighty power of His Spirit, each new creature in Christ Jesus is " transformed " consequent upon the renewal of the mind, and this spiritual process which quickens the mind is inevitably seen in the controlled tongue. Complete mastery of this unruly member is impossible this side the veil, but good is it to remember that God accepts perfection of intention—" If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body " (James 3 ; 2). It will not do to say " it is my way," for all the ways of the fallen nature are bad, and need to be overcome.

The tongue is an index of the heart, and its importance may be measured by our Lord's statement that " every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof," while " by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned " (Matt. 12 ; 36-37).

As we progress in the School of Christ that progress will be manifest by the **changed life**. The naturally sweet and gentle disposition may require experiences to develop strength; the naturally frigid member may need to be softened; the hard unfeeling one will have just those experiences to break down completely this outlook, provided, of course, that one is rightly exercised thereby.

The Power of the Gospel

The Apostle shows that it is by the "foolishness of preaching" that it has pleased God to **save those who believe**. We all know this to be true in the widest sense, and we can recall many experiences when the spoken word has **appealed**. There are countless instances in the Bible. Paul heard the Voice of Jesus on the road to Damascus, and His words changed his future life entirely. This gave him, in turn, the power so effectively to witness before King Agrippa that the record has come down to us of his admission, "Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian" (Acts 26; 28).

In our own day, too, we realise how much has been done by the spoken word uttered from the platform. Great crowds assembled to hear the Pastor proclaim his message announcing the Master's presence, and the change of dispensation, explaining the course of world distress. To the ones who as a result associated themselves with our fellowship, the same method continued to appeal as at preaching services and in studies **tremendous help** has been received by interchange of thought through the medium of the spoken word.

In the Individual Sense

All have a very important part to play as individuals, and gracious words on spiritual lines are by no means limited to those uttered in public. It is in private conversation that gracious or ungracious words assist or well nigh stumble those on whose ears they fall. Each has a responsibility, moreover, in this direction.

There is a right way and a wrong way of saying everything, and in some instances great tact is **necessary** if regrettable misunderstandings are to be avoided. Frequently, we do not know the turmoils that are **raging** in an individual soul, and with ungracious words we inflict deep wounds and do untold harm. Knowledge which is trained uses wisdom that it may accomplish more **good**, and there are many evidences of the **need** for this among

the brethren. A few examples along the lines of **general principles** may not be out of place.

Presentation of the truth.—Infinite patience should be used if two or more brethren cannot see eye to eye on some aspect of truth. The Spirit of Christ is positive and definite, yet kind and considerate—a peculiar combination possible only amongst those who are spirit-begotten, in its fullest extent. We must not be ashamed of our beliefs, and never may we in any way compromise conscience, but that is not to say that we are to condemn others with the fanaticism of the unbalanced mind in evidence in some quarters. Our Lord did not approve of the woman taken in sin, but He said "neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8; 11). Untold harm is done by the determination to condemn others, for nothing of value is accomplished, as it only tends to prejudice the object of the condemnation and to make him possibly more determined to cling to his own view. But something may be gained if the difference is approached with tact and courtesy; the adoption of the question form of presentation is often most effective, as it provokes enquiry in the mind of the hearer without forcing him.

Personal dealings.—Ungracious words frequently stumble, and the Adversary is only too quick to use the tongue for this purpose in creating misunderstandings over what are purely trivial matters. The Apostle aptly remarks, "when I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things" (1 Cor. 13; 11). Yet many of the difficulties which arise can only be described as "childish" in the sense in which the Apostle uses the term. Nevertheless, we need to exercise the greatest care when dealing with any such situation, even remembering the example of Christ, our Master. A soft answer turneth away wrath; a smile in return for an unkind look; an extra effort to perform a kindness to someone who has been unpleasant; these and many other ways might be named whereby the maximum possible good may be accomplished. Again, we are all leaky vessels, and it is always wise to be lenient, to give the benefit of the doubt,

and to put the best construction on anything that has been said or done rather than seek to impute a wrong motive. All this demonstrates the **force of example** in terms of the Apostle's exhortation: "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves" (2 Tim. 2: 24-25). The same Apostle says, "be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4: 12).

In the world.—Nothing is more forceful than gracious words to demonstrate to those who are of the world that some great change has come over our life, namely, that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him. A word in season often means much, whereas an unkind word thoughtlessly uttered, may cause the hearer to think that it is not consistent with the profession made, thereby bringing reproach on the Name of Christ. The Psalmist says, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me" (Psalm 39: 4).

Those Who Stumble Others

Let us ever remember our Lord's words, "whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18: 6). Unlovely words play an important part in this stumbling process, for time and again has this been noticed and experienced. No one is perfect, but we must strive ever after the ideal, so that the meditation of the heart and the words of the mouth may rise up acceptable unto God, our Strength and our Redeemer.

It has often been said that the Lord's people are probably more outspoken than others, and in this way the "jewels" are polished. This is undoubtedly true, but we must see to it that we allow God to do the polishing by His overruling providence rather than seeking to bite and devour one another by ungracious words. **"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom"** (James 3: 13).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gone from us. We are advised that Bro. E. Harris, of Woodbridge, Suffolk, passed away on 22nd March. He was known to many of the older brethren and those who remember him will think upon one more disciple passed into the Lord's keeping.

Benevolent Fund. Will friends who contribute to the Benevolent Fund please send their donations direct to the Committee at 20 Sunny-mede Drive, and not to Bro. Ford? Donations sent to Bro. Ford have to be re-transmitted to Ilford for paying into the Committee's account, thus causing a little extra unnecessary work.

The Bookroom. Price increases this month are:—Song of our Syrian Guest, 2/-; Little Life of Jesus, 4/-, post free. Evolutionists at the Crossroads now unobtainable and out of stock.

A few Committee facilities:

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Overseas Books.—We regret that we cannot undertake to obtain books published by our American and Australian brethren, other than those which appear in our publications list. We may import only a certain quota of books, and we must use our quota to the best advantage. Since the demand for the books we do import often exceeds the supply, we record orders for same in rotation, and supply as and when the books come to hand.

Literature to Censorable Countries.—We hold a Postal Censorship Permit, and can despatch books published in England to any country permitted by Censorship regulations. This includes Northern Ireland and Eire. No books imported by us from abroad may be sent out of this country again.

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Whitsun, SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MAY 27th and 28th, 1944

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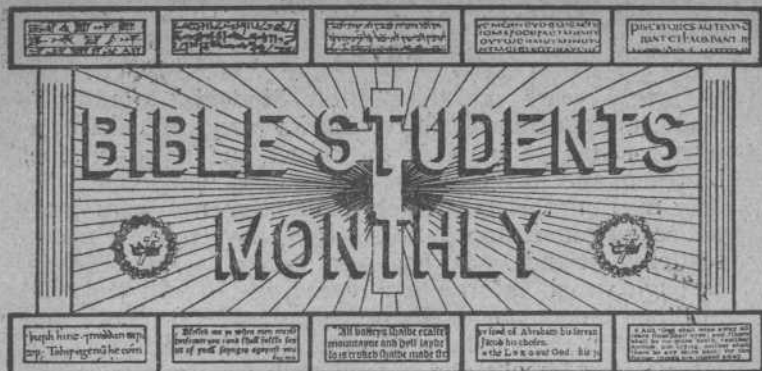
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Twenty years ago the "Bible Students' Monthly" made its appearance. Surviving its early difficulties, it won for itself a place in the hearts and minds of the brethren, and in these more recent years has become the only medium through which announcements of interest, notices of conventions, and so forth, have reached many scattered friends. It has also served as the means through which information regarding "Truth" literature has been made available, and the B.S.C. Bookroom would be useless without the monthly intimation, to all interested, of books and pamphlets held in stock for the brethren's convenience.

These things, however useful, do not constitute the only or even the main purpose of the Monthly. It was initiated to be primarily a source of spiritual encouragement and instruction to the friends. It was not intended to be, and has never been, a debating ground for opposing viewpoints of doctrine, and to that end the brethren who year after year have succeeded one another on the Committee have very generally kept the subject matter within the scope of this purpose. "For the perfecting of the saints . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ." That has been the ideal before them, however imperfectly attained.

We are asking ourselves now whether this object is still being achieved. True, the paid circulation of the Monthly has never been so high as at present. Since 1935 it has more than doubled, even in the face of several price increases and some war-time deterioration in style. But is this a true indication? We receive occasional words of commendation or praise of a specific article; we also receive expressions of criticism; but we do not receive enough of either to form a considered judgment.

The work involved in the preparation and distribution of the Monthly is a labour of love, but occupies much time and thought, and labourers—in war-time—are few and heavily pressed in other directions. They would not continue unless they felt confident that the Monthly was meeting a need.

Continued inside back cover

"As He had said."

T. H.

There is something very helpful when the words of a friend prove true in emergency. When we can look back along the way and say events have come to pass, even as he said, it deepens and establishes our confidence in our beneficent adviser. We feel we have found a friend indeed, whose word can well be relied upon.

In these few words of Holy Writ, the disciples put on record both their amazement and their satisfaction that their Master's words had been so amply verified. Along with Him they had come up to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast—a feast which was to remain the most momentous of all their lives.

When the day for removing all leaven from their dwellings had come Jesus selected Peter and John to go on a little in advance, to make ready the place where He purposed to bring His little band, so that, in its quiet seclusion, He and they could commemorate that never-to-be-forgotten night in Egypt. "Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat," said Jesus to the chosen two. "But where shall we go, Master,—from whom shall we make enquiry, concerning both chamber and food?" "Behold," said Jesus, "when ye have entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water. Follow him into the house whereinto he goeth. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house: 'Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he shall show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready."

To the uninformed disciples this instruction may have appeared a most haphazard affair—a kind of indefinite goose-chase; a situation which might or might not come to pass. Only time could determine whether they were undertaking a fruitless journey and quest.

But they had learned to have some respect for Jesus' word, and in obedience to the command the two selected disciples went along to begin their preparatory quest. Arriving at and entering within the city gates, one of the first objects to attract their attention was a man bearing on his head a pitcher of water. This was the first stage of their instruction verified. Here, indeed, whether co-

incidental or accidental, was a man bearing a pitcher of water as Jesus had said.

Gathering confidence from this first verification of their Master's words, they followed the pitcher-bearer into the house. Explaining this unusual procedure, they told the master of the house that the "didaskalos" (master) had sent them to enquire: "Where is the guest-chamber where I can eat the Passover with my disciples?" Instead of meeting with rebuke for their unbidden entry, the goodman immediately led them up a flight of stairs, and showed them a large upper room furnished with couches, tables, ewers, bowls, etc., which needed only to be set into position for the number expected to gather there. Again the Master's prescient words were fully verified, for here was indeed a room placed at their disposal, without restriction or impediment, and there they were able to "make ready," as Jesus had instructed them. Evidently also, provision was made for their eating too, for "making ready" implied more than the arrangement of the room.

This sequence of connected events made a deep impression on their minds. Most certainly, Peter felt the influence of the dove-tailing stages of the event, sufficient to relate in later days the story to the Church as proof of his Master's Messiahship, so that from his lips, Luke, the writer of the narrative, obtained an unmistakable insight into the reaction on the hearts of Peter and John which the clear fulfilment of Jesus' words had produced. "They went, and found even as He had said unto them." "Even as He had said!" The words may be Luke's, but the amazement and satisfaction was Peter's.

Something similar had occurred a few days previously, when Jesus and His little band were wending their journey up to Jerusalem. "Go your way into the village over against you, in the which, as ye enter, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat, loose him and bring him. And if anyone ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say, The Lord hath need of him" (Luke 19; 29-31). The deputed messengers went over to the village; found the colt there, and heard the very question, and were able to make the actual reply given to them by their Master, "... they that were sent, went away, and found even as He had said unto them"

(v. 32).

Just how Jesus came to possess this fore-knowledge it is not our purpose to discuss. It is the fact that events did come to pass even as He said they would that is of vital interest to us, just as it was to those early disciples. His words came true. They were fulfilled accurately and precisely. Men's actions and responses occurred in distant places, in full accord with what He said. It was this amazing fact that came to be noted with great satisfaction by the observant little band.

But there was motive and purpose in all these little episodes of life. Jesus was teaching them to believe on Him; to take Him at His word. He had said many other arresting things to them relating to future days. He had promised them a share with Himself in Kingdom honours, and that, if they proved faithful under trial and test, they should be with Him when He returned to restore Israel to their place in God's purposes. He had spoken of things associated with the "regeneration," when the Son of Man should sit on the Throne of His Glory (Matt. 19; 28), and the blessedness of those who should be accounted worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead.

These were tremendous things for them to learn, and they were intended to incite the little band to faithfulness and constancy. But these things lay some way ahead along the stream of time, and, as there was a dark future to intervene, the faith and confidence of even the best of them would be tried to the extreme.

They had great need to learn the lesson of trust and confidence in His spoken word. It was necessary to inspire in them the same kind of confidence concerning the bigger things, which they were showing in the smaller things. "Lord, increase our faith" was once their plea, and in these little episodes their Master was making His response to their prayer. He wanted them to accept and believe His words as words of authority and truth; hence, by act and voice He sought to teach them the elements of true faith. Little by little, in this experience and then in that, He laboured to create in them a deepening certainty that He Himself knew fully the verity of those great things of which He spoke.

It was no easy thing to bring forth in these simple

hearts the depths of faith commensurate with their eventful days. The nation from which they sprang had failed to appreciate the visit of the Dayspring from on high, and the prevailing unbelief could have been a stumbling block for this chosen few. Events were at hand which would strain their slender faith to the utmost extent. Jesus had said that "heaven and earth may pass away, but my words shall not pass away," yet within a few days they were to see Him pass away, and heaven and earth and all His enemies remain.

To find things taking place "even as He had said," therefore, was valuable tuition as they neared the fateful hour when their Master would be slain. This tuition may be classed as of elementary type, but it was intended to be introductory to the upper-standard stage. "Go into the city, and ye shall find a room furnished" may be instruction of a kindergarten kind, but the simple and immediate was intended to lead on to the distant and profound. The same instructive principle was employed when He foretold the "kindly host" and "the waiting ass," as when speaking of the Kingdom day. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me," He said, in that upper room, even after the shadow of death had fallen across the path. "Believe in Me . . . believe in Me, for the works I have done, even if not for the words I have spoken," was frequently the theme of His utterances.

Shortly after listening to their Master's solicitous words the little group fell into deep perplexity and distress. Their Lord and Master was put to death. Their hopes were rudely dashed. "We trusted that He should have redeemed Israel," was their downcast reply. "We trusted"! That slender trust lay crushed and withered, though not quite dead!

But when He came triumphant from the tomb they called to mind what He had said before He died. They remembered that He had said He would rise again from the dead. And then, when they beheld Him, even as He had said they would, the good seed He had sown in their simple hearts sprang forth to rich fruitage of confidence and trust. From that time forward they had no further doubts, or unmaturing faith. They believed Him now, and in their hearts that deep deposit of faith was laid which has grown into the unwavering confidence and

trust of the Christian Church. From their inspired and inspiring words believers of many generations since have learned to take the words of the Blessed One "even as He said."

There are many ways to-day, in which we may take these simple words and apply them to our own estate. The blessed lips spake many things of this our day; of things about to come to pass, of wars and sorrows and distress; of signs and tokens marking an old world's death, and telling of a new world's birth. His words may seem to us hard to place and difficult to understand, but He wants His waiting people to believe that all these words will surely be fulfilled, "even as He had said." The important feature of such belief lies in the fact that when He comes again there would be but little true faith in the earth (Luke 18; 8). Many hearts, once believing, will have grown cold and apathetic towards the Lord and towards the brethren everywhere (Matt. 24; 12). Disbelief, not faith, will characterise the day of His return, hence but few will be able to appreciate His words and expect them to be fulfilled even as He said. For some, the non-fulfilment of former expectations will prove a severe test to faith. The lengthening time of tarrying here, when all had expected long ago to be gathered to the Lord may be a matter difficult to understand. Disappointment over the protracted delay may be a handicap to faith, but through it all, the dear Overseer of our lives desires us to take it all on trust. He wants us to believe that the sequence of "Parousia" events will come to pass even as He said, and that if our expectations have not tallied with events, it is because our expectations have not been in full harmony with what He said. By re-attention to His words He wants us to understand that events will come to pass "even as He had said." Such re-scrutiny of His words will result, not in loss of faith, but in its increase. Come to pass they will; and no power on earth can stay their coming for a single day. Some great event, at an appropriate time, will bring the key to unlock the mystery, and as we pass within the portals of that event, we shall then stand in holy awe and reverent appreciation of all that He has said. We shall then learn that what He has said was sure and true.

Meantime, to keep our faith alive, and help us wait in patience for the consummation of our desires, our Blessed Lord said He would be with His people to the end of the Age. Some have lost faith in this Providential presence of their Lord. The chilling influence of dispensational disappointment has damped the warmth and enthusiasm of many hearts, and with this damping down has gone, in many cases, the quick responsiveness to the Shepherd-Care of the Lord. The disturbed state of mind has led to a disturbed state of heart, which, in its turn, has led to a less reverential and worshipful attitude before the Lord. And thus the many tokens of the loving Shepherd's care are overlooked and become, in time, no longer expected or desired. In this refrigerated state of heart, the little tender endearments of the Lord produce no salutary effect, and joy and happy praise then very quickly decay.

If we had continued to believe that the Christian life would be "just as He had said" it would, this sad consequence could not have come about. We begin the sad decline by forgetting what He has said along pastoral lines, concentrating more upon what He spake along dispensational lines. Then when our incorrectly drawn conclusions fail to correspond with the drift of dispensational events, the balance in our hearts is gone. Longing for His appearing has out-weighted the longing for His caress, and when the tokens of His "Parousia" are slow to materialise, the tokens of His shepherding become less apparent too.

The ripened faith that can trust under darkening skies is not of mushroom growth. It does not grow like Jonah's gourd, in a single night. It is a balanced thing—a deep assurance that can feed as well on the Shepherd care as on the dispensational event. It accepts fully all that He has said about the pastoral care as about the "Parousia" event. This balanced faith is the most desirable thing in the Christian heart, for when the dispensational fulfilment seems slow to come, it still can feed on the lush grass beside the gently flowing waters of His Providence, knowing throughout that the Shepherd still is near.

It will be better to walk in the dark with Him than to go alone in the light.

The Time of Harvest

—A.S.—

According to Bible chronology, which was at one time generally accepted by our fellowship, the Harvest of the gospel age should have ended in 1914, but as we look forward to taking part in the first resurrection, and still await "the redemption of the body" that means our full sonship, it seems obvious that the Harvest work is not yet completed. This apparent lagging of the actual event behind the calculated time of completion has proved a severe trial to some, and has been the cause of others relinquishing that hope which at one time shone so brightly before them. In the hope that it may help us to keep our hopes burning brightly unto the end, let us turn our minds for a while to this Time of Harvest.

We do not propose to attempt to explain why the harvest did not end when men presumed it would, but leaving the study of chronology to those who find it helpful, we would like to turn our attention to the signs and portents which can be seen by all who have eyes to see.

Our Lord often illustrated the truths He taught by allusions to the agricultural activities which were so familiar to most of His hearers, and in this picture of the wheat harvest we find much which helps us to understand the experiences of the Church in these last days.

To properly appreciate what would be behind the lessons which Jesus wished to teach, we must forget the modern methods of harvesting, and the ever increasing speed with which this work is carried out, and look back at the slow laborious tasks which were involved in bringing in the ripened wheat when Jesus was on earth.

One of the most important points which we should like to stress is the time which was taken to gather in the complete harvest in Palestine. The work was commenced in the third month, corresponding roughly with our June, and was not completed until the sixth month, corresponding with our September, thus the harvesting of the wheat covered a period of at least three months, or a quarter of the whole year.

Let us note the work which had to be done, and see if there is any spiritual parallel. First of all, the sickle

must be thrust in and the wheat and darnel separated, the darnel to be burnt and the wheat to be gathered into the barn ; but what a tremendous amount of work must be carried out before the grain is finally stored. The wheat must be tied into bundles and then transported by either camel or donkey to the threshing floor, which was usually on a hill top or mountain side, where the wind would blow away the chaff. The threshing sledge, consisting of rough planks fastened together and having sharp flints let in on the underside, was dragged over and over the bundles of wheat by an ox while the driver stood upon it ; this not only tore the bundles apart and separated the grains of wheat, but cut up the straw into chaff which was whipped away by the wind.

Next the grain was sifted to remove any dust or foreign matter, and then, and not before, was the wheat placed in the storehouse.

Some of the older ones among us were witnesses of the thrusting in of the sickle of truth in the beginning of the Harvest, in fact, they were themselves gathered out of the " Field " where they were growing with the tares ; they have also witnessed the gathering of the " tares " into bundles to be burned. After this they were transported to the mountain top " seated together in the heavenlies," but there, too, they found the threshing floor. The threshing sledge seems to well represent the painful experiences which have from time to time separated the Lord's people, and the separation of the single grains find a parallel in the individual nature of the trials which have come upon the members of the true Church, often involving isolation and loneliness. The winds which blow away the chaff may well represent the strange doctrines which have wrought such apparent havoc among the brethren, but which in reality have only seemed to blow away the chaff—those who are " carried about with every wind of doctrine " (Eph. 4 : 14).

Those who have survived the threshing are not yet, however, safely gathered in. The most searching test of all is now, we believe, being carried out. Our Lord said to Peter " Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat." Reference to other translations reveals that Jesus said in effect " Satan has obtained permission to have all of you to sift as wheat is sifted, but I have

prayed for you (Peter) that your faith may not fail." The word " sift " here used means " to shake," and we know how severely Peter was shaken, and we believe that all of the Lord's true people are at this time being similarly shaken, and only those who are very strong in faith will come through as wheat.

The severity of this trial may be increased by a feeling of loneliness, but we should remember that one of our Lord's greatest trials was His utter loneliness when He was nearing His death on the Cross. As He approached that dark hour His disciples were so self-centred that they were arguing about prestige in the kingdom ; in the garden of sorrow the watching disciples fell asleep ; and finally, as He bore the sins of the whole world, his Father turned His face from Him and left Him utterly deserted.

We may feel lonely, neglected, misunderstood, but we need not suffer the intense loneliness which Jesus had to bear, for we have the promise of the Lord of Harvest, " Remember, I am with you always, day by day, until the close of the age " (Matt. 28 ; 20, Wey.).

Turning again for a moment to the natural picture, we see that during the sixth month, when the harvest is being completed, the heat of the sun is intense and there is great danger of sunstroke, so the head must be covered (2 Kings 4 ; 18-20).

This is also true in the spiritual sense ; unless we keep our heads (minds) protected in these last days, when, if it were possible, even the very elect would be deceived, we are liable to be overcome by one of the many deceptions of the Adversary, so becoming sidetracked and in danger of losing our grip upon the hope of glory.

This month is also a time of heavy storms. Although very little rain falls, the great heat causes vivid lightning and heavy thunder. Surely as we look around us to-day we see very little rain (truth) falling upon the earth (society), but we are witnesses of vivid lightnings and mighty thunderings as this passing evil world is rent by the violent storms of the Day of Vengeance.

After the harvest is safely gathered in comes the Feast of Ingathering (or Tabernacles), the last of the three feasts to which all the males of Israel were called. During this festival all the members of the family came home, first to present their gifts to the Lord "In the

place which the Lord shall choose" (Deut : 16 : 16-17), then to dwell in booths or bowers of tree branches for seven days, feasting and giving thanks for the harvest. Thus were they reminded that the days of their living in tents in the wilderness were over, now that they were delivered into "their land."

This surely pictures the Church, delivered for all time from the wilderness condition, first presenting their gifts before the Lord (see Deut. 16 : 17) then finally gathering together at Harvest Home, there to rejoice and give thanks, or as Rotherham renders it : "Be altogether rejoicing"—having reached "the climax of rejoicing."

It is of interest to note that this last festival of the year took place on the 15th day of the 7th month of the sacred year, which month was also the first of the civil year, so the feast of Ingathering, celebrating the end of the Harvest, took place after the beginning of a new civil year, there being 15 days overlapping.

So likewise the Harvest of the Gospel Age is overlapping the New Age, and the remaining members of the Church, the last grains of wheat, are witnesses of the ushering in of a New World in which dwelleth righteousness.

As we look round us in these strange but stirring days, we find that from every corner of the earth come voices proclaiming the "New World" which will follow the storms of Harvest Time. They who thus cry are **thinking of a new world** founded on the ideals and plans of men, whereas we know that the New World will come only by the rule of God's righteousness and justice; nevertheless all thinking men and women are expectant and eager, peering into the darkness for a glimpse of what lies ahead.

Before this New World can be established the Lord of Harvest has much work to do, for ere the planting of the next crop can proceed the field must be ploughed and harrowed, so we see that the ploughshare of trouble has been, and still is, overturning the institutions and traditions of men in what is now a world revolution, ready for the Lord of Harvest who is waiting to plant the seed in preparation for his final harvest at the end of his reign.

Whilst the darkness still obscures God's purposes

on earth, the Lord of the Harvest is engaged upon other work, besides that of harvesting the wheat and preparing the world for the next sowing.

Long centuries ago God planted a vineyard, having gathered out the stones, fenced it and built a watchtower and a wine press therein; but it brought forth wild grapes, so he took away the hedge, broke down the wall and permitted His vineyard to become neglected with thorns and thistles (Isa. : 5-1 to 7). In Jer : 11 : 16 we read of a green olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit, but its fate was similar to that of the vine—"with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled a fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken". But although the vineyard is overgrown and neglected, the roots of the vine are not destroyed; and whilst the olive has been burned and broken and wild olive branches have been grafted in, God's promise is "I will be as the dew to Israel, his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree. They that dwell in his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn and grow as the vine." (Hosea : 14 : 5-7).

Before this can be fulfilled the nation of Israel must be pruned and digged, the thorns of avarice and greed and the thistles of bigotry and tradition must be rooted out and cleared away, and these drastic operations seem to be manifesting themselves in the strange and awful experiences which are coming upon the Jews at the present time. The wild branches which were grafted into the "good" olive tree have borne fruit and are just about to be removed, and we expect that soon the broken branches will revive and bring forth fruit for the next Age. (Rom : 11 : 12-15).

So in these last days we find ourselves, amid the thunder and lightning of earth's storms and the growing winds of adversity (yet still in the sultry heat of harvest) witnessing scenes which are at once terrifying and inspiring, and we may ask, with due reverence : "What is our Father, the great Jehovah, doing whilst all this is taking place?"

In Isa. 18 : 4, we find an allusion to a phenomenon of the harvest time which may help us to see how God is viewing these great events. Rotherham translates as follows : "For thus said Yahweh unto me—I must be

quiet, I must look on in my fixed place of abode—like a cloud of dew, in the heat of harvest." This last phrase is explained by a traveller in Palestine as follows: "During the night a dense fog settled down flat on the face of the plain. In the morning it absolutely reposed upon the harvest fields of Philistia, lying on the corn serene and quiet, as an infant asleep. I have never seen such a cloud except in the heat of harvest."

Does not this describe God's attitude towards all the noise and tumult on this earth? He is looking on in His "fixed place of abode," serene and quiet as an infant asleep, for He knows the end from the beginning. But what is the effect on those below? The writer previously quoted continues: "In the morning you could see ten steps before you, and before it was light the village was all abuzz like a beehive. Forth issued party after party, driving camels, horses, mules, donkeys, cows, sheep and goats before them. To everybody and everything there was a separate cry, and the roar and uproar were prodigious. Ere long all were lost in the dense mist, and the thousand-tongued hubbub died away in the distance." Is not this a true picture of the conditions on earth while God is looking on and while the Church is experiencing the heat of harvest? Men are indeed groping in the mists for a solution to their problems, and as each faction or party seeks to make its ideas heard, the result is much the same as that of the cattle drivers in the natural picture—a thousand-tongued hubbub.

This hubbub and confusion must continue until the mists of earth are dispelled in the morning by the warming rays of the Sun of Righteousness, then shall men behold a vision glorious, far transcending their brightest dreams.

We, as grains of wheat of the gospel harvest, look forward to a share in the spiritual phase of the kingdom, so, whilst we endure these last days of the heat of harvest, while we submit to the shaking which is sifting out the dust, let us remind ourselves that in a little while will come the feast of ingathering, when, having placed our final gift before the Lord, we shall be, altogether, rejoicing—in the shade of our Heavenly Abode.

WAXING COLD

T.H.

It is a matter of frequent occurrence to hear and read of some high Church dignitary lamenting the fact that the hold of the Church over the masses is broken, and that Christian faith is in sad decay everywhere. No country, Romanist or Protestant, is free from this religious blight. An English Bishop recently said: "This (decay of faith) is not a problem which is troubling merely England, or the Church of England. The decay of faith is a worldwide phenomenon." Continuing, the Bishop said: "It has been estimated that ten per cent. of the people were definitely attached to some Christian religion. Thirty per cent. were kindly disposed to Christianity, and put in an appearance at Church on special occasions; fifty per cent. were totally indifferent; and ten per cent. were definitely opposed." But in his own opinion it was being too optimistic to say that even ten per cent. were attached to some Christian religion. It is indeed a sad commentary upon the activities of the Churches, whether sacramental or evangelistic, when one so prominently placed within one of the larger churches feels constrained to confess that not one person in every ten in all professedly Christian lands is attached to one or other of the various Churches of the world. It has not always been thus. Time was when a far greater percentage of men and women were attached to the Churches, and though the standards of truth were greatly diluted with error, they served the needs of their generation, and gave the congregation some sense of the nearness of God.

A recent educational writer, in reference to our own homeland, says: "In the last century England had a philosophy of life. Its leading men were all formed by Christianity or Hellenism (the love of Greek literature), or both. The nation had a common belief, and common standard of conduct. The nineteenth century had a soul, a spirit." He then asks: "What soul has ours?" In reply he says: "It is an age in which tares not only grow among the wheat, but are not distinguished from it. Look at any issue of our cheap daily papers and you will see what I mean."

Another writer, sensing the drift away from religion and the Churches, wrote some years ago: "As a people we are different from what we once were. Not upon the surface, but at the source and foundation of our life. For two thousand years conscience had been a haunting voice to the white race. We may have trifled with conscience, and in hot and wild hours we may have smashed the face of it as in a paroxysm of hatred a man might smash a picture. But in doing such things we at least have known we were doing wrong, and when the wildness passed we have been unhappy and ashamed. So far there has always been something which has been able to touch us, and to recall us, and to save us. But it is the boast of this modern world that it has freed itself from all this. The outstanding change which is taking place before our eyes is the slow departure of the thought of God."

To-day, the leaders in every Christian Church are raising the voice of alarm, and by voice and pen, are bewailing the fact that the masses do not heed the call of God, or even the lower call of the Church. Some of the critics, in reply, are stating that religion as exemplified in Christianity is played out, and that it is out of date for modern needs, and that a new conception of world relationship to Divinity is requisite to regain control over the minds and morals of the world to-day.

Very certain it is that the present world upheaval has let loose a flood-tide of moral laxity, and things are done to-day, with unashamed face, which would have shocked our fathers to their finger-tips, and raised the voice of remonstrance to the skies.

But why is this? Who is to blame for it all? Is there no desire for the clean life, and the sanctity of home and purity of person in the young generation of these tremendous days? Does the young life really want to run amok? Close observers, at work among the young, speak of a strong urge, of a powerful drive, and of an intensity of desire to enter on a new and better world, and that they show some interest in religion, but it must be the religion of social contact, and not merely a religion for the mind.

The modern demand which they make from those who administer religious services is that they shall advocate

cleaner and better homes **for to-day**, and not be content merely to gender hope in a life to come. The young want some of their heaven to-day—not only in the hereafter.

Many known causes have contributed to this changing outlook—some within, some outside the Churches. The Higher Critic's activities of the last century undermined the faith of many in the bona-fides of the Bible. The Sacred Volume lost its former place as the seat of all moral authority, when it ceased to be accounted the actual Word of God. Nothing was put in its place, and two generations have grown up without the restraining hand of its moral precepts. To-day they chafe at the thought of any restraint, and are inclined to venture out on to the thinnest ice.

Another factor is the growth of social opinion, in itself an enduring revolt against the evils of the industrial developments of the last century. The spirit that herded the industrial slaves into slums and tenements while it fed them on hopes of better conditions in a world to come is anathema to-day, and every argument that has been levelled against bad landlordism has hit the Church as well. The rent exactor and the parson are held to have been hand-in-glove together. Religion which could tolerate such conditions of exploitation among the masses is not the sort that is wanted by the young socially-minded youth of these more independent days.

Another factor, but not of such widespread influence, arose out of the impact of scientific thought upon the doctrines of the Church. The inability of the clerics to rebut the scientific claims regarding the origin of man has reacted back both into and upon the Church. Many of the Church's present leaders have accepted the scientific viewpoint, and themselves teach Evolution. But the Church has never recovered from the blows which it received when the Scientists defeated the Church's apologists. The Church is considered an antiquated institution, a relic of an earlier day, unfitted to grapple with modern ideas, or to minister to modern needs. First-century ideas are too greatly out of date for this twentieth century's needs, and even the Founder of the Christian Church, though admittedly a good man, is considered a product of His day and age. Jesus, the man, "the historic Christ"—a "Christ after the flesh"—is the only

standard that the Church can hoist aloft—but modern youth are not keen to enlist beneath that flag. According to the testimony of "padres" with the soldiers in the field, the young minds of these men, standing on the threshold of both life and death, are enquiring, "What can God and Christ and religion do for us here, and in the new and better world we hope to return to when the soldiering is done." It is not the story of a man who lived in an eastern land two thousand years ago, even though He spake as few men have spoken, or taught revolutionary truth far in advance of His Age, that interests them. These modern minds are asking for guidance, on the problems of to-day and the day that looms ahead. And if the Word of God can afford that guidance, they are ready to accept.

Why is it that the young generation is unsatisfied with the creeds (that is, with the way of stating the Divine verities), of their forefathers, and that they ask for a revelation peculiar to and applicable to these more scientific days? And why does not the ministration of the Churches satisfy that need?

The reasons for these things run deep. These are not mere exterior symptoms. This is not a matter of bubbles or foam on the surface of the running stream. War-time conditions may have changed their direction somewhat, but they have not generated them. They are the expression of tendencies and tides of thought which had their origin in the over-rulings of Divine Providence. Men do not usually associate the upheavals of the French and other subsequent Revolutions with the designs of Providence. They are not wont to attribute to God the drastic removal of outworn institutions and governments. Europe suffered under Papal control a full thousand years because no generation could break its stranglehold. Even Luther's reformation did not break its grip. But when the time of Divine appointment had arrived, the ferment of thought began. The sleep of a millennium was rudely disturbed, and men, waking from their dreams, began to talk and act in a different way. With Napoleon's shattering blows an age-long system began to pass away—a system, which, even when Napoleon himself had passed, was beyond the wit or ability of man to restore or preserve.

The deep tides of thought which run to-day are the sequels to those mighty explosions of the American Colonies, of France, and the South American States, in the years that lie between 1776 and 1830 or thereabouts, when they burst their bonds and struck out for liberty. The dark days of the industrial period in England lie between that day and this, but the very slavery of the loom and the dark stench of the slum served greatly to increase and augment the deepening currents of thought, and to give momentum to the tendencies of the day. These thought-movements are like the mighty currents of the sea as the tides sweep on to high-tide. Each surging wave mounts further than its fellow, and nothing can arrest its flow until its peak is reached. For six generations the tides of thought have risen, wave on wave, and humankind are carried on their breast, sometimes as sailors pulling painfully at their oars, sometimes as drift-wood or wrack, driven by the set of the tide. That is not to say that men are not applying their minds to the situation. But as the present tendency is towards a democratic high-water line—a democratic way of life in its fulness—every effort consciously put forward is like the sailor pulling with the tide. It is on this tide that the modern young generation has been launched, and it wants to know how and when the full democratic life may be reached.

The theological confessions of the Churches were not framed with that end in view. Nor was the message of the Apostolic ministry stated with that end in view. Consequently, neither the true voice of Scripture relevant to this Age, nor its ecclesiastical imitation, can be of any service to the restless spirits of this day. That is why organised religion is powerless to-day. And **that is why even the messenger of the Truth—the real truth—cannot make an effective appeal.** The teaching of this Age—as set out in the conclusions of the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15)—is that "God is taking out a people for His Name"—an elect class, to be conformed to the image of the Lord, in readiness for a later day of service. The ministry of the organised Churches has not understood this teaching, but has proclaimed a message applicable to a later day—the message of "Whosoever will." Their own confusion of mind has been passed on

to their congregation, with the consequence that the present-day generation is suffering more than any previous generation from misdirection of thought. Another serious defect in modern theology is that all dispensational teaching is discredited. Very few teachers and preachers proclaim with conviction that we have reached the end of an Age. Believing that many such crises have occurred, they are inclined to depreciate the importance of this vast crisis, and to think that humanity will blunder through it, as through the others of earlier days.

Two things are essential to every understanding to help men to comprehend and appreciate the meaning of the signs and portents of these historic days.

First—the true purpose for which the Gospel Call (and Christianity) has operated.

Second—the fact that in God's Times and Seasons the Gospel Age is practically at an end.

The appeal of the old Gospel Story, and the call to consecration has lost its ancient power (except to those already consecrated). It was too other-worldly for this generation. Its day is almost over; its work is all but done.

We are all in the throes of a great change—a transitional period in which the new land-marks have not yet become clearly discernible. Men are longing unwittingly for Kingdom conditions to arrive. The form of the religion they desire is earthly and humanistic. They want to live a full life as men and women together, joining with their fellows outside and above all national boundaries in one greater international fellowship. The Church of the past is not the gateway to such fellowship. Neither its form, nor its personnel, nor its creed is suitable or adequate to meet the needs of the case. By trying to change its spots and adapt itself, at the cost of principle and dogma, it may seem for a time to be achieving some success, but the collapse when it does come, will be all the more violent, and complete. There is only one gateway into the fuller life—the life ordained of God—and that gateway is the nation of Israel. In conjunction with the true Church of this Age (the spiritual phase of the Kingdom), Israel, as the earthly phase, will constitute the Holy City, whose ever open gates will afford men access to God, and give them satisfaction for their

deepest needs. The cry of this generation for a form of religion and worship such as they feel is befitting these days is the cry for the Kingdom of God, and even though they know it not they are calling for the lowest depths of their souls for the Kingdom to come. But that Holy City does not yet exist. Israel is not yet re-gathered, nor is even the Church complete.

The present generation seems destined to stumble along after its uncertain guides, taking many wrong turns before arriving at its desired haven. And every wrong turn will bring further disillusionment, and as they pass through the agonies accruing from the thickets and entanglements of the hitherto untrodden way, both those who lead, and they who follow, will grow cold at heart, and the love they had will evaporate and pass away.

It is a blessing beyond compare to-day to have learned, and sincerely believed, that this Gospel Age has been devoted, not to building up a universal Church, but to the gathering of a people to bear God's Holy Name—an elect class called out from all nations and people of the earth, and that the time apportioned for that in-gathering is all but spent. The shadows of the night are closing round us as the Gospel day draws rapidly to its close. A dark night is about to settle down upon the scene, and before a new dawn can break, many catastrophic events will envelop the misled hosts of Christendom.

It is a condition calling for great thankfulness and much gratitude to God that the understanding of the two simple themes we have mentioned make all the difference to our own outlook and our own peace of heart, and to the continuance of our own love to the Lord of heaven and earth. It is no selfish attitude that prompts our gratitude, for even if we would impart our own understanding to the generation of to-day (and to their leaders also) we would find it an impossibility so to do. This confidence is not the product of a month or a year, but of a lifetime spent under advantageous conditions, and we could not pass that to a generation urged on by a desire to achieve its own destiny in its own way, and in the shortest possible time.

These things, so evident to the spirit-enlightened Christian, are signs and tokens of the times leading up to the great climax with which this present age will end. But

there is little they can do about it, except strengthen each others' faith and power of endurance. They cannot arrest the flowing tides of thought (any more than the surging waves of the sea), and no child of God would wish to interfere with the way his Father has mapped out His purposes. All he can do is to stand still and watch intently for the omens which tell him how far he is from the end of his own pilgrim journey, and place himself unreservedly in the care of the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

To the things we are witnessing we can apply the words of Jesus, "the end is not yet," and "this is the beginning of sorrows." But in the midst of it all, though mountains quake, and the sea roar, God will be the refuge and strength of those that can put their trust in Him, and live quietly and resignedly under His Providential care. Till their day is done no harm can befall their higher interests, for it is still true that "all things work together for good to those that love God and are called according to His purposes."

Keep the altar flame burning, beloved in the Lord, and let the love of God burn brighter as the deep night settles around, and take comfort in the thought that each day's present suffering brings the auspicious day nearer, both for yourselves and for the groaning creation. Be ready to help where you can, but do not grieve if you cannot re-direct the tides which are driving human institutions upon the rocks. The drift of events will call all your own spirit of endurance into play, and you should always recall Jesus' words: "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved"—both he himself and his love also. And that is treasure indeed to be preserved, when there is such general loss of it on every hand. See that your own love does not "wax cold."

So we come to you with our request. We want to receive a letter from each one of our readers, saying quite freely and frankly just how they feel about the Monthly. Say which of the features that have ever appeared you appreciated, and which you did not appreciate. If you think that there are too many "doctrinal" articles, or on the other hand that the "devotional" articles are in excess, then say so. Say what you think about the "Quiet Time," the "Question Box," the short extracts from other periodicals. Give some idea of articles you would like to see printed—articles which we may not have thought about as yet. Go back over your old copies, if you have them, and mention one or two items which you specially enjoyed, and one or two others you thought unworthy of our magazine. Say what you think of the style of the production. Is the language employed too scholarly, too many long words, or is it too simple, too elementary for people such as our brethren?

We feel that many of the brethren would gladly spend a few minutes over such a letter as a little mark of appreciation for the regular visits of the Monthly, and so we leave our request with you, thinking that it will not go unheeded. One more word: do **not** send your letter to London office; they are overworked already. Send it to Leicester, where it will be added to all other such letters and its contents taken into consideration by the entire Committee in their deliberations as to the future of the Monthly.

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NOTES

A significant feature of Jewish settlement in Palestine is that over one-half of the Jews living there are under twenty years of age. The tide of immigration began to flow in 1918, and we are now nearly one generation removed from that memorable year—twenty-six years in which a new generation of Jewish youth has been born in the land promised to their forefathers to be a possession for ever. This is a fact of profound significance. At a time when the nations of Europe are bemoaning a declining birth-rate and an increasing proportion of elderly people, with all the loss of national vigour and enterprise which that fact implies, there is a new nation growing up in the East fired with the zeal of youth and the inspiration of a great ideal. At this same time the political and economic affairs of those other nations are in the melting-pot, no man can foresee in what form they will emerge, and yet out there in Palestine a tiny handful of people—not much more than half a million—are working as one man to the realisation of a very definite ideal.

It would be idle to pretend that what we are witnessing is the creation of the Kingdom of God upon earth. There must yet be a great awakening and a widespread conversion on the part of that people before we can say that the Kingdom is within sight. But the signs are heartening. Just as a new generation, born in the wilderness of Sinai, took possession of the Promised Land and cast out the seven nations, so now may we reasonably expect that this new generation of Palestinian Jews are destined to do great things in "preparing the way for Jehovah's chariot."

We need not be unduly concerned at the apparently irreligious attitude of these Palestinians. It can hardly be expected that at this stage they will do other than reflect the general attitude of the world. But it has been said, and it must surely be, that "I will pour upon the house of Israel and the house of Judah the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him (their rejected shepherd) as one mourneth for his only son." That day may be a great deal nearer than outward appearances indicate; but whenever it comes, as come it will, then will the Kingdom be at the very door.

CHRIST — A KING.

A.O.H.

From the dawn of history men have clamoured for kings to reign over them. The pomp and circumstance of government, the pride of leadership, and the desire of men to organise together for the carrying out of agreed purposes has made the office of a king an essential factor in human society. Whether the man occupying such a position be called a king, a president or a dictator, the difference is but one of name. He is the head of the community or the nation, and the director of his people's destinies. His is the duty of leadership. Men demand leadership, and men will follow a leader for good or for evil. All of earth's kings have been imperfect men. They have strutted here and there upon their tiny stage and then passed off, out of sight. There have been some good kings, but in the main they have caused misery and suffering. Their recorded actions have to do chiefly with wars and oppression, with self-indulgence and self-aggrandisement. The best-known names are usually those associated with unusual cruelty, vice or ruthlessness—Nero, Herod, Napoleon, our own King John. The world's experience of kings has been a sad one indeed.

It is when we turn to the sacred Scriptures that we find mention of kings of a very different stamp. One of the earliest historical accounts in the book of Genesis tells of Melchisedek, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God (Heb. 14; 18-20). One can visualise the benevolence of this old patriarch as Abraham rendered him homage, giving him tithes of the spoil taken from the defeat of the Babylonian kings. Little is revealed concerning Melchisedek, but the allusion to him in Heb. 7; 2 as "King of Peace" comes as a refreshing breeze to those oppressed with the dark stories of the warlike deeds of ancient—and modern—kings. Surely in that far-off day when Abraham dwelt in Canaan the benevolent rule of King Melchisedek must have foreshadowed in a very small way the coming reign of Christ.

Was it, at least partly, in this way that Abraham "rejoiced to see my day, and saw it, and was glad" (Jno. 8; 56)? Was it the holy city of Salem, the city of peace, that the Hebrew patriarch looked upon as a

type or figure of that "city which hath foundations" (Heb. 11 : 10), for which he longed and waited? Be this as it may, it is clear from these and other Scriptures that Abraham looked forward to a day when a greater than Melchisedek would reign in a greater city than Salem and a greater dominion than Canaan, and because he saw so plainly that such a day must surely come, he "was glad."

To the average Christian of to-day, this kingly aspect of the Saviour's work is greatly ignored. As the Redeemer, dying upon the cross for the sins of mankind, He is familiar to all. As a personal Saviour, a counsellor, a friend, He is accepted by a few. As an ethical teacher of the highest order, one to point and direct to the highest principles in life, He is esteemed by many, even by those who will not have Him in any more personal relationship. But as a king, administering the affairs of a kingdom and ruling over all mankind, wielding His kingly power in truly benevolent fashion; this is something entirely new to the understanding of nearly all men. Yet this is the right and proper understanding, if the Scriptures are to be believed at all. The entire story of the Bible leads one on to the final picture of the ultimate kingship of Christ for the salvation of the world. "For He must reign," says the Apostle Paul, "until He hath put all enemies under His feet" (I Cor. 15 : 25).

Men sadly need such a king; man-made government is on the wane. Humanity is facing the abyss. There have been many forms of rulership tried in the past. They have all failed. Not one has achieved peace and happiness, true liberty and nobility. Now in our day the contending systems of democracy and dictatorship are struggling for supremacy, and whatever the issue of the immediate conflict there can be no doubt that eventually, during the course of this Time of Trouble, they will both fail. Men have their ideals, but the ability to translate them into practice is lacking. With the best intentions in the world, statesmen cannot construct a system which can maintain world peace. And so the cry rises up from every quarter: "Where is the superman who can restore order by building society anew on right principles? Where is the inspired leader who can attain to so complete a control of this disintegrating world

that he can guide humanity with a sure hand into the ways of peace?"

That man must possess unusual and far-reaching qualifications. He must command the respect and confidence of all men. He must be able to exact implicit obedience during the transition stage, and have effective power to restrain the aggressor against law and order without in his turn doing injustice to that aggressor. He must understand the principles upon which society must be built if it is to endure. He must succeed in abolishing poverty, disease, selfishness and crime, dealing with it, not by punishment and treatment, not even by forcible prevention, but by conversion and regeneration. He must be able to guarantee man's happiness by destroying death and giving all men life under ideally happy conditions. The world would soon accept such a one, if he could be found—but where is he?

That one is Christ—the King!

Hear His own testimony!

"I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world" (Jno. 18 : 37). That was the witness He gave when standing before Pilate. A king, even then, in the hearts of men. A king of men, by right, but not at that time asserting His royal power to reign over His earthly kingdom. A day must yet come whose dawn will witness the fulfilment of His words to Caiaphas the High Priest, "Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26 : 64). It was in symbolic declaration of His right to rule over men as King that He rode into Jerusalem upon a colt the foal of an ass—the traditional method by which Israel's kings presented themselves to the people (Matt. 21 : 5). Thus did He fulfil the prophecy spoken of Israel's King five centuries previously, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9 : 9).

And when the disciples asked him about their future, He told them that "In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of

Israel" (Matt. 19 ; 28). It was in those words that Jesus began to reveal something of the purpose in His Kingship ; a purpose which involves a work of blessing and teaching humanity, even as it is indicated in the symbols of Revelation : " They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years " (Rev. 20 ; 4).

It is that thousand-year period of Christ's reign over mankind that is indicated in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25 ; 31-46). The story is located at that time " when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him," and declares that " then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations." Here is the work of the Millennial Age, the day when " He shall come whose right it is," and the Heavenly Father will give Him the Kingdom (Ezek. 21 ; 27 ; Dan. 7 ; 13-14).

There was a time when the people would have accepted Him as King. They hailed Him as the Son of David when He rode into Jerusalem on that eventful morning. There was an occasion when they would " take Him by force, to make Him a King " (John 6 ; 15), and He withdrew Himself into a solitary place to defeat their intention. From time immemorial had Israel looked for just such a king to fulfil the glowing prophecies of Isaiah—one who could heal the sick and raise the dead, one possessed of powers against which mortal man could not stand, one who could at a word destroy all the enemies of Israel, and restore the Kingdom of the Lord to the glory it enjoyed in the days of David and Solomon. Many among those people must have remembered the stories they had heard in their youth. This man was the subject and the hero of those stories. The angel Gabriel, the chief messenger of God, had appeared to His mother Mary, and told her of the coming child, that " He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest ; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David " (Luke 1 ; 32). The angels of heaven had sung at His birth in the hearing of men still living, " Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord " (Luke 2 ; 11). The aged Simeon, long since gathered to his fathers, had been known to proclaim this one, when a babe in arms, as he that should be a " light to lighten the Gen-

tiles, and the glory of thy people Israel " (Luke 2 ; 32). The devout Anna also had spoken of this same babe to all those who looked for deliverance in Israel (Luke 2 ; 38). Even the famous prophet, John the Baptist, had hailed Him as the Coming One Who would take away the sin of the world. Surely, surely, He would accept the position so clearly marked out for Him in the purposes of God, and assert His right to reign as King in Jerusalem, to the joy and exaltation of God's ancient people Israel !

But it was not to be. The time was not yet. He was born to be King ; but His crown then was of thorns, His throne then was a cross, His raiment then was parted amongst soldiery. His followers then were dispersed and scattered. A most unlikely commencement for a King !

It is left to the Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesian Christians long afterwards, to declare the marvellous triumph behind that apparent tragedy. " When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men " (Eph. 4 ; 8). The resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead is the foundation upon which the whole Christian faith is built. Without that supreme sequel to His life on earth His Kingship could never become a reality and men would be quite without hope. It is because He rose from the dead that we proclaim confidently that sin and death will one day be abolished, because the way is clear for Jesus to fulfil the promise He made before His death—" If I go . . . I will come again " (John 14 ; 3).

He promised to come again—in due time. The angels who spoke to those disciples, gazing into the heavens which had just received Him out of their sight, said to them : " This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven " (Acts 1 ; 11). When the passion and greed of men reaches its inevitable climax and plunges the world into a maelstrom of destruction from which there is no human way out—He returns. When men's power to rule and control the world has utterly failed, He comes to restore order out of chaos.

That time is here. To-day there is no help in the arm of flesh. Like Israel of old, described so vividly in Psa.

107 ; 27, the world's institutions " reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm . . . so he bringeth them to their desired haven." It is because Christ hath ascended into the heavens and death no more hath dominion over Him that we look for His return—for Christ, our King.

Said Peter on that memorable day when he preached the first Christian sermon to be given, " He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began " Acts 3:20, 21

What will His return accomplish ?

First, the raising of the dead. He does not return to conduct a Day of Judgment of the kind pictured in mediæval theology. There will be no falling mountains and shrill trumpet blasts to terrify multitudes of trembling sinners. It will certainly be a day of judgment, a day which God has " appointed . . . to judge the world by that man whom He hath ordained " (Acts 17 ; 31)—but it is to be a judgment in which education and evangelism are to play their parts before the final and irrevocable choice is offered to man. All shall come forth. " All that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth " (Jno. 5 ; 28). " The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away " (Isa. 35 ; 10).

Secondly, there will be a great restraint of evil. The arch-enemy of mankind, Satan, is to be " bound " for the whole duration of the Millennium, and will be quite unable during all that time to deceive and ensnare men. Moreover, the power of earth's new king will be extended in some at present inexplicable manner so that no man will be able to do harm or injury to another. " They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain " (Isa. 11 ; 9), says God. Men will die for their own sins if after full and fair opportunity to repent it is manifest that they are irrevocably set against all righteousness, but no one will either die or suffer in any

way on account of the sin of others. There will be a benevolent restraining force in operation to prevent anyone from being hindered or thwarted in their own personal endeavours to come into harmony with God and His righteousness. So will men gradually learn the underlying principles upon which God's creation is founded and by which it must endure, preparatory to making their own choice between good and evil, life and death.

There will thus be a steady progression in righteousness in the earth inspired by the educational influences controlled by earth's new King. " Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem " (Isa. 2 ; 3). There will be those in the earth who will " turn many to righteousness " (Dan. 12 ; 3), teachers, already trained and fitted for their work by past experiences. This is the reward of those who in long ages past had served God faithfully amidst discouragement and persecution, enduring " as seeing Him Who is invisible " (Heb. 11 ; 27). Now they will see the results of their labours in the definite advance of men toward mental, moral and physical perfection. The " Golden Rule "—do unto others as you would they should do to you—will be in active operation, and as the power of sin and evil begins to slip away from the earth so the forcible restraint of evil doers will become less and less necessary. In the glorious vision of this wonderful day seen by John and recorded in Revelation 22 there were trees of life, the leaves of which were to be for the healing of the nations. That will be a time of great mental and moral as well as physical healing.

Together with this goes the development of the earth and its resources. Man's original commission was to possess the earth and subdue it, making use of all its wealth and possibilities for the general good and happiness (Gen. 1 ; 26). Under earth's new King there will be progress in invention and knowledge, the study of art and science for its own sake, on a scale never before known. The results of all that study and progress will be used for the betterment and the wellbeing of humanity and not for its misery and destruction, as is so often the case at present.

Then comes the operation of the Divine decree: " It

shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from amongst the people" (Acts 3 ; 23). There can be no such thing as eternal life allied with sin. The sinner must surely die, as Paul realised when he said so plainly in Rom. 6 ; 23, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is not revenge on God's part ; neither is it an arbitrary and unreasoning punishment. It is the inevitable and only possible consequence of an intelligent being's refusal to order his life by the standards which God has ordained to ensure the happiness of His creatures. So it is true that by the end of the Millennium there will be none but pure, upright, supremely happy beings upon earth. The last shadow of evil and its allies, sin and death, will have vanished for ever.

So the Kingship of Christ on earth comes to an end, having achieved its purpose, the abolition of evil, sin and death, and the reconciliation of mankind to God. "Then cometh the end," says Paul, speaking of this time, "when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father . . . that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15 ; 24-28). The benevolent restraints of the Millennial reign will be removed, for by then the whole human race will be perfectly capable of conducting its affairs in complete accord with God and the laws of righteousness. Every man will be a king in his own right, the equal of every other man, and the world will, at last, enter upon an era of peace and happiness which shall never end. Sin will have been for ever destroyed, and God's purpose fully accomplished.

I have no wisdom, no renown,

Only my life can I lay down;

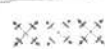
Only my heart, Lord, to Thy throne I bring, and pray

A child of Thine I may go forth,

And spread glad tidings through the earth

And teach sad hearts to know Thy worth;

Lord, here am I.



THE QUIET TIME



BURDENS !

In Psalm 55 ; 22 there is a word which is full of rich suggestion. We are bidden to "Cast our burden upon the Lord." In the margin, however, is the word gift—thus reading—"Cast thy gift upon the Lord." So our burden is God's gift to us. This is true whatever the burden may be—duty, sorrow, pain, loss, care. Being God's gift, there must be a blessing in it, something good, something we could not miss without sore loss. It may be a blessing for ourselves, or it may be for others—in the garden it was the blessing of the world's redemption which was in the cup that was pressed to the lips of our dear Lord. In every case, our burden is God's gift, and it would not be a kindness to us if He were to lift it away.

But there is more of the promise. We are to cast our burden upon the Lord and He will sustain us. That is, He will give us strength to carry our load, to endure our suffering. The story of Paul's thorn in the flesh illustrates this. The torturing burden was not removed, but instead there came grace sufficient—the strength of Christ to balance the human weakness, so that Paul was enabled to rejoice in his infirmities because of the blessing which came to him through them.

**" We must live through the weary winter
 as we would value the spring ;
 And the woods must be cold and silent
 Before the robins sing.
 The flowers must be buried in darkness
 Before they can bud and bloom ;
 And the sweetest and warmest sunshine
 Comes after the storm and gloom."**

REJOICE EVERMORE

Paul and Silas in Philippi's prison knew sorrow ; and yet they were filled with joy. Even then they were rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, though their backs were bleeding, and their feet were fast in the stocks, and there was no light in the dungeon. Being at peace with God, they sang in the night.

At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God (Acts 16 ; 25).

"LET HIM BE THY GUIDE"

What Christian has not realised certain crises in his life in which two voices seemed to speak to him; the one favouring humility and obedience to God at any cost; the other urging self-will backed by Pride? If we are advanced Christians, who through numerous victories have gained a position where such besetments are rare, we still need to be on guard and to remember that we have a very wily adversary, that we have the treasure of the new mind in an earthen vessel, and that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection. These recollections should make us very humble, and lead us to cling closely to the Lord, and to fear and abhor any attitude of conduct and even of thought that would in any measure seem to antagonise the Divine will.

THE TIME TO TRUST

When is the time to trust?

Is it when hopes beat high,
When sunshine gilds the sky,
And joy and ecstasy
Fill all the heart?

Nay! but the time to trust

Is when our joy is fled,
When sorrows bow the head,
And all is cold and dead,
All else but God.

A MIGHTY FAITH.

How much is your faith worth? George Muller of Bristol, whose children's homes and schools were such an outstanding achievement of the nineteenth century had no money but a faith worth over a million pounds in the Bank of Heaven—at least, that was the amount which that Bank put into his hands during the fifty years or so of his stewardship. Paid out in instalments as required, of course. There were times when he and his helpers had no food in the house for the next meal of the day, and no money to buy any—yet the wherewithal always came in time and they never lacked.

HE IS RISEN

C.T.R.

The proofs of our Lord's resurrection from the dead are necessary to be kept in mind by those who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit; and as they were indispensable to our attainment of justifying faith in Jesus, so they are also necessary for others. Indeed, none could reach the higher developments of faith and Christian experience without this foundation well established. As it was necessary for us to know that Christ died for our sins before we could believe in Him as the Redeemer, as the one who had secured the right to be the Life-giver to Adam and his race, so it was necessary for us to believe more than this, namely, that He who died for our sins rose again, that He might be our justifier, our Lord, our guide, our helper, our advocate with the Father, and by and by the Mediator between God and the world. From this standpoint, therefore, this subject is important as providing us with the necessary reasonable proofs to lay before others who have not yet accepted Christ.

Summing up the proofs, we find that they are numerous and well substantiated.

(1) Our Lord's death could not have been a case of suspended animation; the spear-thrust in His side made this evident, not only because it was a mortal wound, but because it furnished evidence that our Lord was already dead in that there issued from His side water as well as coagulated blood.

(2) The centurion charged with the execution was satisfied as to His death, and so reported to Pilate, the Governor.

(3) The request of the chief priests, that the stone against the door of the sepulchre be sealed and a guard placed around the tomb so that no one could remove the body and assert that Jesus had risen, was a further evidence that He was regarded as dead.

(4) His friends believed that He was dead, and wrapped Him in spices for burial; indeed, in their grief they seem to have forgotten His promise of a resurrection—so much so that even after He had risen it was

with difficulty that they were convinced.

(5) The record that the guards dissembled and declared that the disciples stole His body while they slept, being bribed by the Jewish rulers, served at least to prove that the guard had been set, and that everybody recognised that Jesus was dead.

(6) The tomb in which Jesus was buried was a new one, in which no one had previously been buried, so there could be no doubt as to the identity of the one who arose.

The resurrection of Christ is vouched for by many most honourable witnesses, of whom it cannot be said that they were shrewd and learned, and took advantage of opportunity to hoax the public. On the contrary, they had nothing to gain by their course—everything to jeopardise. The witnesses were not only poor but unlearned, and write themselves down as "ignorant." It would have been to their advantage to have dropped Jesus and the malodorous reputation associated with His name. They testified to His resurrection, and preached in His name and through His power as the risen one the forgiveness of sins—and did this at their own expense, with sufferings, stripes, imprisonment and cruel death as the reward. Their testimony fully concurs with the Master's own words before He died—words which His own intimate follows could not appreciate, could not comprehend—that on the third day He would rise from the dead.

The doctrine of the resurrection itself is peculiar to the Jewish and Christian religions. Other religions the world over ignore the necessity for a resurrection, and claim that those who die are more alive than they were before their death. The Apostles, on the contrary, admitted that all their hope rested in the fact that Christ did rise from the dead. Mark the Apostle Paul's words: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified that God raised up Christ: whom He raised not up if the dead rise not; for if the dead rise not then is not Christ risen; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. 15; 14-18).

It is not reasonable to suppose that honest men would misrepresent such a matter as the resurrection of our Lord, and it would be foolish for them to lay such stress upon a matter of which they were not morally convinced themselves. Why dwell so earnestly upon the resurrection of the dead if they had the least doubt on the subject? Why declare that all faith and all hope in Christ, all hope of forgiveness of sins, all hope of a future life by a resurrection was at an end if Christ had not risen unless they were satisfied beyond peradventure, especially so when the learned of that time were teaching Plato's philosophy, that the dead are not dead but more alive, and hence need no resurrection?

Our Lord announced in advance that He would rise from the dead on the third day. One view of the fulfilment of His words can be tabulated thus:

Jewish Reckoning

4 to 6 p.m. Friday—2 hours.

6 p.m. Friday to 6 p.m. Saturday—24 hours.

6 p.m. Saturday to 4 or 5 a.m. Sunday—10 or 11 hours.

By Modern Reckoning

4 p.m. to 12 midnight Friday—8 hours.

From midnight Friday to midnight Saturday—24 hours.

From midnight Saturday to 5 a.m. Sunday—5 hours.

Or another possible view of the matter would indicate Thursday as our Lord's death-day as follows:—

Laid in tomb—6 p.m. Thursday.

6 p.m. Thursday to 6 a.m. Friday—First night.

6 a.m. Friday to 6 p.m. Friday—First day.

6 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Saturday—Second night.

6 a.m. Saturday to 6 p.m. Saturday—Second day.

6 p.m. Saturday to 6 a.m. Sunday—Third night.

6 a.m. Sunday—Beginning third day.

Either view thus reckoned fulfils Peter's words: "He rose again the THIRD DAY."

The view of the majority of Christian people is that our Lord rose from the dead as a being possessing a kind of glorified human body. The other view is ours, namely, that our Lord arose from the dead a spirit being, but since human beings cannot see a spirit being without injury, our Lord—really a spirit being—clothed Himself

as it were with flesh and clothing in order to appear to His followers, in order to give them a demonstration that He was no longer dead; appearing to them in various forms, as a gardener, as a stranger, as a man on the shores of Galilee, and as the one who was pierced, that by all these changes He might demonstrate to His followers that, although risen from the dead, He was no longer the same being as before, nor subject to the same limitations as before. Now, as a new creature, a spirit being, even as He explained to Nicodemus, he had power to come and go as the wind, and none could tell from whence He came or whither He went. So is everyone born of the Spirit, everyone who experiences a resurrection to the spirit nature (John 3; 6-8).

Our Lord had indeed appeared subsequently to Saul of Tarsus, and manifested to him a certain measure of the glory of His resurrection condition, but the effect upon Saul was to blind him so that it required a miracle for his relief. To have so appeared to the eleven apostles and the others of the five hundred brethren who believed on Him would not have been a satisfactory proof of our Lord's resurrection. They would merely have known that they had seen a great light, experienced a shock, and that they had heard certain wonderful words, but where would have been the proof to them or others of mankind that the one who was buried in Joseph's tomb had arisen from the dead and was now a spirit being? Our Lord, therefore, evidently chose by all means the better plan for making known the great fact of His resurrection. He appeared as a man, but under varying conditions, showing that He was not bound by the limitations of the human nature, but that He appeared and disappeared in bodily forms as the angels had in previous times, as, for instance, the three who appeared as men to Abraham for the purpose of communion with him, who ate at dinner with him, and whom he afterwards came to know as angels. For a similar purpose the Lord had appeared to His disciples after His resurrection: He veiled His glory and they saw it not when He appeared in various forms.

The majority of Christian people are greatly confused over the matter of the resurrection. Having received from pagan philosophies in the "dark ages" the same

doctrines that were communicated by the Adversary to all the heathen, namely, that the dead are more alive than they ever were before, Christian people in general wonder why the Scriptures lay such stress upon the resurrection—why there is any necessity at all for a resurrection. They properly enough reason that if the dead are no longer trammelled with earthly bodies, why do they need them in the future any more than in the present. This confusion of thought is directly traceable to Satan's falsehood, "Ye shall not surely die." When we accept the teachings of the Word of God that the dead are really dead, then we perceive that there is no hope for them ever to have any knowledge or consciousness except by resurrection of the dead—we learn that there is neither knowledge nor device nor wisdom in the grave, sheol, the state of death, whither all go (Eccl. 9; 10). As an illustration we quote a few words from Doctor Peloubet. He says:—

"The resurrection of Jesus shows us the meaning of the New Testament teaching concerning the resurrection of the body. So in the Apostles' Creed we declare our belief in the 'resurrection of the body.' But these things do not express what the New Testament teaches concerning the resurrection, especially in 1 Corinthians 15. Jesus Himself did not have His resurrection body till He ascended. The disciples saw the same body they had seen before the crucifixion. Our present bodies with flesh and bones cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but out from them in some way will grow spiritual bodies."

What confusion! The cause is not far to seek: it is first the error of supposing that the dead are not dead, and secondly the failure to see that our Lord was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit," as the Apostle most explicitly tells us (1 Pet. 3; 18). With the morning light shining upon the Divine Word these shadows so confusing to heart and mind are gradually fleeing away, disclosing to us new beauties in our Heavenly Father's Word—consistencies, harmonies. Here we see the Apostle's statement that we are sown in weakness, raised in power, sown in dishonour, raised in glory, sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15: 42-44)—not sown a natural body and raised a natural body out of which will grow a spiritual body. The

Scriptures are consistent, harmonious, beautiful when allowed to interpret themselves.

The resurrection narratives are simple, unvarnished, natural. The different gospels tell of the matter in different languages, narrating sometimes the same item in different form and sometimes different items connected with the manifestations of the forty days of our Lord's presence after He arose from the dead, and before He ascended on high. Although these accounts differ, they in nowise contradict each other; each told what he himself saw and knew, whereas had the account been a spurious one, written to deceive, undoubtedly great care would have been exercised to have every witness tell the same thing. Here, then, is another evidence of the truthfulness of the records.

To draw an illustration from more modern history: several generals present at the battle of Waterloo gave very different accounts of the same—especially respecting the time of the beginning of the battle. Two armies of men witnessed the matter, yet an authoritative account of just when it opened cannot to-day be known. The Duke of Wellington declared that it began at ten o'clock in the morning, and General Alba, who rode beside him, says the hour was eleven-thirty; Napoleon and one of his assistants, Douret, claimed that it began at twelve o'clock, and General Ney asserted that it began at one o'clock. Evidently these different persons had different conceptions of the matter: one may have counted from the time the first gun was fired, another from a period of the general engagement, or what not. No one thinks of questioning the fact that there was a battle of Waterloo because of these divergent statements respecting the time it began. So with the matter of our Lord's resurrection, the fact that the different records of it are not in the same language militates nothing against the fact as a fact. All agree that the resurrection took place on the first day of the week (Sunday) following the Passover, early in the morning. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the mother of James the Less and of Joses, were there (Matt. 27; 56), and Mark and Luke tell us that shortly afterward came Salome the mother of John. Joanna the wife of Chuza, and other women, who brought spices for a more thorough embalming of the

Lord's body than was possible on the night of our Lord's burial on account of the lateness of the hour and the approach of the Passover.

The earthquake had already rolled away the stone, the sentries having fled in terror from the manifestation of the angel's presence. But the same angel, so terrible to those out of harmony with the Lord, spoke graciously to those who were His friends, assuring them that Jesus was risen, and directing them to go quickly and tell His disciples, also assuring them that Jesus would go into Galilee, and intimating a general meeting of His friends there, which later took place. En route they met Jesus, who sent the same message to His disciples. Seemingly the Lord recognised that woman can exercise faith more readily than can man, and here He used them as His servants and mouthpieces to bear His message—to prepare His disciples, to assist them more readily to accept the truth of His resurrection.

For forty days our Lord was with His disciples before His ascension, yet He revealed Himself to them, according to the records, not more than eleven times in all. His interviews with the disciples were surrounded by circumstances and conditions which told them what a great change had occurred to Him—that He was no longer the same being, although He evidently had the same loving interest in them as before. He was still their Lord and Master, this same Jesus, although no longer Jesus in the flesh. He was "the Lord, that spirit," a "quickening spirit." To bring the matter more clearly before our minds let us note the records covering these manifestations or appearances, as follows:

ON THE DAY OF THE RESURRECTION

- (1) Sunday morning early—to Mary Magdalene—near the sepulchre at Jerusalem—Mark 16, 9; John 20, 11-18.
- (2) Sunday morning—to the women returning from the sepulchre—near Jerusalem—Matt. 28; 9, 10.
- (3) Sunday—to Simon Peter alone—near Jerusalem—Luke 24; 34.
- (4) Sunday afternoon—to the two disciples going to Emmaus—between Jerusalem and Emmaus—Luke 24: 13-21.

(5) Sunday evening—to the apostles excepting Thomas—at Jerusalem—John 20 ; 19-25.

All five of these were on the first day, the resurrection day, the remaining six appearances being scattered through the remaining thirty-nine days of our Lord's presence, as follows :

THE NEXT SUNDAY—THE EIGHTH DAY

(6) Sunday evening, a week after the resurrection—to the Apostles, Thomas being present—at Jerusalem—John 20 ; 26-29.

APPEARANCES IN GALILEE

Quite probably three weeks intervened without the slightest communication. Meantime the Apostles had re-engaged in the fishing business, when our Lord appeared to them on the shores of Galilee.

(7) As a stranger on the shore Jesus called to seven of His disciples who were fishing—John 21 ; 1-13.

(8) Shortly after the manifestation on the shores of Galilee Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee—Matt. 28 ; 16-20.

(9) Very shortly after this He again appeared to a general company of His followers gathered together by previous appointment, "above 500 brethren at once"—in Galilee—1 Cor. 15 ; 16.

LAST APPEARANCES IN JERUSALEM

(10) At the close of the forty days our Lord appeared to His natural brother James, probably at Jerusalem—1 Cor. 15 ; 7.

(11) At the end of the forty days our Lord appeared to all of the Apostles at the time of His ascension. This was at the Mount of Olives—Luke 24 ; 50, 51 ; Acts 1 ; 6, 9.

It was years after this that Paul wrote : "Last of all he was seen by me also, as of one born before the time." He was seen of the other Apostles as the gardener, as a stranger, as the Crucified One, but when Paul, the last of the Apostles, saw Him it was not so, but as we shall see Him by and by when we are changed to His likeness. The Church of the First-born are at the resurrection changed to be like their Lord and see Him as He is. Any special revelation of the Lord might have been withheld from the Apostle Paul until the same time, except that it was necessary that the Apostles should be "witnesses."

testifiers to the fact that Christ had not only died but had also risen from the dead ; and in order that Paul as an Apostle might thus testify he was granted the vision of the glorified One. He saw Him as we shall see Him, in that he saw Him in the brightness of His excellent glory, and not as the others, veiled in the flesh. Thank God that the time is not far distant when, those who sleep in Jesus having been changed to His image, we who are alive and remain shall also be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to be made like Him, to see Him as He is, to share His glory. Thus being changed by passing from death to life, the full number of the very elect shall be completed and the reign of glory shall begin

DESPISED AND REJECTED.

This rendering of one of the finest passages in the Bible is said to represent a compendium of six translators. It may not be so literally accurate as the Authorised Version rendering, but there is a beauty in this presentation of a familiar chapter which perhaps brings home more intimately the pathos of the prophet's theme.

Isaiah 52 ; 13 to 53 ; 11

"Behold my servant shall prosper ; he shall be raised aloft, and magnified, and very highly exalted.

"As now many are astonished before him (so disfigured is his aspect before men, and his figure before the children of men) so shall many nations exult in him ; kings shall close their mouths before him ; for what had not been related to them, shall they see ; and understand what they never heard.

"Who hath believed what we have understood by hearing ? Who perceives what the arm of Jehovah is preparing ?

"He hath grown up as a twig before him, as a shoot out of dry ground. He had no form nor beauty. We looked at him, but there was no fair appearance that we should be desirous of him.

"Despised and neglected by men, a man of sorrow and familiar with sufferings, and like one who hideth his face from us, disdained; and we gave him no attention.

"But it was our griefs he bare, it was our sorrows he carried. We, indeed, accounted him smitten; stricken by God and afflicted.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions; was smitten for our iniquities; the chastisement, by which our peace is effected, was laid upon him; and by his bruises we are healed.

"All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned each to his own way; but Jehovah hath inflicted upon him the punishment of all. He was severely afflicted, yet he submitted himself, and opened not his mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, or as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

"By an oppressive judgment he was taken away—the men of his age who shall describe?

"For he was cut off from the land of the living; on account of the transgression of my people was he smitten.

"A grave is assigned him with the wicked; but his tomb is a rich man's; for he hath done no injustice, and no guile is in his mouth. But Jehovah is pleased to crush him with sufferings; if he will offer himself a sacrifice for sin, he shall see his posterity, he shall prolong his days, and the gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand.

"The effects of his soul's pain he shall see and shall be richly satisfied. By his knowledge my righteous servant shall make many righteous, and shall take away their iniquities.

"Therefore will I distribute to him the many for his portion; and the mighty people shall he share for his spoil; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Queens Square. The friends formerly meeting at Queens Square ask us to announce for the benefit of intending visitors that the meetings are now held at 10 Bedford Square (Board Room) 1st Floor, adjacent to the British Museum, London, W.C.1., every Tuesday evening at 6.15 p.m. Needless to say, a warm welcome awaits any who would like to attend.

Anonymous. We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation the receipt of an anonymous donation of £1 (April).

Doctrinal Essays. Attention was called in our February issue to the proposal made toward the end of last year by which an opportunity would be afforded for the dissemination of essays on matters connected with our faith, and for consequent discussion. The proposal was fully explained in the initial circular, and every facility offered for the careful consideration of such essays as might be submitted, but it is evident that there is no real interest in such a project on the part of the friends, and the Committee have therefore decided to abandon the idea. The proposed publication of occasional books of such essays will, therefore, not be proceeded with.

"Hell—The Truth." We have a small stock of this tract available for free distribution, and will be pleased to send quantities of several hundred at a time on request, accompanied by postage, at the rate of 6d. for 250.

"Dawn" Booklets. Import restrictions make it impossible for us to stock the full range of "Dawn" booklets, but we have on hand a few of two issues, "The Day of Jehovah" and "The Jew and the War." We can despatch these, while stocks last, at six copies for 6d. post free.

"Englishman's Greek New Testament." This is a Greek Testament, with interlinear rendering, and translation at side, similar in size, appearance and style to the "Diaglott," but with the Authorised Version in the side column instead of Wilson's translation. We do not propose to continue the supply of this book, and will therefore dispose of the two copies now left in stock at 10/- each post free instead of the 15/4 shown in our price list, to the first two requests.

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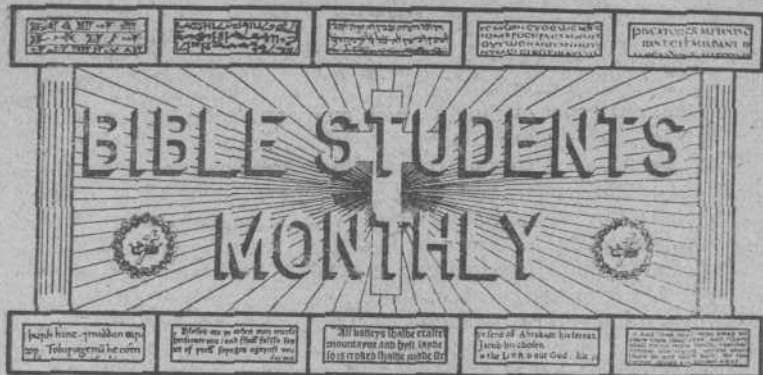
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THE LAND OF PROMISE

Significant developments in the East.

Jewish immigration into Palestine has stopped, and no more permits are to be issued. The 1939 White Paper laid down the British Government's policy of allowing 75,000 immigrants in the five years 1939-44, after which no more would be permitted. There are at present 508,000 Jews in a total population of 1,800,000—just 28%. The Arab hope is that Jews will remain a permanent minority in the land.

Students of the Scriptures await the next move with interest—for that there will be a next move is certain. God has promised that He will Himself give the land to the nation He will call forth to inhabit it. Significantly, on 24th June last an appeal to the United Nations for the restoration of a Jewish State was read in every synagogue in Palestine. It may be that the fulfilment of the age-old hope must wait until such an appeal is made, in full faith, not to the United Nations or any other power of this world, but to Him Who holds the nations in the hollow of His hand. We do well to watch the course of events.

During the past 25 years only 6% of the total land has been acquired by Jews, their total holding now amounting to some 400,000 acres. One wonders if they are to realise that apart from the intervention of God their dreams can never become reality.

Nevertheless there is a bright side to the picture. By industry and up-to-date methods the Jewish agriculturalists are far in advance of their Arab fellows. The Arab farmers' cows yield an average of 800 quarts per year; the Jewish ones, specially selected and bred, give 3500 to 5000 quarts. The Arab chickens lay 70 small eggs where the Jewish ones lay 150 large ones per year. The Arab farm yield of wheat is 13 bushels to the acre where the Jew produces 25 bushels. As in the long-ago days of Egypt, the Israelites are "more and mightier" than the people among whom they dwell.

We must not draw hasty conclusions from these things. We must record them as facts and take them into consideration whilst watching the stately steppings of our God, moving forward to the deliverance of that nation which shall be His chosen instrument on earth in the day of blessing at hand.

More than ever do we need to watch the trend of affairs in the new order of things which men are attempting to build. A new book (*Evolutionary Ethics*) by Prof. Julian Huxley, has been hailed by one responsible periodical as "a notable standard for rallying the forces at present struggling to find a basis for ethics in harmony with scientific thought and untinted with the tenets of revelatory religion." Translated into plain English this means "a handbook for people who try to base their ideas of right and wrong upon human wisdom instead of the Bible." Those of our friends who are responsible for the upbringing of children "in the nurture and reverence of the Lord" will be more deeply concerned over this tendency than our more elderly ones who are nearing the end of the way, but none who love the Lord and His Truth can look on unmoved. The systematic reduction of "religion" to a code of good manners and orderly conduct is planned to be instilled in the very schools, as witness the following:—

"A scientific reader, for example, may be somewhat perturbed to see so much attention paid to religious education . . . such training (religious education) must be based on rational observation, and not on emotional feelings and mythical beliefs."

"The man of science may be expected to make certain demands upon the advocates of religious instruction in the schools . . . his sympathies will be with the modernists, who apply to the Bible precisely the same methods of research as are applied to other ancient literature, these methods being strictly scientific in the sense that reason alone is employed."

"The teachers (of to-day), unlike their grandparents, are not troubled about the literal inerrancy of the stories of creation and Noah's flood."

These are quotations from leading journals interested in the future of education. They indicate the position to which we are being led. The nation is being encouraged to adopt ordinary standards of morality and decency, but there is no call to personal relationships to the Lord Jesus Christ and no regard to the Bible as the Divine revelation. The inevitable result must be that the rising generation will grow up to be unbelievers, worldly wise, and follow their elders into the abyss. But what shall we do about our own children?

The Foolishness of Preaching

The Apostle Paul in the chapter from which these words are selected clearly distinguishes human wisdom from Divine wisdom. We are reminded afresh of the words of the prophet of old: "for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55, 8). God's methods are very different from those of fallen man, and they can be understood and appreciated only by those who have received His Spirit. Spiritual discernment is one of the greatest blessings that we enjoy, and to the extent that we live up to our privileges so we may receive more and more of His Spirit in our minds and hearts. The work of the Gospel Age, in particular, is aptly described by Zechariah when he records "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 4, 6).

Our whole course and conduct seems to the worldly minded to be foolish. Our hopes seem to them to be entirely without foundation, for they have no faith in the Scriptures; they do not understand from whence they came or whither they go, believing that this life is the end of all existence; they are without God and without hope in the world (Eph. 2, 12). A review of certain aspects of God's methods and of "the foolishness of God (which) is wiser than men" should in such circumstances enhance our appreciation of God's goodness towards us and strengthen our faith in the unseen things which are eternal, as opposed to the transitory things of time and sense.

Drawn by His Spirit.

If ever we are tempted to doubt our position, it is helpful to review the wonderful way in which each one has been called out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Pet. 2, 9), as this cannot fail to assure us of the reality of our experience. In this connection the Apostle truly says: "for after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1, 21 to 23).

Jesus verily testified, "no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6, 44), and it is because of this that the apparently foolish method of preaching has had such a wonderful effect all down the

Gospel Age. According to human wisdom, there would appear to be nothing of value in preaching but empty words making little sense; but if *God's Spirit draws* the hearers, then the eyes of the understanding are opened. This is the secret of the *changed outlook* and the subsequent *transformed life* which those without fail to comprehend. It is well that each one of us should review these early "drawings" of the Spirit, for they help us to realise afresh that our outlook is not the mere product of imagination, or of some delusive sophistry. On the contrary, we *know* in whom we have believed, and we are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day (2 Tim. 1, 12). In contradistinction, the position of mankind generally is described by the same Apostle as one of blindness. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world (the Adversary) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4, 4). The natural man cannot understand spiritual things because they are spiritually discerned.

Deeper spiritual insight.

There is peculiar blessing in recalling the way in which we were led to enter into a "covenant of sacrifice." The Word of God uniformly stresses the necessity of spiritual growth in both grace and knowledge. This growth is made possible by the same apparently foolish process, for God works in us by His Spirit, unseen to the natural man, and, "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4, 16).

While this further growth is accomplished by the same method, namely, by preaching, it is here appropriate to explain that the term "preaching" does not necessarily have the limited meaning usually associated with the word. The same original word is sometimes translated "proclaimed" (Luke 12, 3) or "published" (Luke 8, 39). In our day much preaching is done through the printed page and by the reading of the *written word*, but in every case the *power of the message* is the spiritual enlightenment which comes from above. It is this which begets in us *assurance* and provides for us in our own time and day "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1, 3). Those "proofs" in that day were by the aid of natural sight, but the Lord Jesus explained to Thomas that a special blessing would be upon those who, in later times, would not be able to see with their natural eyes and yet would believe. We have all experienced this blessing; it is

more real and precious than any natural manifestation.

Constant growth in grace and knowledge by *living up to our responsibilities* makes for development after the likeness of the perfect Image. The Apostle John aptly describes this process when he says, "if we *walk in the light*, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1, 7).

Spiritual individuality.

God deals with us as individuals. We are not called in companies, and we are not taken into the Kingdom on collective merits. His wonderful message enters and fills the *individual* heart and mind and leads to *individual* service for the Lord. This is particularly important to remember in the Harvest-time, when everything is being shaken that can be shaken, so that only that which cannot be shaken may remain.

This thought inevitably reminds us once again of *responsibility*, particularly in this day when so much light has been given through the clarion message of the great truths that belong to our day. Each one is responsible for a *clear* and *faithful* witness, not so much to the world but amongst the Lord's people, because the Adversary is particularly busy to-day in his endeavours to cause the Lord's people to lose their "first love" by forgetting the *spiritual realities* of their calling out of darkness into light and of His care over them even unto now.

The Present Truth.

Think again of our main theme, namely, the *reality* to the spiritually minded of what appears to the naturally minded to be nothing else but foolishness, and apply this to the Present Truth.

One of the most important features of Present Truth is the doctrine of our Lord's return and what a wonderful blessing belongs to those who appreciate this Truth. But the man in the street goes about his daily round quite unaware of the great dispensational changes now taking place; he does not know that the end of the age is upon us and that the troubles of our day are part of the "Day of His preparation" for ultimate blessing. If he should be told, he would regard it as foolishness, because "since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were since the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3, 4).

The Lord, in His providence, is testing each member of the Body along spiritual lines to-day. He appears to have tarried, for it is almost seventy years since first the message

of His Return went forth. Is it foolishness to affirm that He has indeed come? Are we deceived, or have we that *deep inward conviction* that He has surely come, the "signs of the times" being mere confirmation of that conviction?

Yes, we surely believe that He has come with mighty power to do the work seen in Dan. 2, 44, and that present conditions indicate that, ere long, the blessings for which mankind waits will be poured out upon them. It is our duty, then, to declare this wonderful truth to the Lord's people to the end that they may be encouraged to weigh the proofs and to rejoice in the increased light now shining on the pathway concerning Zion. Next to the Atonement, possibly no doctrine has a more inspiring and important place in the outlook of the consecrated. It is our bounden duty, therefore, to declare the message "Behold the Bridegroom."

In the days in which we live, when the fire is trying every man's work of what sort it is, we find ourselves constantly in "crucible" experiences. All do not have the same tests, but in every case the vital issue is our heart loyalty to the Lord and our transformation into His likeness. Doctrine is essential, but it is useless unless it has the effect of drawing us nearer to the Lord that we may worship Him in the beauty of holiness and enquire in His temple. The truth is the channel of the Holy Spirit, just as the hymn says:

Show me the truth concealed
Within Thy Word;
Then in Thy Book revealed
I'll see *Thee*, Lord.

Let us not be troubled, then, by the apparent delay in the fulfilment of our hopes. Let us not forget our "first love," but use the truth aright as a spiritual force to transform us from natural to spiritual. Let us see to it, too, that we give a bold, uncompromising witness for what we believe to be truth and to which our entire being is devoted, whether others hear or forbear. Withal, let us see to it that we demonstrate the Spirit of Christ by using wisdom in all our ways that we may accomplish more good.

A Dilemma of the Early Church

T H.

It has so often been said that the Apostolic days were the Church's purest and best days, that it may occasion some surprise to learn that the Early Church was scarcely ever

free from difficulty and dilemma. Some writers have called that the "Ephesus period" of the Church's historical career—the time of "first love"—the time when, by Apostolic care and oversight, the Church was kept free from false doctrine, and when zeal in service was at white fervent heat. It has been accepted, almost as matter of course, that with the Apostles of the Lord on the spot, to teach, and advise and admonish, the difficulties would be cleared away almost as soon as they appeared. That many of them did clear up is indeed a fact, but that some remained and had not been cleared up right to the time when two of the greatest of the Apostolic band fell asleep, is also true. Some of those that were cleared up can be found in Paul's letters to the Corinthians, the Thessalonians, and the Romans.

One of these problems which had not been cleared away when Peter wrote his first letter to the Dispersion was concerning the Parousia of the Lord. It was a burning question in the Church in those days, and tended to disturb the peaceful relations of the believers in their little groups and churches, and, strange to say, even the Apostles had no definite or precise explanation to give which could settle the question once for all. There were men among them who asked openly and challengingly, "Where is the promise of His Presence?" and they alleged as warranty for their question that there had been no change in the historical run of affairs for hundreds of years which would lead anyone to think that a change was then impending, or that the Lord's "Parousia" was either a present fact or an event near at hand. "From the time the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" was the defence they made for their contentious attitude. Peter speaks of these men as "scoffers" or "mockers": "Mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts" (2 Pet. 3, 3, R.V.). While the word "lusts" may not always have indicated carnality or vice, it could always be associated with strong personal desires—a form of self-interest or self-gratification. Because of these self-centred purposes the idea of the changes attendant upon the Lord's Return was very unpalatable to them. They did not want to believe that the Presence of the Lord was near at hand, and strove to counteract the effect of Apostolic teaching by scoffing or ridicule—the cheap banter of men with uneasy consciences who have no real answer to an argument.

Peter was one of the Apostolic band who felt the mocking

taunt very keenly. He had called the "Jewish people to repentance, in order to be ready for the Lord's return. A season of refreshing would follow their change of heart, and then God would send Jesus Christ to bring in the times of Restitution of which all their prophets had spoken. They themselves cherished the hope that within the lifetime of some among them the Lord would return, to set up the Kingdom of God in their midst. Peter had been told that he would experience violent death (John 21, 18-19), but others had expectations that they might remain unto the Presence of the Lord (1 Thess. 4, 15; 1 Cor. 15, 51).

Thus the question of the return of the Lord from heaven was ever to the forefront of their minds, more particularly during the first twenty or thirty years after the Lord's ascent into the presence of God.

As days and years passed and a full generation was all but run out (Matt. 24, 34), uncertainty and questioning grew apace. Efforts to account for the delay were made by some, who said that, a resurrection having already taken place, the Lord would not now need to come (2 Tim. 2, 18). Arising from such unsettling ideas, many began to depart from the faith, and gave heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demonology and angelology (Col. 2, 18; 1 Tim. 4, 1-2), becoming destitute of truth, and accounting that godliness was an easy means of making money (1 Tim. 6, 5). Thus they became "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (1 Tim. 6, 20). Thus, within and without the Church, adverse influences grew apace, until all brotherly love had cooled, and a scoffing tongue replaced the voice of exhortation and helpfulness.

For the assistance of those still standing fast, though greatly perturbed, Peter makes a three-fold reply, but more in the nature of an apologia than an explanation. It might have appeared more conclusive if Peter could have said, "From the evidences given in the sure word of testimony we can assure you that the Lord's presence began five years ago—or will begin five years hence"! Peter could not do that.

The "sure word" did not afford the evidences for a statement like that. Hence Peter could not meet the mocking taunts by fixing a date. Instead, he shows first of all that the advocates of "no change since creation" were wilfully blinding themselves to facts. There *had been* a change, due to Divine intervention, when the heaven and the earth of old

time passed away. God had interferred in the affairs of men and had destroyed all their evil inventions. Then, having in mind certain utterances of the Prophets (Isa. 66, 15-16; Isa. 33, 11-12; Joel 2, 13). Peter asserts that another world order is destined to be destroyed by fire, and that the certitude of that overthrow is assured by the same word which brought about the change in earlier days. Scolding men may ignore historic facts, but that does not change the nature of those facts, and so Peter was on sure ground in asserting that what God had done once He might do again, varying only from water to fire as the means whereby to accomplish the overthrow. The fire may be symbolic fire, but that is immaterial to Peter's argument.

Then Peter becomes more persuasive than argumentative as he adduces his second point of reply. "But beloved . . ." That was a masterly stroke! It takes away at once the edge of a suspicious attitude, and puts the wavering brother at ease again. "Beloved" by Peter, yes! and beloved of the Lord! All the full story of reconciliation, of acceptance and adoption into the family of God, is couched in that one word! "But beloved be not ignorant of this one thing . . ." Beloved, do not forgetfully overlook this one essential thing, that time with God is not as time with man! Man's life span is very short—a few years rush by, and man has passed from infancy to senility. With God it is not so! A full thousand years are but as yesterday—or as a watch in the night, when it is past (Psa. 90, 4).

Man, expectant and eager to see the happy days of Promise materialise in his own times, counts the waiting years as long; but God can look out over a thousand years and esteem it only a "watch" in the night.

If, then, God has put the times and seasons in His own care, they will surely come when His hour begins to strike. At such a reply the scoffer may continue to scoff, but let not a brother beloved in the Lord think so lightly of the slow, sure work of God! That was Peter's own attitude.

As the final feature of his reply Peter dwells on God's longsuffering and unwillingness to close the door of repentance one moment too soon, lest a belated repentance should take place. Men—these scoffers—were counting God slack concerning His promises. "Yes! God will fulfil them, but when" they tauntingly said. "God is not slack (or tardy or dilatory) concerning His promise, but is showing long patience with the impenitent, and desires to afford all necessary time and opportunity for them to repent."

So says Peter to all who would give ear. Although Peter can assign no date, how much better is this answer than the impenitent's scoff. Peter's reply, though not an answer in full to the burning question of the hour, left the issue where it rightly belongs, and at the same time extolled and honoured that great love which has been preparing redemptive purposes from pre-human times. God's plan would lose nothing of its fulness or breadth by its spread over long ages, nor would God close the portals of opportunity a moment too soon, perchance some slack procrastinator were desirous to enter in.

Would the Apostle's reply suffice for us to-day? Some would say it is not precise enough—nor emphatic enough! Some still might say "Yes, the Lord will come, but when?" Does one brother say the Lord has come? Does another say He has not come? In either case this is a "waiting time"—as in Peter's day—either a waiting till the work of His Presence is complete, or a waiting "till He come"! Waiting is tedious and wearying—the years seem long, and vital strength declines, and faith can lose its grip, and patience can wear thin! Were Peter here to-day, his answer might still have to be the same, but would it not still be the best reply? Not an Apostle, nor any, nor all to-day could place the timing of God's plan in better hands than Peter did, nor for a better cause. If God's purposes seem to tarry or to wait, let us be very sure there is good reason why. And better far to say "God is long-suffering" than think that "God is slack," even though the problem still remain a problem which even a modern Peter might fail to answer, for everyone, once for all.

These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.—Rev. 14 ; 4.

Christianity is not acting according to the letter of certain rules and regulations. **It is following a living Christ ; walking as He walked ; doing as He did ; imitating His example in all things.** This is Christian movement—Christian action. It is keeping the eye fixed upon Jesus, and having the features, traits, and lineaments of His character imprinted on our new nature, and reproduced in our life and ways.



GOOD WORKS

A.O.H.



"Let your light so shine before men," said Jesus, "that they may see your good works" (Matt. 5, 16). There was no doubt in His loving heart that good works would accompany the reception of His teachings, and no doubt either that the light of the Gospel would be manifested, not only by word of mouth, but also by practical deeds of love and sympathy toward the groaning creation. The Early Church grasped this truth more clearly than did any later generation, and the records of their times are replete with examples of the manner in which they carried out this very practical aspect of their Master's teaching. There has been no other time when the Church on earth has so completely manifested the Master's ideal. He founded a community which was to be as a family, its members closely knit by the ties of sympathetic and understanding love: a family which would exemplify the characteristics of the Kingdom it preached by doing good to all men as it had opportunity.

The miracles of Jesus, quite outside our own power to reproduce, tend to obscure the fact that He must have set the example in good works of other kinds which are within the range of our own abilities. It may be a new thought to some that Jesus, from His scanty store, did on occasion give money to the poor. The Holy Spirit has caused the evidence to be recorded that we may be in no doubt upon the subject. In the account of our Lord's words to Judas at the Last Supper, John says (chapter 13, 29): "some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him; Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, *that he should give something to the poor.*" The seeming casual allusion indicates clearly that the giving of alms to the poor was a customary action of Jesus—so much so that the departure of Judas at a word from the Lord was tacitly assumed by the disciples to be for some such purpose. We must commence our consideration of "good works," therefore, by realising that Jesus did not content Himself with telling folk that there was a good time coming, nor that His mission on earth was confined to preparation for His future Millennial work. He did something there and then to relieve the material distresses of suffering humanity in a way that would be possible later on to many of His followers.

It might have been this attitude of Jesus which led his

own natural brother, James, the first Christian Bishop of Jerusalem, to stress in his epistle the importance of practical Christianity. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this," he says, "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1, 27). James meant much more than a mere calling upon a widow to offer sympathy and condolence. The plight of orphans and widows in the First Century was desperate indeed, and the words of James have no meaning at all unless they imply the rendering of practical assistance to those thus bereaved. The beloved disciple John took up the same theme and drove the implication directly home when he said, "Whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in Him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; *but in deed and in truth*" (1 John 3, 17-18). John could not tell us in better language that the sharing of material goods with others in need is a concrete evidence of indwelling love. The Divine recognition of Cornelius' prayers is another case in point. Cornelius was a Gentile, a Roman centurion, a man noteworthy for two things: he "feared God with all his house" and "gave much alms to the people" (Acts 10, 2). When the angel appeared to him, he was told that his prayers *and his alms* had come up for a memorial before God (v. 4). There was value, in God's sight, in this outward evidence of a heart sincerely afflicted with the sorrows of humanity.

The opportunity and duty of almsgiving must have featured very prominently in the life of the early Church—much more so than in our own day, because of the frightful conditions under which the poor lived. There was no system of relief such as does function, though imperfectly, in our country to-day. No one—very nearly no one—cared whether the very poor lived or died. The old, the infirm, the diseased, unable to labour for their living, turned out of their homes by children or relatives, wandered hopelessly about the towns and countryside, begging for alms wherewith to buy food sufficient to keep them alive. To Jesus, and to those who embraced His teaching, it must have been an intolerable sight; and to us in these days, despite all we know of State provision for such unfortunates, it should be no less intolerable.

The primitive Church accepted this problem of poverty as a challenge to their new-found faith. Within their own circle they did not tolerate it at all. There was no such thing

as unsatisfied need in the churches at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Rome. At the very outset the Church adopted the family relationship and to an appreciable degree the communal life. To describe this as communism may convey a wrong thought. Acts 2, 44-46, plainly states that those who believed were "together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." This was the secret of their power; in the joy and zeal of their conversion they counted not their goods as their own but as held in trust for their Lord and to be used for the general good. Thus, while there is no evidence of an equal division of possessions such as is generally implied by the word "communism," there was undoubtedly diligence to see that every case of need was satisfied from the store of one who possessed abundance.

One allusion to this family life is found in Acts 6, 1-4, where the election of the first seven deacons is described. There was apparently a tendency to neglect the Grecian-Jewish widows in favour of the native Jewish widows in the administration of this relief. The Church had grown greatly in numbers, and the problem was evidently assuming large proportions; nevertheless, the account reads as though there was absolutely unanimity on the method adopted to remedy the defect. The impression of a spontaneously happy family is maintained throughout.

Such enthusiastic love for suffering humanity could not be kept within narrow bounds, and it was not long before the growing Church was reaching out to do good to all men irrespective of their standing inside or outside the Church. Paul's own exhortation must have been ever in their minds, as it is in ours. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6, 30). The stress laid upon the latter clause does not release us from the obligation of the former one. And to such an extent did the early Christians exploit this outlet for loving service on behalf of their fellow-men that in the fourth century the Roman Emperor Julian (the notorious Julian the Apostate) declared that "the godless Galileans support not only their own poor, but our poor also." In the year A.D. 250 it was recorded that the Church in Rome—never a big church in those early days—regularly maintained no less than fifteen hundred destitute pagans.

"All this is very interesting," says one, "but you forget the peculiar mission of the Church in this age: 'to develop in herself every grace . . . to prepare to be kings and priests

in the next age.' We can do so very little to improve the conditions of the world *now*. We shall have all power *then*. Is it not better to leave the dead world until the day that God has appointed, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained? (Acts 17, 31). After all, Jesus did say "Let the dead bury their dead; go thou and preach the kingdom" (Luke 9, 60). 'Silver and gold have I none,' said Peter to the beggar at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3, 6). When the woman who anointed Jesus with the perfume was reproached for not using its value in the relief of the poor, He said, "For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always" (Matt. 26, 11). Our money is consecrated to the Lord and we are stewards to Him concerning it. Is there not a danger that we might be side-tracked from our High Calling if we lend ourselves to works for the world of this kind?"

But my brother is in need! See, he stands before me, mute in his helplessness! In the face of that awful fact, can one sustain any longer those academic arguments? Would Jesus? Would Peter? "*Such as I have give I thee.*" It was a literal fact that Peter had no money on that occasion, but he had healing power—and gave it. It is an equal fact that we at this time do not possess miraculous gifts, but—"*such as I have give I thee.*" When Jesus told His disciples that they would always have the poor with them, did He not mean that there were only a few days left in which to show their love and devotion to Him in person, and all the rest of their lives in which to minister toward the poor? Surely that saying was an acceptance of the position rather than a denial of its propriety.

"To develop in herself every grace." Yes, that is the all-important work of the Church. To have the love of God so dwelling in us and so integral a part of our lives that we individually may be found worthy of participation in the marriage of the Lamb when the blessed day shall come. We are very busy, in the upper room, putting the finishing touches to the embroidery on each other's bridal robes, and talking about the glories of the King's supper to come; but out in the street still stands that old beggar woman, hopeless eyes fixed to the ground, for no man has ever taught her to lift them to heaven. Why stands she there; cannot someone tell her to go away and come back when the Millennium is here? There will be plenty of blessings for her then. Even as the specious argument is deftly suggested to us by the Adversary of God and man, the words of the beloved disciple come down the centuries in tones of thunder: "*Whoso . . .*

seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Be it noted there is no qualification of merit, no stipulation that the subject must be a "deserving case." The sole requirement is *need*, and that is all-sufficient justification.

It must be so, for the problem of the poor in no wise differs from the problem of the world as a whole. The world is in need—desperate need—and our mission in life, the whole object and purpose of our consecrated walk before God, is to fill that need. We know that the Millennial Age has been set apart by God for the full accomplishment of that work, and that God is now selecting from amongst men those who can be fitted to carry out that work. He chooses only volunteers, those whose hearts are in this work and who would be engaged in it even now if they had the power and the time was right. And the extent to which we use the power and the time we *do* possess is the gauge by which God measures the sincerity of our professed desire to do that great work *then*.

"Charge them that are rich in this world," says Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 6, 17-19), ". . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works . . . willing to communicate, *laying up in store for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*" How clear it is that the good works, faithfully performed as we find opportunity, are of themselves contributing to our preparation for the future day when all power shall be ours. Works of mercy and sympathy, deeds of kindness and compassion, efforts to ameliorate the lot of some unhappy one or to infuse a little sunshine into a drab life—all these things, quite apart from the temporary relief they may bring to some afflicted son or daughter of Adam, are building into the fabric of our characters something that will endure to all eternity.

Our love for the brethren is the supreme test. Do we really appreciate the family relationship in our fellowship and look upon ourselves and our brethren as members one of another, to the extent of counting not what we possess as our own, but as held in trust for the benefit of whoever within the family circle has greater need than ourselves? And having joyfully entered into this glad communion where we too, like those of early days, can eat our bread from house to house in gladness and singleness of heart, can we soberly and thankfully look around us for opportunities of doing good, not only to the household of faith, but, as we have opportunity, to all men. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

✠✠✠✠ THE QUIET TIME ✠✠✠✠

Quietly Wait."

There is indeed strength given us in being quiet before God. Man is so prone to do and say, and to attend to things himself rather than to allow God to work out things for him, while he patiently and humbly waits before Him. It is one thing to talk about this, and quite another thing to actually be quiet before God. It never pays to act hastily. We can always afford to wait until we truly know the mind of the Lord.

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."
—Isa. 30, 15.

"Though it tarry" (Hab. 3, 17).

Although the fig tree shall not bloom,
Nor fruit be in the vine;
The labour of the olive fail,
And men lack oil and wine;
Though harvest fields may yield no meat,
The folds no flocks display,
And stalls no herd with champing feet
To mark the close of day;
Although the time be thus delayed
And every vision fail,
My trust on God is firmly stayed:
My hope—within the veil!

New standards.

Acceptance of a standard which is unearthly will result in very drastic revision of a man's life on earth. *His judgment will be formed upon the pattern of God's judgment. This will give him a sturdy independence of man, with a very humble dependence upon God.* It will be a very small thing with him that he should be judged of man's judgment (1 Cor. 4, 3). He will set before himself God's standards for thought and look and word and tone and deed. . . . Nothing less than likeness to Christ will satisfy him. . . . To him the meanesses, the compromises, the bickerings of men will be abhorrent.

"If David then called Him Lord, how is He his son?"

(Matt. 22, 45.)

How could Jesus be both the Son and the Lord of David? He is not David's Lord by reason of anything that He was as a spirit being before He was "made flesh, and dwelt among us," any more than He was David's Branch or Son in His prehuman existence. Our Lord Jesus *became* David's Lord or superior, as well as "Lord of all" (Acts 10, 36), by reason of the great work which He accomplished as the Mediator of the Atonement. "To this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living" (Rom. 14, 9).

True, the man Christ Jesus, before His death, might properly be styled a Lord, and was so addressed by His disciples, as we read: "Ye call me Lord and Master, and ye do well, for so I am" (John 13, 13). As the special messenger of the Covenant, whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world to redeem the world, and whom the Father honoured, testifying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," it was proper that all who beheld His glory, as the glory of an Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, should reverence Him, hear Him, obey Him, and worship Him—do Him homage—as the representative of the Father. But, as indicated by the Apostle in the text above cited, there was a *particular* and different sense in which our Lord Jesus *became* a Lord or Master by virtue of His death and resurrection.

This particular sense in which the risen Christ was "Lord of all"—a "Lord both of the dead and the living"—is vitally connected with His great work as Mediator of the Atonement. It was for this very purpose that He became a man. Humanity in its depraved condition "sold under sin" through the disobedience of Father Adam, was helpless—under the dominion of sin and the sentence of death; and its deliverance from these evils, in harmony with the Divine law, required that the penalty of Adam entailed upon his family should be fully met. The race required to be *bought back* from sin, and Christ became its purchaser, its owner—"Lord of all." For this very purpose He became the man Christ Jesus, and the Scriptures declare that He gave Himself a ransom for the race condemned in Adam. Thus the whole world was *bought with a price*, even the precious blood of Christ, and by virtue of this He has become its *owner*, its *master*, "Lord of all." . . . It was to obtain the right to

release man from the slavery of sin and death that our Redeemer became the purchaser, owner, Lord of all. Thus by His death Messiah became David's Lord, because David was a member of the race purchased with His precious blood.

—C. T. R. (Vol. 5).

Pre-Abrahamic Worship

A comparative history of the oldest religions, such as those of Egypt and Persia and India and China, surprises us with many likenesses to the Bible faith. Archbishop Trenchard has beautifully illustrated this idea in his Hulsean lectures, "The Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom," under such headings as these: "The Vanquisher of Hades," "The Son of God," "The Perfect Sacrifice," "The Redeemer from Sin," etc. These things were in the oldest religions, anticipations of the true and obscured by myth and superstition; but how did they get there? The idea of a suffering God was not unfamiliar to the Eastern mythologies—one who, like the Egyptian Osiris, also descended into Hades and there judged the dead righteously. And in their worship these religions were all originally monotheistic. The inference is, of course, the one suggested by the word superstition. It is an independent peep into the Eastern world, far up under the dawn. Outside the Jewish nation and uninfluenced by it, before Abraham's day, before the evolution of superstition, there was among the scattered nations a purer religion, and one received, apparently, from the same general reservoir of truth. Nor, if Moses was inspired to record for us the true history, need this surprise us. And Christ must in some way be got rid of, before the sceptics can get rid of "Moses and the prophets." According to the Mosaic chronology, Abraham was fifty-eight years old when Noah died; he lived to be one hundred and seventy-five, and even then died thirty-five years before Shem! Up to that time these two patriarchs of the flood were living somewhere among those Eastern nations. They are not mentioned, nor any of the nations except Egypt, because they no longer touched the onward historic stream. But at the dispersion of Babel, some two hundred years before Abraham's birth, these two must have gone away with some of the descendants, carrying with them,

as they had already made known, the true religion, and something of the earlier civilisation.

This fact of an earlier religion, however soon and widely it may have become corrupted, explains some things which the brevity of Scripture has left obscure. When Abraham, himself a monotheist from the Euphrates in the East, was in the vale of the Jordan in the far West, there came to him, and blessed him, Melchisedec, "Priest of the Most High God"; whilst not far off there was Abimelech and his people, with whom still dwelt "the fear of the Lord." This in Canaan itself, and in the very neighbourhood of Sodom! But from beyond that same distant Euphrates, 470 years later than Abraham's time, came Balaam to confront Moses and Israel—a man who worshipped the same God with Moses, and by the same name: "I cannot go beyond the word Jehovah, my God"; the man who, when the king of Moab, in his terrible extremity, proposed to "sacrifice his first-born," uttered those sublime words, recorded only by Micah: "Jehovah hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!" "Hath showed thee"—where,—how, in what early record known to both Balaam and the king as the word of the "Lord"? Moreover, of this Balaam from the far Euphrates it is said that he "knew the knowledge of the Most High"—the very word used for God by Abraham and Melchisedec in the valley of the Jordan. Except once in Deuteronomy, we do not meet it again till the history gets back to the Euphrates, to Daniel, to the Chaldeans, to Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian, and to Cyrus the Persian. They all use it, as evidently the earliest and the descended term for the one God. It brought Cyrus, as belonging to a common monotheistic worship, into sympathy with the Jews. It is known to-day among the mountains of Tibet; and, in the form of Shang-Ti, is the one missionaries in China have adopted to express the idea of God.

This word (in its different forms), Most High, the Highest, the Lord God of Heaven, is, indeed, itself pregnant with thought. It indicates a process of thought and a conviction in the earliest men as they looked up to heaven: a conviction of a One God who was above all in power and glory, and to be worshipped. It was a source of conviction independent of any other source of knowledge, as, for instance, Noah and Shem; and how strongly it impressed

them is crystallised in the word they used and handed down to indicate God. David felt precisely the same when he exclaimed: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." And this has an intimate bearing upon some present discussions about the heathen. Paul declared them "without excuse." Why, upon what ground? Upon the ground that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Their lapses into idolatry and superstition, with the consequences, were purely wilful—they "did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Up the stream of universal history there was that knowledge, "clearly" to be derived in all ages, from the same overspreading testimony, the heavens. The power of that testimony and its effect upon the earlier men lives, in many languages, in that "indestructible" word, the Most High God.

—A. G. Vermilye.

Comment by C. T. R.

The above observations are valuable, considered in connection with Paul's inspired account of how ignorance and superstition came to be so widespread throughout the world as detailed in Romans 1, 18, to 3, 23. Deplorable and dense as the ignorance and superstition of the world is, it is well that all should see that it is not the fault of God, that it is not because God made men degraded and vile. It is necessary that this be fully recognised as an offset to the growing idea that God did a very imperfect work in the creation of man, and that present progress from darkness and superstition, to light and reason and civilization, is merely human development—evolution.

Be it noted that the Scriptures everywhere give one harmonious account of the origin and cause of evil and ignorance in the world, and show that God is not guilty; they tell that "God hath made men upright, but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7, 29); and that it was when and because man was not desirous of retaining a knowledge of God in his heart that God gave them over to a reprobate mind (Rom. 1, 28). Thus sin, which entered at Eden (Rom. 5, 12), manifested its tendency to be continually downward, except as God introduced "the salt of the earth" (those exercised by His truth—led of His Spirit), whose influence has been to keep the social mass from utter corruption. Thank God for the blessed assurances of His Word, that, though the

world has been thus left largely to its own course, that both angels and men may see the real tendencies of sin, yet, that when this severe lesson has been well illustrated and deeply impressed, then He will, through His anointed ones, Christ Jesus and His Bride the overcoming Church, arrest the sway of ignorance, and sin, and superstition, and cause the knowledge of the Lord and His perfect plans to fill the earth. Thank God that His promised Kingdom (the glorified Church, "a royal priesthood"—rulers and teachers) shall re-establish righteousness and give to the billions on earth (who, as inheritors of sin and weakness, have never known or been able to appreciate righteousness, purity, and their attendant joys), an opportunity to taste and see that the Lord is gracious and that wisdom's righteous ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

When thus the right is known, and its result appreciated, all will be permitted to choose good or evil, right or wrong, righteousness or sin, obedience or disobedience to God; and according to their choice they shall receive their final and lasting reward; according as it is written, "The wages of sin is death (extinction, the withdrawal of all life), but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ" to as many as truly accept of him as their Lord and Master.

LOVE NEVER FAILETH

Patience is Love on the anvil, bearing blows of suffering.

Zeal is Love in the harvest-field, never tiring of toil.

Meekness is Love in company, vaunting not itself.

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An interesting and informative response resulted from our request, in the June issue, for expressions of opinion on the "Monthly." The Committee are at present engaged in studying the letters sent in, but we feel that the friends will appreciate some preliminary outline of the general feeling.

The most appreciated of the monthly "features" is evidently the "Quiet Time," followed quite closely by the "Question Box." The "Land of Promise" also received favourable mention, indicating that the interest of our friends in the welfare of God's ancient people has by no means diminished. The prevailing thought regarding the proportions of space allocated to "doctrinal" and "devotional" articles seems to be that each type is quite fairly represented. There is certainly a keen appreciation of the various types of doctrine exposition and prophetic study which have appeared from time to time, even although it is equally evident that the friends in the main regard the words of exhortation to holy living and Christian steadfastness as being of greater importance.

It does not seem necessary to mention by name the particular articles which have appealed to the friends. Sufficient to say that the indications given will prove a source of real encouragement to the Committee as they continue their work of scrutinising the articles which are proposed from time to time for publication.

A number of constructive suggestions were made by various thoughtful brethren, aiming at increasing the virility and usefulness of our magazine. For these we thank you, brethren, and we shall consider them and bear them before our Master. Five per cent. of replies advocated the conversion of the Monthly into an open forum for the presentation and discussion of brethren's personal views on what are usually known as "controversial doctrines." Such a publication would be of deep interest to the comparatively small number of "research" students in our fellowship, but we think all will realise that it would not be so helpful to the vast majority of the brethren, who need, in these difficult days, food for

(Continued on back cover.)

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST.

Part I.

This exhortation is reprinted, by request, from a magazine conducted by the Glasgow friends many years ago. We have been unable to trace the author but feel sure that he would be glad to have his labour of love presented to our readers.

In the third Chapter of Ephesians, verses 3-11, we find our subject expressed under four headings:—

1. The Mystery.
2. A knowledge in the Mystery.
3. The fellowship of the Mystery.
4. The unsearchable riches of Christ.; or, as we have it in Col. 1; 27, the glorious wealth of the Mystery (Diag.).

1. The word Christ, as we know, means Anointed, and carries with it the thought of office; for in olden times when one was anointed of God, as was Aaron or David, it was to occupy the office of Priest or King, and as such to do a certain work.

The Old Testament by type and prophecy pointed forward to the coming of a great anointed One, "Testifying beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." The Jews, who were looking for this great Messiah, or Christ, to come, neither understood His character nor the nature of the work He was destined to accomplish. To them it was an undivulged secret, "which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." The Lord Jesus Himself, in His testimony that the Son of Man must suffer, and that the servant was not above his Master, and in His wonderful picture of the Vine, sought to prepare the minds of His disciples for that illumination which would follow their quickening by the Spirit at Pentecost, when the Spirit would bring all things to their remembrance; but it remained for the Apostle Paul as the Lord's messenger to declare the Mystery of Christ in all its fulness, revealing that this great Anointed was a crucified Christ composed not of one but many members.

The Mystery of Christ, then, is twofold; first, as concerns His mission, and, secondly, as concerns Himself.

What is the mission of Christ? To reveal the Father; in other words, to glorify the Father by manifesting His

life. Of this Mission of the Christ we read in I Tim. 6 ; 16, "Which in His times He shall shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting." Now, there are two ways it is suggested in which God, the Eternal and Invisible One, might reveal Himself to man. He might Himself become incarnated in a body of flesh and tabernacle among men, or else He might bring forth a Son in human conditions, and by His Spirit express in and through that Son His Divine life. The first course, unreasonable though it be, is the one attributed to the Eternal God by the Creeds ; the second course, reasonable and beautiful in its God-like simplicity, is the one affirmed in the Word ; "God sent forth His Son," "The Logos was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" ; "No man hath seen God at any time. The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Surely a wonderful mission this, to declare the Father, to manifest the life of God ! A mystery indeed to the natural man ; as Paul says, "Great was the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh."

Jesus was anointed for this work at Jordan. Two qualifications were necessary. First, He must be perfect. God could not dwell in anything sinful. Secondly, He must be fully surrendered. These conditions were fulfilled in Jesus ; He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" ; and at Jordan He came saying, "Lo I come to do Thy will—I delight to do Thy will, O my God." There He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power as the Christ of God ; that Divine power took control of His fully surrendered being and began to accomplish in that perfect earthen vessel the Divine will—to express the Divine life. How completely the life of God was manifest in Him is evidenced by His own words : "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me ? The words which I speak unto you I speak not of Myself, but the Father that dwelleth in

Me. He doeth the works."

Of course, the life of the Father in that earthen vessel meant suffering. The image of the Divine may dwell in the human as a reflected light, but the Divine itself only as a consuming fire. That energising Spirit consumed Him. Because it was the Spirit of Divine love it exhausted His sensitive, sympathetic nature in the service of humanity ; as we read, "He was moved with compassion." Because it was the Spirit of Divine holiness, it prompted Him to magnify the law and make it honourable, exemplifying the spotless righteousness of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation ; as we read, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten Me up." Because it was the Spirit of Divine truth, it impelled Him to declare the Father's name under the shadow of the Cross ; as we read again, "To this end was I born and for this cause came I unto the world, to bear witness to the truth." In the power of the Spirit He, "poured out His soul unto death" ; as we read, "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God." That Holy Spirit controlling Him and to which He was wholly and joyfully surrendered, constrained Him to this daily course of sacrifice, that from the altar of sacrifice the Divine life might shine forth pure and clear. Adapting the words of the hymn, "He laid in dust earth's glory dead, and from the ground there blossomed red, life that shall endless be." That Divine life was perfected in its expression through suffering.

Surely Jesus, then, fulfilled His mission in so far as it could be fulfilled on earth ; as He Himself declared to the Father : "I have glorified Thee in the earth, having finished the work Thou gavest Me to do ; and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self." God glorified Him with Himself and when He raised Him "far above angels, principalities and powers, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the full development of Him that filleth all in all."

What does the Apostle mean by the Church which is His body ? That brings us to the second aspect of the Mystery, not concerning Christ's Mission, but the Mystery concerning Christ ; that the great Anointed One of Jehovah is composed not of one but of many members,

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members being many are one body, so also is Christ"; and that Jesus is the Head in whom resides all the perfections of the Church, which is His body, for "it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell." God desires that His Divine life should be manifest in an anointed company, and as He cannot dwell in anything sinful, He has made this wonderful provision of accepting us, "in the Beloved," anointing Jesus as the recipient of all the fulness of His life and grace, and dwelling in us only as we abide in Christ, recognising our humanity as members of Christ's humanity, to Whom it indeed belongs, "For ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." We are bought by Christ, that, belonging to Him, we might be accepted in Him and receive of His anointing to the end that that same Spirit which animated His mind and controlled His earthen vessel might possess us and manifest in us that same Divine life. Paul says: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" and if God sees our bodies as members of Christ's humanity, it must be that He is seeking to dwell in us as He dwelt in Christ, and so Paul says again: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit in you which you have from God?" Oh, what a wonderful thought the Apostle here gives us: what a glorious Divine truth, that "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," walking no more the individual pathway, living no longer the individual self-life, "For ye died," Paul says, "and your life is hid with Christ in God," one great Spiritual Creation—the Christ of God, anointed to manifest the one life—the life of God.

2. Now, it is one thing to talk of this mystery of Christ, but it is a different matter to experience its reality in the life. And so the second point for consideration is that conveyed in the Apostle's words: "My knowledge in the Mystery." Notice the Apostle does not merely speak of his knowledge of the mystery, but his knowledge in the mystery, which would seem to convey a deeper thought than mere outside intellectual knowledge of the doctrine that Christ is many members, suggesting rather that inner knowledge (heart) emanating from an experience of its operation. To illustrate, in another

place Paul's prayer is: "That ye may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge," knowing, through experiencing in the life, that which passes any theoretical understanding. And, indeed, it is only those who are in Christ enjoying that mystical oneness which the figure of the human body is intended to convey, who can be said to have a knowledge in the mystery, to know God as He is manifest in Christ Jesus.

There are two essentials to a knowledge in the mystery. Paul mentions them in the First and Second Chapters of First Corinthians. The first is: Identity with Jesus Christ crucified—"The world by wisdom knew not God, but we preach Jesus Christ crucified." The second is: Revelation by the Spirit—"God hath revealed . . . by His Spirit."

The first work of the Spirit is to crucify, and only as we are crucified with Christ is the Spirit free to reveal in us the Mystery of Christ, thus giving us a knowledge in the mystery. And so Paul declares: "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

What does the Apostle mean—Jesus Christ crucified? Jesus' crucifixion began at Jordan. There He surrendered His human will to be crossed by the Divine will. God accepted that surrender, manifesting His acceptance by the giving of His Spirit, which, taking control of our Lord's mind, began to express in that earthen vessel the Divine will to the effectual crossing or crucifixion of the human will. Time and again, throughout the Lord's ministry, we get glimpses of this continued crucifixion. We have the incident, for example, recorded in John 12, when certain of the Greeks came saying, "We would see Jesus." According to certain writers, the desire of these Greeks was that Jesus should visit their country with His gospel, they being always out for something new and novel. What a wonderful vista opened up to our Lord here; what scope for propaganda—and without the Cross! But the will of God was Calvary. Jesus said: "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour (this dark hour so near at hand). But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." In Gethsemane we have it

revealed again, and the victory of the Spirit, "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done."—crucifixion.

Now all this was a new experience for Jesus, He had never known crucifixion before. His will, of course, had always been entirely subject to God's will, but in the past God's will had never been crossed with His own perfect, natural desires. But now the will of God for Him was something vastly different . . . the manifesting of the Divine life, a manifestation which could only be at the expense of the human life. It was a continual crucifixion. But what a glorious outcome! Day by day the Holy Spirit was enabled to enhance His knowledge of the Father, because day by day the Father was being revealed in His life. Only thus can God be known; not to our senses because God is a Spirit; nor to our mental faculties, for (Job 11; 7) "Canst thou by searching find out God?" but known by indwelling. This is the only knowledge in the ultimate that counts, the knowledge of God within, a knowledge of which the world knows nothing; "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee." Such a knowledge of God means Eternal Life, because it is the realisation of the Divine life within that constitutes a knowledge of the Father. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Can we wonder, then, that Paul, with such a glorious incentive, is inspired to declare: "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified!" For only thus could he come to know God, by being crucified with Christ.

And how can we become crucified with Christ? Accepting by faith the fact that we have been bought by Christ, we manifest "the obedience of faith," by believing into Him, yielding ourselves to Him, and in Christ our wills become subject to the same will to which Christ is subject, for as "The Head of the Church is Christ, the Head of Christ is God." Now, ere we can become living members of Christ, that thus the Holy Spirit in Christ may begin to express in us God's will to the crucifixion of our old fleshly will—our "old man"—the power of God must operate. Crucifixion with

Christ necessitates more than the surrender of our wills. Not that we can do more than that. Our heart's desire is:

"Take my will and make it Thine, it shall be no longer mine; take my heart, it is Thine own, thus in me Thyself enthroned." But crucifixion involves more than surrender. God Himself must accept the surrender, and by a direct operation of His Spirit quicken us as members of Christ, thus bringing us within the scope of the Divine will for Christ, that, like as the hand is controlled by the will of the head by being virtually connected with the body and dominated by the one spirit, so the one Spirit animating us may be the energising power for the expression in us of the Divine will, to the crucifixion of the human will. As Paul says: "By the one Spirit we were all immersed into the one Body, and were all made to drink into that one Spirit." We have been begotten of God, and the Holy Spirit now finds in our life a field for its activities, day by day seeking to accomplish in us that Divine will which it accomplished in our Head, that the life which was manifest in Jesus might also be manifest in us. And of course, immediately, crucifixion begins.

In every avenue of life the old will with its natural inclinations begins to find itself crossed and thwarted, and day by day the test becomes more severe. Will we continue to bow to the dictates of the Spirit in all of life's affairs? In our business, in our home, in our study of the Word, and in our fellowship with the brethren the Holy Spirit is gradually intensifying to the surrendered soul the will of God, and exposing much as proceeding from the will of the flesh, which we had thought good and in harmony with the Divine will. The true saint of God invites this exposure. In the words of the Psalmist, his desire is: "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." He desires that nothing shall obscure the pure transparency of his heart in which the Father is seeking to be reflected, and day by day lays himself bare to the "X-rays" of Jehovah's searching gaze, praying that God by His Spirit may remove all those earthly

hindrances which the Holy Spirit reveals. And just as surely as the Holy Spirit reveals God's will each day, so surely will it accomplish it if in our continued unqualified surrender to God we yield ourselves up to be crucified with Christ.

The Holy Spirit will be the power enabling us to scrutinise our every thought; word and action more closely that we may be the better enabled to glorify God. Of course, it means suffering. Crucifixion is a very painful process. The natural will desires that the natural life abound. The Divine will is that the Divine life—the Christ life—reigns. And these two are so diametrically opposed that, as with Christ, so with His members, crucifixion resolves itself into a process of death—death to the human. As Paul testified: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus (the Divine life) might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." If we would have a knowledge in the mystery, if we would know Christ, we must know Him first as Jesus Christ crucified. But what a glorious privilege! In the words of Madam Guyon:

**"Thy choice and mine shall be the same,
Inspirer of that holy flame,
Which must forever blaze.
To take the cross and follow Thee,
Where love and duty lead, shall be
My portion and my praise."**

And in union with Jesus Christ crucified, "God by revelation makes known unto us the mystery of Christ," doctrinally also of course, but finding a lodgment in the head through the avenue of the heart. Day by day the Holy Spirit is free to reveal Christ in the life, more and more untrammelled in its operation by any cross-grained will of the flesh. "I have been crucified with Christ," Paul says, "nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Obviously, our knowledge in the mystery is a progressive knowledge. We can only know Christ as the Divine life which constitutes that knowledge is more and

more revealed in us. It is thus that we find Paul, even when well advanced in knowledge, yearning for a closer intimacy with Christ, a fuller and deeper realisation of the Christ-life. His prayer is: "That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

"That I might know Him"! What a wealth of desire these words convey, rising from the depths of a heart thrilled by what it already knows, and longing for a fuller knowledge of Him who is altogether lovely! "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." Paul knew something of Christ, but tasting the sweets of such wonderful knowledge only served to create in that opened receptive heart a yearning desire for more. "That I might know Him!" And who that has drunk at this glorious well of salvation does not long for a fuller revelation of knowledge? Surely the Apostle's prayer on our behalf finds an echo in our own hearts: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge (**Diaglott**) of Him the eyes of your heart having been enlightened; and that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, what the glorious wealth of His inheritance in the saints."

(To be concluded)

ANXIETY

And what does anxiety do? It does not empty to-morrow of its sorrow, but it empties to-day of its strength. It does not give escape from evil, but it makes us unfit to cope with it when it bursts upon us. It does not bless to-morrow, and it robs to-day. Every day has its own burden, which is quite heavy enough for the day's strength. Sufficient for each day is the evil which properly belongs to it. We shall be wise if we do not add to-morrow's weight to to-day's load, nor drag the future into the present, where there is no place for it. The present has enough to do in looking after its own concerns.



THE LAND OF PROMISE



Significant developments in the East.

The rise and progress of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem is a sign of the times. On the summit of Mount Scopus, where Titus pitched his camp when his soldiers destroyed Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago, there now stands the greatest centre of learning, research and education in the Near East. It was in June, 1918, whilst the Turkish guns were booming only twenty miles away, that twelve foundation stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, were laid in the presence of a distinguished company which included General Allenby and Dr. Weizmann. Building began in 1924, and the University was formally opened in 1925 by Lord Balfour. Since then the institution has made great strides. Every branch of learning is represented, and in 1944 it could boast of 1,200 undergraduates taught by an academic staff of 150 specialists. It has become the spiritual home of Jewish culture, and many scholars and scientists, escaping from European oppression, have found a home within its walls. In 1939 there were 60 such exiled professors and research workers and 600 exiled students playing their part in laying the intellectual foundations of a Jewish commonwealth.

The University library, the largest collection of books in the Near East, possesses over 400,000 volumes, many of them in Hebrew and Arabic. The world's classics and scientific works are being steadily translated into Hebrew, which is the official language of the University, and so in a very real sense this library is becoming the centre of the world's knowledge. Lecturers go to all the towns and villages imparting popular education. There is a Department of Oriental Studies, which is doing a great deal to make the Jewish and Arabic cultures more widely known to each people, and contributing considerably to mutual understanding between Jew and Arab and the breaking down of racial antagonism.

It is not often realised what great contributions to knowledge have been made by the Jewish people. They were especially prominent in the famous centre of learning at Cordova, Spain, during the Middle Ages when Europe was steeped in barbarism and ignorance; Jews and Arabs together made Cordova University the intellectual centre of the world. Before that, during the early centuries of the Christian era, Tiberias, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, was a place from which enlightenment streamed out to men. And even so far back as the Babylonian Captivity, in the days of Daniel, the Jewish captives established a seat of learning at Borsippa, fifteen miles from Babylon, the fame of which persisted for many hundreds of years.

But this time there is a difference. The light which is now being kindled at Jerusalem will not be extinguished. It is destined to flourish and grow until it becomes an essential part of that new world educational system which shall be administered by the "princes in all the earth" who are to return and assume control of human affairs.

An adjunct to the University is the Haifa Technical Institute. Founded in 1924, it embraces every kind of engineering and technical learning, and is already doing good work in the engineering, architectural and marine fields. Appropriately enough, it is situated in the city of Haifa, which has become the industrial centre of Palestine.

Then there is the Bezaleel School of Arts and Crafts, catering for the study and practice of the fine arts, such as painting, sculpture, handicrafts, and so on. Bezaleel was the man who superintended the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. It is appropriate that his name should be thus associated with the modern development of the arts in which he was skilled in his own day, twenty-five hundred years ago.



+ The Blood of His Cross. +



Interwoven with the many strands of thought descriptive of the creation and heading-up of all heavenly things in Christ, is the statement that earthly things were included also in the great design. "... in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth ..." (Col. 1 ; 16).

Between the times when the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm were created, and the purposed "heading-up" of all in Christ, will take place, a state of sin had entered into the midst of these heavenly ranks. Lucifer, Son of the Morning, rebelled against his Lord, and introduced this condition of sin. At a later time, other angels, about whose rank we have no knowledge, left their own angelic estate and debased themselves to live among fallen men. Over and above the lustful sinfulness of their purpose in marrying themselves into the human race, the act of leaving their own estate was a sin—a rebellion against an ordinance of God. Sin thus invaded the heavenly sphere, and brought discord into that higher realm. The elimination of this state of sin awaits the day when the great Deliverer can begin his reconciling work.

The rebellious angels have been under long restraint, and it may be assumed that such as have been moved to repentance for their sin will have endured their chains of darkness with resignation and humility. They were not condemned to die, and become unconscious in the tomb, but were sentenced to confinement through the ages then to run till the Day of Judgment should be come (Jude 6 ; 1, Pet. 3 ; 19). This long confinement will constitute expiation for their sin, if in that later day they are ready to return to a state of obedience and righteousness.

Man was condemned to death—to enter upon an unconscious state, and to remain thus unconscious forever, unless redeemed by a substitute. A state of sin became predominant over man—so that Paul says "sin reigned"

(Rom. 5 ; 21)—all men being made subject to its rule. Additionally, "death" has "reigned," (Rom. 5 ; 14, 17 ; 21). On the earth, therefore, there have been sinful men—sinful men who were also dying men—men bound with a double chain, neither of which man himself could ever hope to break. These chains were imposed upon man's soul in pursuance of a decree of eternal law. Being imposed by law, they could be removed only in accordance with law—by the provision before that law of a Substitute to take the place of the man whose life was taken away as forfeit for his sin.

Among all the great things foreseen in pre-mundane times by the Great Architect of the Universe, was the actuality and reality of this present reign of Sin and Death. No escape has been possible for any man from the stark realism of this actual matter-of-fact experience. It has prevailed everywhere since man fell, in every land and century, affecting high and low, rich and poor, cultured and untaught alike.

But the same Great Architect purposed a full Redemption from this state of sin, for both angels and men. Angels would expiate their own sins, by a long term of imprisonment, but would need a deliverer to open for them their prison door, and afterwards restore and reintroduce them into the company of the ever pure and holy and loyal hosts of the heavenly courts. He who will deliver them has learned to be compassionate and sympathetic to sinners, wherever found, providing the sinners show contrition for their sin, and are desirous of becoming reconciled to God. To obtain this compassionate and sympathetic heart, cost the Deliverer His life's blood on earth—where He was made perfect in love by His suffering.

Thus, even angels, fallen into sin, may profit by the blood of His Cross—and be reconciled to God through His emancipating work (Col. 1 ; 19, 20, Jude 6, 1 Cor. 6 ; 3). With man, the circumstances were otherwise. His sentence had no "until" clause included therein. It was a sentence of death—full and absolute—"dying, thou shalt die"—the full and complete cessation of life in every sense.

Once it is admitted that the Custodian of Divine Law had every right to fix whatever punishment was just,

adequate and equitable as penalty for human transgression (and this must be admitted without question), then, because that punishment was in itself intrinsically just, it must stand for all time. Once imposed, the sentence could not be revoked or recalled, nor admitted to be too exacting or too severe. Any interference therewith would imply that it had not been a "just" sentence, and ought not, in the first place, to have been imposed. That is not to say that the actual transgressor must of necessity bear the penalty himself for all time, but should some system of substitution be introduced, it would be absolutely imperative that the substitute should itself bear that punishment for all time.

These observations foregoing imply that it was within God's province to fix such punishment as was just, adequate and right, as penalty for Adam's Sin, without consulting Adam about it, simply because the world was God's own world, and Adam's entry into it, and his continuance in it, was entirely a matter of God's good pleasure, and not of Adam's own personal right, and, furthermore, if God allowed or accepted (or prepared) any system of substitution whereby another took the sinner's place, and bore the sinner's punishment, it was not because the sentence was unjust, or too severe, or too exacting. On the contrary the system of substitution could only be introduced because the punishment was just—infallibly and inerrantly just—and therefore could not be reversed, or nullified, or rendered void.

The eternal and absolute principles of Divine Government were involved in Adam's trial and judgment. Not only was Adam, as a man, under test, but God also, as Ruler of the Universe, was under test. A demonstration for all time, and for all worlds, was needed that Divine Righteousness could not depart from the strict, exact and absolute balance of the scales in weighing up the factors of a correct relationship between any rational intelligent creature and his God. Should the scales tilt too little or too much towards the creature, according him too little or too much credit for his works or responses, those emblems of Justice would forever be discredited and regarded as faulty and untrustworthy.

Never before in the annals of Creative work had that

demonstration been staged for heaven and earth to witness and understand. Never before had God placed Himself at such disposal to be judged and tested by the creatures He had made. Never before had such vast issues centred in the experiences attendant upon such a test.

If, after Adam had sinned, a too-lenient Love had overridden or superseded the prerogatives of strict unswerving Justice as the basis of relationship between Creator-Judge, and the sinning creature, Righteousness as a world factor would have ceased to be. Love would have been giving "more credit" than was deserved. An over-doting Creator, like an over-doting man, would have failed to make proper recognition of his children's faults, and would thereby have invited eternal petulance into His nursery. What had been condoned once, could be condoned again, and if petulance had won condonation yesterday, it could win it to-day and to-morrow and for eternity.

To lavish the kisses of a too-lenient Love, and thus withhold the administration of the righteous "rod" would mean that Supreme Authority could be defied, without fear at any time of ill-consequence. Authority defied, would mean peace and harmony for evermore disturbed. The petulance of the creature could always presume upon the leniency of the Creator, and thus control and dominate the universal nursery by his contumacy. Thus the creature, not the Creator, would "call the tune," and caprice, not righteousness, would become the ruling principle of the world.

God did not fail in this supreme test. Even though an intense love for the fallen creature welled up in the Creator's heart, it was held in leash so that righteousness might rule and prevail. Under just test man had failed, and a just sentence must follow and prevail. Had Love, not Justice, then prevailed, God might have rubbed the record clean and forgiven unconditionally the sin. Then the Logos need not have left His heavenly home to become poor on earth, or have suffered one single pang of loneliness or pain. He could have remained at His Father's right hand, and watched Him make forgiveness again and yet again ten thousand thousand times.

But Justice took control, and judicial sentence was passed, and the descent of the Son of God to earth became inevitable. Justice, not lenient Love, made the death of Christ a certainty. Contrariwise, the death of Jesus is proof incontestable that Justice ruled the day when Adam fell. God did not forgive the sin in Adam's day. He has not forgiven it since. It will not be forgiven to the end of time. God condemned the sin, and that condemnation must stand for evermore. The penalty that then befell must remain unremoved through all the endless rounds of time. The sinner himself (or a substitute) must continue subject to that penalty worlds without end.

Only thus could impartial Justice be established and maintained. Only thus could Justice be satisfied. Only thus could demonstration be made, under test, that the Judge was strictly "just," and would remain for ever "just"! Only thus could Divine Wisdom prove man's trial "just"! Three great incontrovertible facts emerge therefore from that time of supreme test—first, the trial of Adam was "just"; second, the sentence was "just"; and third, the Judge was "just"! These things are the sunken socket-stones on which the Plan of God is built. Everywhere, in heaven and earth, throughout all future time, angels and men will recognise the Most High God as immovably Just and True—a God whose word is dependable and trustworthy, without trace or shadow of changeability. Even though it cost Him pain, and the sacrifice of the dearest treasure of His heart, He will not swerve from the absolute uprightness and downrightness of Righteousness. Heaven and earth will know that He is trustworthy to the end. The over-leniency of Love at that fateful time would have opened the doors to countless thousands of such episodes, with petulance and presumption and sin continuing evermore; the strict impartial administration of unbending Justice closed those doors for evermore, and barred and bolted them beyond possibility of swinging open again. But there is more to say than that. It does not say that though the penalty is irremovable, the man who sinned must for ever bear that penalty. God had arranged another way. He had provided a Lamb, before

the world was made, who would bear that penalty (1 Pet. 1; 19-20).

In some rare cases a judge has known that the just sentence which, in the performance of his duty, he must impose for an offence, has been more than the offender could meet or bear, and has himself discharged, from his own resources, the prisoner's liability. Here is justice at its very best, and throws some faint light on the actions of the Great Judge of Heaven and Earth. The claims of Law required that Justice should be done. Thenceforward in any act that may follow, prompted by mercy or love, it has nothing more to say. The Judge may afterwards do as He will.

The Heavenly Judge, knowing in advance that the just sentence He must impose for human sin was more than the man could bear (except by permitting him to remain eternally dead), not only proceeded right on to impose that penalty, but proceeded also forthwith to prepare to pay for man the price which man himself could not pay. The claims of Universal and Eternal Love required that Justice must be done—after that it leaves God free to do what He will.

To meet the claims of Justice, God sent down His Son to the earth. Being there found in fashion as a man, the Lamb of God humbled Himself to death, that thus He might bear man's penalty. Voluntarily He took the sinner's place, substituting Himself and His unsullied life for the sinner's own soul, and bearing in and upon Himself in His own person the actual sinner's doom. He had come from God, as God's own possession (Acts 20; 28) to satisfy the claims of eternal and immutable Law by offering His perfect human soul (His sinless flesh and unforfeited life) as compensation to the Judiciary of the Law—a value to correspond, like for like—for the intrinsic value of that human soul that had been overwhelmed by sin, and disintegrated in death. That substituted perfect human soul, which had not known sin, must thenceforth remain eternally in death as forfeit for Adam's wilful sin. But Adam will become free from that penalty when the Great Judge makes the transaction absolute and irrevocable.

Here the balanced equation is simple and direct. It is the substitution and exchange of "a life for a life." One

man only failed under test, and fell into sin, and became subject to the penalty. Judicially, death seized upon him at the moment the penalty was pronounced. In the day of his sin, Adam's opportunity to live was taken away. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2; 17). His days thereafter were but "waiting days"—comparable to the three clear Sundays allowed under English law before execution takes place.

No child of Adam was involved directly with him in that test. Hence none of his progeny were sentenced exactly as he was sentenced for his fall. Only Adam was directly convicted for sin. And only one sin was charged against him by the law. One man's one sin brought judicial sentence upon the sinner's head. And that one man's single sin cost the Son of God (and thus cost God) the surrender of His sinless Life. But God paid the "bill"—and gave over His beloved Son to death. Thus a basic principle of Divine Law—A LIFE FOR A LIFE—was exemplified and established by the Most High as a precedent for all time.

But even that is not the whole story. Adam's children, born from a fallen father, were born in a state of sin. No one of them was ever put under personal test, nor for centuries was any ever charged with sin. No further sentence was imposed. Yet they all died like their fallen father did. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression" (Rom. 5; 14). Death, in all these generations came by inheritance from their father, rather than by sentence from the judicial bench. Cut off from contact with the high source of Life upon the Heavenly Throne, the foods of the earth were in themselves insufficient to maintain the necessary balance of waste and repair in the human body, and slow decay began to operate in their bodies, with death as the logical consequence when the vital force was spent. Pending the further development of His plan, God abandoned Adam's children to their hereditary fate. Morally they followed in their father's steps, and were in a state unacceptable to God—in a state when the great Laws of Heaven and Earth condemned, yet God did not charge them specifically with sin (Rom. 5; 13). For centuries God permitted

them to reproduce themselves, living their lives as best pleased themselves, and though God had given them some ground for future hope, He did but little to help them in their sad estate, or lift them from the pit of depravity.

Many centuries passed—from Adam to Moses—without change. Then a local change was introduced. God called a people for a purpose and placed them under an adapted form of His Great Law. Offences began to abound, and Sin began to be charged up again. "Many offences" occurred among the "called" people, and though the blood of bulls and goats was shed from year to year, it never took away their sins. Those sins have remained to be taken away under the terms of a New Covenant (Heb. 9; 15).

Again an equation will be instituted. The "righteousness" of "One" will be made to stand over against "unrighteousness" of the "many" who sinned. "Many men's many offences" will be compensated by One man's justifying (or compensating) righteousness. The equation now is "Righteousness for unrighteousness." "He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5; 21).

This is an experience intended for those to whom God had imputed Sin—that is, His called and chosen people. The wider world was not charged with sin, even though blemished and faulty in all their works. Their faults God will overlook (Acts 17; 31, Acts 14; 16), and in the appointed day will call them to turn again, and walk in His way.

To satisfy the claims of His Great Law, God has provided "A Life for a Life," to compensate for the first great sin in Eden days, and "Righteousness for unrighteousness" to compensate for the many offences of many men, against whom He has (since Moses' day) imputed sin.

It is asked how a differentiation between Life and Righteousness can be introduced in working out these corresponding values? Well, think of Lucifer, the prince of the power of the Air! Lucifer has lost his righteousness, but not his life! The fallen angels lost their righteousness but not their lives, and some of them, if penitent, and desirous of reconciliation in their Judg-

ment day, will never lose their lives. On the other hand, they will recover what they lost and become righteous again.

Contrariwise, Jesus surrendered life as a sacrifice, but the righteousness of His unblemished activities remained as an unextinguishable credit to His Name. Neither the Great Law nor the administration of that Law could ever say He had done one discreditable act. His righteousness could have been extinguished by sin, but never at any time by Sacrifice.

That credit of righteousness is a fund of virtue (a deposit in the bank—if you will) which may be placed over against need, thus affording the bankrupt, who cannot pay his dues, relief from his disabilities and liabilities.

When, therefore, we read of the "blood of His Cross" and of "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" in this Ephesian and Colossian catalogue of great truths, we are to think of all the experiences which the pre-eminent Son of God had to pass through to prepare for the final heading-up of all things in Heaven and Earth.

He had to leave His high estate and come to earth. He had to surrender His unblemished life to redeem the life of rebellious man. He had to place His assets of righteousness at God's disposal for the assistance of defaulting sinners to enable them to stand in the presence of God's Law. And He had to learn, under the adverse circumstances of life amid a world of sinners to be compassionate and considerate of all, angels or men, who had gone "out of the way."

Truly, then, the effects of His Cross upon angels and men is great beyond calculation, and its truth worthy to rank with the greatest thoughts of Paul's prison days. No wonder Paul could say that his boast was in the Cross of Christ his Lord. And surely, brethren in the Lord, it is your boast and mine, every day and in every way.

**"In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."**

(Notes continued from front cover)

the heart much more than food for the head, and many of whom have built their Christian faith-structure on a doctrinal foundation well and truly laid in past days and which they have proved to be the minister of God to them for good.

So we shall go on, while the Master gives us strength and opportunity, holding with that grand ideal so well expressed by the Apostle Paul:—

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"—Eph. 4: 12-13.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Gone from us. Sister Gertrude Medcalfe, of Blackpool, and late of Manchester, passed to her rest on 21st June after a painful illness. Our sister had rejoiced in "Present Truth" for forty years and has now gone to meet the Lord she loved so well. The sympathy of many will go out to her daughter, Sister Dorothy, together with the prayer that the God of comfort may be very near.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

On and after 18th September, 1944, the central address of the Committee will be changed from 20 Sunnymede Drive to:

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NOTES

The exigencies of the present situation have compelled the removal of the office to Leicester, and the curtailment of the lesser essential activities of the Committee. We have postponed this step until it became evident that it could be no longer delayed, and now that it has taken place we feel that the friends will willingly endeavour to fall into line with the new arrangements. The Book-room will be carried on as heretofore, although we shall no longer be able to undertake the many little special commissions, such as securing copies of works out of print or difficult to obtain, and in fact shall not be able to supply any book save those which appear on our list. Subscriptions for the B.S.M., the Herald and the Dawn will still be taken, and of course we hope that the Benevolent Fund will continue its work. Whilst the present emergency lasts we shall endeavour to serve the friends within these limits to the best of our ability, and in this connection we feel sure that the many little printed slips we send in reply to letters and enquiries will be received just as though they were indeed personally dictated letters. We must take advantage of every possible means of lessening office work, and since the typing of many letters has now become virtually impossible our only solution is to have printed slips dealing with all the usual matters, and to use these as required. Rest assured, brethren, that every time our Treasurer or Secretary or other office helper sends you one or another of those slips their thoughts are with you, and there is a consciousness of a bond between us which shall grow ever more full of meaning as we together progress into this dark night of trouble. A day will come, and may it come soon, when all the mechanical aids to quick interchange of thought and word will be swept away, in that glorious reality to be our portion beyond the veil, when we all, with unflurried minds, can enter with leisure into the fellowship which is to be ours to all eternity. It is for that day we look, for we know that then, and not until then, will this world be set on the way to true peace and reconstruction. So let us hold fast, patient and yet zealous, until "that which is perfect is come."

Destroyers of the Sanctuary

A plea for sanctified common-sense.

"A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees; but now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers."
(Psa. 74; 5-6.)

The sublime lament which is Psalm 74 might very well have been composed in Babylon at the time of the captivity. It seems clearly to refer to the destruction of Solomon's Temple. There is no event in Israel's earlier history to which the words can be made to fit. The Psalmist laments the destruction of the Divine Sanctuary by fire, its profanation by pagan symbols, and concludes on the despairing note, "we see not our signs; there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long." And as he looks around him at the ruined house of prayer and calls to mind its former glories, he breaks out into the bitter reflection just quoted. In the days when this Temple was built men achieved honour and glory by virtue of their labours upon the great cedars and stately olives which were cut down and shaped to their uses in this house; but now fame and reward is to him who leads his comrades in the work of destruction. "Ichabod" has been written over the portal of God's house on Mount Moriah, and the glory has departed.

What would have been the thoughts of those men who hewed the timbers for the Temple, had they known that in generations to come their great work would become the prey of the invader, suffering total destruction at the hands of God's enemies? I Kings 5 tells of their labours. King Solomon, writing to his friend Hiram, King of Tyre, who had jurisdiction over the forests of Lebanon, said, "Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants; . . . for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like the Sidonians . . . So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to his desire . . . and Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and four-

score thousand in the mountains . . . so they prepared timber and stones to build the house." What a mighty work this must have been; this felling and transporting of the cedars and firs of Lebanon to Jerusalem that the House of God might be built!

I Kings 6 tells of the building and of how these great quantities of precious timbers were utilised. "He built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling; and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir . . . and the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers; there was no stone seen . . . and within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits (about eighteen feet) high . . . and he overlaid the cherubims with gold; and he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without . . . And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree . . . and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold . . . and the two doors were of fir tree . . . and he carved thereon cherubim and palm trees and open flowers; and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work" (vs. 15-35).

This was the carved work which those later despoilers attacked with their axes and hammers. Caring nothing for the patient loving labours of those who in times gone by had given their lives' best endeavours to creating these beautiful things for the glory of God, that His people might worship Him in the beauty of holiness, they wantonly destroyed that which they had neither capacity to create nor ability to appreciate: and the world was the poorer for their action.

Have we not here a vivid picture—almost a parable—for our own day? We, too, in this time of frustration and disappointment lament the bygone days when men were famous according as they had lifted up axes upon the thick trees, the great foundation principles of the Word of God. We remember how they brought them unto Zion with songs and rejoicing, and shaped them into walls and floors and ceilings for the house of prayer that was being built. We recall with a tightening of

the heart strings how the carved work was put into place and a place of worship, of fellowship and of service was prepared into which those who were unsatisfied by the old theologies could enter, and rejoice in a new and larger hope for all mankind. The simple gladness and enthusiastic zeal of those earlier days is traditional amongst us.

One can trace an analogy between that Temple of Solomon's day and this work in the end of the Gospel Age which has meant so much to a great number of devoted saintly ones. One thinks of the floor of fir, a symbol of everlasting life because of its evergreen nature. Here is the ground on which we stand. As we enter this temple we enter upon eternal life. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "Whosoever believeth on me hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Upon every side were the enclosing walls of cedar, according to Lev. 14 one of the constituents in the ceremonial cleansing of leprosy; and leprosy is a symbol of sin. So, in our temple, there is that all around which cleanses from sin. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." The doors into the sanctuary, made of olive wood, bring to the mind thoughts of the "way in" to God's purposes and to communion with Him—access by Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared . . . but God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit." So do the olive wood doors swing open, revealing to us somewhat of the glories which lie beyond.

And what shall we say of the cherubim, the attributes of God? Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power appear before us revealed in all their beauty and magnificence. Surely they were not so seen before our minds were enlightened by that knowledge of the Divine Plan which came to us primarily by the labours of one who undoubtedly did wield axes upon the thick trees? Now we see them, alternating with the carved palm trees, reminding us of the righteous man who shall flourish like a palm tree (Psa. 92; 12-14) in his growth to the full stature of a man in Christ (Eph. 4; 11-13). Between

the cherubim and the palm trees, above and around, wrought into a score of graceful patterns, were the open flowers—probably lilies and pomegranates—fit symbols surely of the many precious promises of the Word; all flowers, all "open" for our enjoyment, means of the bringing forth of "much fruit." We can see a picture of our coming to know God in the cherubim; of our growth in grace and Christ-likeness in the palm-trees; and our reception of the precious promises and the bringing forth of much fruit in the open flowers. And this is the "carved work" which unthinking brethren in our own day set out to break down with axes and with hammers!

Make no mistake about it. The picture is very exact. In their heedless zeal many have done grave harm to the cause they espouse and disservice to the Lord they love. Brethren have set out to shatter the faith of others in fondly-held beliefs—often in matters of little or no importance—on the plea of "walking in the light" and in the endeavour to substitute other and allegedly better conclusions. All too often the new belief is no nearer to ultimate truth, and sometimes is a good deal farther away from it, and some devoted disciple's joy and faith in his belief has been taken away to no purpose. Let us then consider carefully what we are about before we apply our own little hammer to the carved work of the Temple.

To adorn and extend the Temple is not the same thing as breaking down the structure already erected by men of faith in times gone by. It is always our privilege and responsibility to bring forth out of the storehouse "things new and old" for the household of faith according to our ability. Every generation between Solomon and the Captivity did something to increase the beauty and majesty of the Temple at Jerusalem. Rich and poor, young and old, made their contribution according to their means, and the building which was eventually destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers was at that time in every respect more impressive and glorious than it was at King Solomon's ceremony of dedication. So must we ever be zealous to add to the edifice of truth which we have inherited, but always with remembrance of the purpose for which truth is given to us, "for the perfecting of the

saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4; 12). We need to add our contributions with care, that they may be helpful, encouraging, spiritually uplifting, to those to whom we minister, and not on the contrary deprive them of the confidence and faith which formerly they enjoyed.

"But surely," says one iconoclast (which word means "destroyer of idols"), "if a belief is error, it is better to expose it, whatever the consequences. Error never sanctifies; truth alone sanctifies."

How often is that old tag repeated! And none of us has ever yet attained to the full truth on any subject! Like Paul, we know only in part, and cannot hope to know in full until we are beyond the veil. And so, whatever truth we hold, it must be to some extent tinged with "error"—to some extent an inaccurate definition of that truth. Our aim and object should be to constantly advance to an increasingly accurate understanding of the truth.

"Well, that is what I mean," says the iconoclast.

Unfortunately, that is not what he really means. If he was honest with himself he would admit that what he really means is something like this: "I am convinced that this particular view of this particular doctrine is truth. **Therefore**, any other view of it must be error. **Therefore**, anyone holding a view different from mine must be in error. **Therefore**, since error does not sanctify and truth does, I must first destroy their faith in their belief, and then, if possible, get them to accept my own." And so saying, he picks up his axe and hammer and goes out to destroy some carved work.

We need to read and re-read, often, the little verse which appears on the title page of "Poems of Dawn."

A bending staff I would not break,
A feeble faith I would not shake,
Nor even rudely pluck away
The **error** which some truth may stay,
Whose sudden loss might leave without
A shield against the shafts of doubt."

How plain it is that the whole purpose of our insight into Scriptural doctrine and prophecy is that we might encourage and build up one another therewith. Unless it fulfils this function it is useless to us. Unless our

knowledge is used to edification we are better off without the knowledge. And yet it is also very, very true that "Where there is no vision, the people perish." "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Prov. 29 : 18, Hos. 4 : 6). Let us, therefore, each one of us, holding in grateful remembrance the labours of those who in past time lifted up axes upon the thick trees, treasure also the carved work they set up in the sanctuary. Even if some of it is becoming a little antique, not in accord with the best modern taste, let us recognise that it still gives joy to some ; let us refrain from destroying it with our axes and hammers. We shall find one chapel in the sanctuary where we can make our own contribution to the carved work and add to the total store of the treasures wherewith God is honoured.

We are the inheritors of a rich tradition. Other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labours. In the spirit of One Who made us members of Himself, members who do not all have the same office, let us seek not our own, but each others' good. Let us be careful and reverent in the use of the revelation which our God has given to us. So shall we be His disciples.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

(Concluded from last issue)

Our third point is "The Fellowship of the Mystery." We began to know Christ by being baptised into the one body and being made to drink that one Spirit gradually revealing in us that one life—the life of the Father, so being enabled to enter into the fellowship of the Mystery.

There is a wonderful fellowship existing in the human body amongst its members. It is (a) a fellowship of sympathy, and it is (b) a fellowship of administration. It is a fellowship of sympathy prompting the members to have "the same care one for another, and where one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and where one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it," and it is a fellowship of administration, because of the performances of the functions of the body, "one member cannot say to another, I have no need of thee,"

not even the head to the feet. "Nay, much more these members that seem to be feeble are necessary."

In the Body of Christ this same fellowship exists : "Now ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular."

(A) A Fellowship of Sympathy. There is a fellowship of sympathy among the members of Christ, because they are animated by the One Spirit. It is not that they as human beings have anything in common with each other that calls for fellowship. Such fellowship would not be the fellowship of the Mystery. The fellowship of the Mystery is the fellowship of the Christ-life—"The fellowship of the Spirit" ; and as that one Spirit controlling the one Christ is the Spirit of the Father, and as the Christ-life is the life of the Father in the Christ, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." This is the fellowship of the Mystery. It is the Christ-life in each member involuntarily uniting and blending in heavenly communion with the Christ-life in each other member. As in the natural body, the intelligent centre of the whole system of nerves resides in the head, and the members are in communication with each other, not directly, but because all communicate with the head, and are controlled by the one spirit of life. So also with Christ. There is nothing of the flesh in such fellowship. It is not the fellowship of the natural life, but the fellowship of the Christ-life. "Henceforth do we esteem no man on account of flesh," Paul says. "We are now a New Creation in Christ Jesus called to fellowship in the Spirit."

O how pure and spiritual is the Apostle's definition of Christian fellowship ! "With the Father and with the Son" ! Surely our heart's desire is for a deeper realisation of the Christ-life, a fuller impartation of the life of the Father, that thus it may be the Father and the Son, dwelling in us, fellowshiping through us with those of kindred minds. Yes, even though this fellowship in the knowledge of the Father involves crucifixion and suffering, how sweet are the sufferings of the cross with such a glorious outcome in view. That is what makes the fellowship of the Mystery so hallowed and fragrant, because it is consecrated with the sufferings of the Cross.

**" Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaints,
How sweet to my soul is communion of saints,
Sweet bonds that unite all the children of peace,
And thrice blessed Jesus, whose love cannot cease."**

No wonder that Paul cried: "That I might know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings." And with earnest solicitude for his fellow members he expressed the same desire for them, that the Christ-life might abound in them so richly that the fellowship of that Christ-life might also abound. "If, therefore, there be any comfort in Christ, if any soothing of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any sympathies and compassions, fulfil ye my joy that ye may think the same thing, having the same love, united in soul, minding the one thing." This same solicitude was the central theme of our Lord's great prayer: "That they may be one in us." "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son," a fellowship which, established here below, and increasing and abounding as God richly dwells within, will endure unto the ages of eternity.

(B) The fellowship of the mystery is also a fellowship of administration. In what way a fellowship of administration? Can it be that in the administering of the affairs of the Christ every member is necessary? That is just the Apostle's thought. "Now ye are the Body of the Christ and members in particular, and one member cannot say to another member, 'I have no need of thee.'" Even the head cannot say to the foot, "I have no need of thee." Of course, the head is the all-important member. If there were no head, there could be no body, the body could exist without a hand or a foot, but certainly not without the head. But for the full expression of life every member, every joint, is necessary. So also with Christ. In our great Head all the fulness dwells, and yet, according to God's arrangement, the Church, which is Christ's Body, has its necessary functions to perform in the full expression of the Christ-life, the life of God.

Paul expressed the matter from two stand-points. He tells us that in Christ is embodied all the fulness of Deity. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in Him"; or as the Diaglott puts it, "filled by Him." Yet in Ephesians 1:23, he

styles the Church "the full development of Him who filleth all in all." What does the Apostle mean? Jesus Himself gives us an illustration. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it live, it bringeth forth much fruit." The "much fruit" owes all its prospects to that one corn of wheat. Possibilities of bread inherent in the one corn of wheat. That one corn of wheat is not of itself a harvest. The "much fruit" is the full development of that corn of wheat, and indispensable if it would realise its possibilities. So also with Christ. Our all is in Him, as He declared: "Without Me (or severed from Me) you can do nothing." The hand is of no use severed from the body; it will simply corrupt. Jesus illustrated this well in His picture of the vine: "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me. If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered." The life is in the vine, and only in the vital union with the vine can the branch bear fruit. And yet in this same picture we have a seed thought for the Apostle's other declaration that the Church is the full development of the Christ. It is the branches that bear the fruit. True, the fruit is not their own but the fruit of the vine, for the life in the branches is the life of the vine, yet in order that the vine may express its life fully in fruit-bearing, the branches have their part to play. Now, there is no room to glory in this thought. The branch is only a channel for the expressing of the one life, not a life of its own, but the life of the vine. And the member of the Body of Christ is only a channel for the expressing of the one life, not a life of his own that he is living in the power of the Spirit: "I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me"—and so of the Christ, it is not because of any inherent value in any member. It is simply the extended operation of the Christ life that makes the Church, which is His Body, "the full development of Him that filleth all in all."

What does the Apostle mean: "Him that filleth all in all"? Who is this "all in all" that Christ fills? Oh, how wonderfully the Apostle's thought widens out here! As the planets all revolve round the sun, and the sun in its turn, with its train of planets, revolves

round a still greater centre, so also in the administration of the mystery. As the Church, those "stars in glory" find in Christ the Son of righteousness, their centre of attraction, so Christ and His heavenly train with one accord acknowledge the superior attraction of the great centre of the universe—"the sweet influence of Pleiades"—JEHOVAH Himself; for as the Head of the Church is Christ, so the Head of the Christ is God.

As with Christ in relation to His members, in Him all the fulness dwells because He is our life and we are nothing of ourselves; so with God in His relation to the Christ as a whole, Jesus confessed: "Of Mine own self I can do nothing." "The words I speak unto you I speak not of Myself but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." It is the Great Jehovah who is dwelling in Christ, and it is His Divine life that is being manifest in the Christ; and yet, according to the administering of the Mystery, God chooses the medium of the Christ for the full revelation of His glorious Divine life. The full and varied expression of His Divine life and character is manifest as never before in the Christ, His Divine family. And yet, that Divine life is not of the Christ but of God, and that Divine likeness is not the work of the Christ, but of that God that dwells in the Christ—"We are His workmanship," and because that one Spirit uniting all the members of Christ is the Holy Spirit of the Father—"God is all in all." After all, it is not even the vine to which ultimately redeems the glory of the fruit, but the husbandman. "Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." As the Apostle declares: "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." (Eph. 3; 22.)

(4) And now we come to our last point. "The unsearchable riches of Christ," and we would suggest that these words correspond to the Apostle's expression in Col. 1; 27. "The riches of the glory of the Mystery," or as the Diaglott puts it, "The glorious wealth of the Mystery."

"Christ in you" is the Mystery, Paul says, but the glorious wealth of the "Mystery" lies in the fact of its being "the hope of glory." Glory to whom? In the first place glory to God. "Christ in you" is the "hope

of glory" to God, the grand prelude to that great anthem of praise which will yet ring through the vaults of heaven and find an echo in the hearts of men below; "Glory to God in the Highest." Yes, the object of the Mystery is Glory to God. Surely, "Praise waits for Thee in Zion, Lord," the praise of countless throngs in heaven and on earth who are waiting till God shall make Himself known in Zion. Whilst in this age God has made Himself known to the members in the Christ, it has only been to the members of Christ. But when in the glorified Christ He reveals Himself to man and "times of refreshing come from His presence," "streams of life to gladden earth," then, "Who shall not worship Thee, O Lord."

"Christ in you" is also "the hope of glory," for the members of Christ. Our lot even now, indeed, is enriched beyond measure. Truly, "God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ." Christ is our life, and surely the realisation of the Christ-life transcends all human understanding—a knowledge in the mystery. But "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear then shall we appear with Him, in glory." That is the glorious wealth of the mystery. "A hidden life and in the end glory to crown it all." Again, what could be stronger than the ties of love and fellowship binding us to the Father and to our Lord even here.

"O wondrous love, what joy is mine to know that I am truly Thine.

O the rich depths of love Divine, of grace a boundless store;

Dear Saviour, since I'm owned as Thine, I cannot wish for more."

Such words are expressive of the fellowship of the Mystery. "With the Father and with His Son," which we experience even here below. As the Apostle says, "Whom not having seen, we love, in whom, though now we see them not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory," rejoicing in hope of our glorious home. The fellowship of the Mystery, brought to fruition in glory, is "the wealth of the mystery," for as the hymn puts it again,

**" Though having Thy presence wherever I roam,
I long to behold Thee in glory my home,
O glorious hope of heavenly love,
It lifts me up to things above,
It bears on eagles' wings."**

What a glorious hope is ours. We are living for eternity, waiting till the Father's Spirit shall have finished its great work in us, waiting to be called home to enter into the joys of our Lord.

**" When on Thine own image in me Thou hast smiled,
Within Thy blest mansion, and when
The arms of My Father encircle His child,
O I shall be satisfied then."**

XXXXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXXXX

ONE OF THE MASTER'S BLESSEDS.

" Blessed are they that mourn ! " Earth regards suffering as a misfortune. The world pities those who are called to endure sorrow. The condition of mourning is one from which men shrink. But in the Kingdom of Heaven those are the favoured ones who are called to suffer. Instead of being the unfortunate, they are the blessed.

The same teaching runs through all the New Testament. Affliction is not a mark of the Divine disfavour, but a token of Divine love. " Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Instead of being hurtful to the life, working harm and marring, trial promotes the cleansing of the heart and the enrichment of the character. " No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

The secret of this strange teaching is revealed in the second part of the beatitude. Why are they who mourn blessed ? It is because they shall be comforted. It is not in the mourning that the blessedness lies, but in the comfort which comes to those who mourn. Sorrow in itself is not a blessing. Sickness, pain, affliction, trial, are not favours in themselves. These experiences can be

nothing else but hard and bitter. It is only in their fruits that the blessing comes.

—J. R. Miller

" The whole earth is full of His glory " (Isa. 6 ; 3)

Nature is but a name for an effect
Whose cause is God. Not a flower but shows some touch
in freckle, streak or stain
Of His unrivalled pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours and imparts their hues.

—W. Cowper

**The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him
(Deut. 33 ; 12).**

I am safe in God's keeping. I can find no other real safety, but this is surely mine. God has not promised to keep me from disaster, but He has promised that if disaster come, in whatever form, I shall not be overwhelmed. He has told me that no foe can touch the innermost life of my soul. I am not to be afraid even of them that kill the body. My real life they cannot destroy. There is an inner fortress whose gates they cannot pass.

" WHOM LOVE HATH TAKEN AWAY "

One day we shall slip away from these scenes of earth. Our eyes will close on all familiar things. Next moment they will open on the unveiled face of Christ. We shall see Him as He is, and shall be made like Him, and shall be satisfied, with no more unfulfilled yearnings or desires.

FRAGRANCE

In a certain valley in Rumania there is a most beautiful garden containing nothing but roses. When the season is at its height, the perfume is such that if you visit the garden, and come back to the city, people know at once where you have been. You carry the fragrance with you.

Is it not, then, as true, if we frequent the presence of God, delighting in the glory, and excellencies of Christ, we may come back to the city and shed the fragrance of His presence around.

THE QUESTION BOX

Q.—If death entered the world as the result of Adam's sin, which we have understood to include the animals, how are we to understand death prior to this, evidence of which is found in the remains of prehistoric creatures?

A.—The Scriptures do not indicate that at any time the brute creation was not subject to death. It is the glory of man that he was made in the image and likeness of God, capable of everlasting life, but this is not true of any lower creature. The animal creation, like the vegetable creation, which also has life, is part of the environment which God has made for man, and every living creature down to the tiniest manifestation of life, has its part to play in the world, and, having played it, concludes its ordained span of existence. The life and death of successive generations of plant and animal species is necessary to the continuance of the conditions which make human life possible upon earth. It is quite evident that throughout the whole history of life on earth, prior to the creation of mankind, death was normal to all living creatures, and there is no evidence and no reason for supposing that there was any change at the time of man's own sinlessness in Eden. Neither is it to be expected that there will be any change in the "Ages of Glory" when the human race will have become possessed of everlasting life. The only respect in which the brute creation became involved in the death sentence, or rather in its effects, is the fact that man, by his fall from sinlessness, lost his power of control over the lower creation, and in consequence that creation "fell into disorder" as it has been aptly expressed. Those powers of control will be regained under the Millennial reign of Christ and just as men will then control and mould the earth's natural resources for the happiness and well-being of all, so will they control the lower living creation to the end that every creature fulfils an essential, useful and constructive function in the earth, but does not become the cause of destruction, pain or fear, or any other evil thing. It is reasonable to expect that the great carnivorous beasts such as lions and tigers will either become extinct, as did the giant reptiles of prehistoric

ages, or change their habits and become plant feeders. The latter is at any rate expressly predicted in Scriptures of some of them ("the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox," Isa. 11; 7). How far down the scale of life this will be carried it is impossible in our present state of knowledge to say; so far as men know at present the world would speedily become uninhabitable if, for example, certain forms of insect life were not kept within bounds by birds and small mammals. We may, however, conclude that the continued operation of death among the lower animals will not be accompanied by pain or distress, or anything else that is out of harmony with the peace and order of the Kingdom.

† Redemption through His Blood

— A Word on Eph. 1; 7

There is at least one strand of thought running through these first verses of Ephesians which no enthusiastic student of the prison epistles can claim to be a new exclusive feature of Truth. Although Paul's detention under arrest had afforded him more time to think and reflect, his words explanatory of redemption through the precious blood reveal but little expansion or development over the thoughts of his earlier days. From his very earliest missionary days he taught the great theme orally, and in his earliest writings it is also to be found. Redemption, based on the death and resurrection of his beloved Lord, was the scarlet strand which he wove into and out of every theme, for indeed to him it was always the prime essential foundation for everything else that had followed. Moreover, when he wanted to prove the verity of God's abounding love—the fountain of all grace—he does so by stating that the death of Jesus was its full and final proof (Rom. 5; 8).

Here, now, among these towering mountain-peaks of truth, he brings it in again, and says, "In who (the Beloved) we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace . . ." That is great doctrine; worthy to rank

with any feature of Divine Truth. To say the least, this sacred theme provides a connecting link between those earlier days of intensive missionary activity, when unceasing service crowded out opportunity to ponder and reflect, and the later restricted days when, though the body was in chains, the mind was free to soar aloft to greater heights, and range abroad over the fields of time from pre-creation days to the coming sinless days when God will be all-in-all, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. This interlinking truth shows that the higher flights of those prison days were not the statements of exclusively new truths, except in the same sense that a fully blooming rose is a new flower. The delicacy of its tints; the perfection of its form, the richness of its texture, and the fragrance of its perfume may all appear to adorn the well-kept rosary in a single summer's day, but its winsome charm and beauty had not been spun overnight by fairy fingers out of early morning dews. Nature's mysterious and subtle forces had been working days and weeks in readiness for the "opening day."

So with Paul's greater thoughts. He had carried them treasured up in his retentive mind, and from time to time when circumstances allowed, he brought to view the green immatured buds of thought, to rouse or comfort fainting hearts. Such developed thoughts were not appropriate for "babes in Christ," and many "babes" came to birth as consequence of the early missionary travail. All such babes needed "milk," and other lighter foods. Among these foods were the facts concerning the death of the Lord and His resurrection from the dead. The story of a Saviour who died to save the people from their sin was an easier thought for the newly-stricken conscience to grasp than the amazing facts of an election pre-determined before the world began. It was a more simple theme to assure the new-fledged believer that Jesus died "for" him, than to ask him to consider himself dead with Christ, and baptised into His death.

While, then Paul's restless feet were hurrying back and forth over land and sea, over mountain and plain, seeking hungering souls which waited for the light, not only had he insufficient time to sit and ponder and develop the full outlines of the Truth committed to his

care, but to have done so would have deprived thousands of waiting souls the assistance for which they called. Both among Jews and Gentiles were many benighted individuals for whom life held no ray of light. To live day in, day out a hopeless Godless existence—"without God and without hope in the world"—was the common lot of myriads of frustrated souls, fated otherwise to pass from the cradle to the grave without aim or purpose in the rounds of life of no higher outlook than that of mere brute beasts. Paul knew all this. His heart was deeply touched with the deep tides of sorrow which surged within, and around the hearts of the vast groaning creation of his day.

He also knew he held the secret of the world's unceasing need in his own soul. He knew what Jesus of Nazareth had done for him. He knew also what Jesus could do for all who would hear the message which he carried from town to town and land to land. Knowledge such as this gave impetus to his feet, and urgency to his task, enabling him to scorn pain or difficulty, or any other of a thousand things with which Satan sought to block his path.

Paul had himself felt the deep soul-need. He once knew the hunger which naught could satisfy. He had known the pain-pangs of a bruised heart, which in its search after higher things had tried to soar aloft, only to fall crashing to a stony earth. He could remember that it had been his privilege to drink deep of his nation's philosophy at the feet of one of Israel's really great sons, and find its choicest waters turn to wormwood in his soul. He could not forget that his ardent nature had searched the deepest mines of his own and of former days, to find the secret way to life, but had found every turn did no more than mock him in his quest. Spite of his scholarly genius and accomplishments, his deeper self had ever remained unilluminated and unsatisfied. No crumb of satisfaction had ever reached the vital depths of his famished soul till he looked on the resplendent glory on the Damascus way. There, for the first time in his adventurous career he tasted the first real morsel that satisfied. There, the God of his fathers—the God he had sought with all the passion of his white-hot heart, began to reveal His Son to his astonished gaze. It broke

upon his arrested mind that the Son of God loved him, and had given Himself up for him (Gal. 2; 20). And when others made boast of this or that, this greatly satisfied heart made boast of one thing alone " . . . far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of Christ my Lord, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I unto the world " (Gal. 6; 14). And this, let us not forget, was the fervent statement of his pre-prison days.

Thus the memories of his own famished soul, and of the satisfaction that now filled his life in every part, sent his travel-stained feet hurrying over hill and plain, over land and sea, to take to other fainting souls the same cup of life from which his own lips had drunk their fill. Men waited in black darkness for the story of Jesus' death—of redemption through His blood—and of reconciliation to a God of Love—what wonder then that Paul slaved beyond his strength, to tell that simpler phase of the great truth committed to his charge, leaving the deeper fuller aspects to later days, when himself had time under the leading of the spirit of truth to trace those deeper things in more detail, and his converts and brothers had grown to greater stature in Christ, and were thus able to understand that a kindly Providence shaped all his path, and gave to him and through him all that was best for every time of need—milk for the infant days, meat for the fuller-grown.

♦ ♦ The Millennium ♦ ♦

as seen by Dr. J. A. SEISS.

The completion of the First Resurrection introduces a wonderful change in the world's history. It is the breaking through of an immortal power; a power which sweeps away, as chaff before the wind, the whole economy of mortal and Dragon rule, and thrusts to Death and Hades every one found rising up or stiffening himself against it; a power which deprives the Old Serpent of his strength, binds him with a great chain, locks and seals him up in the Abyss, pulls down all his works, tears off and clears away all his hoary falsehoods which have been oppressing, deceiving, misleading, and sway-

ing the world to its destruction for so many ages; a power which gives to the nations new, just and righteous laws in the administration of immortal rulers, whose good and holy commands men must obey or die; a power which grasps hold of the plethoric fortunes accumulated in meanness and oppression and held in greedy avarice for the pampering of lust and pride, hewing them down in righteousness and scattering them in restitution to those out of whom they have been so uncharitably ground and wrung; a power which goes forth in vindication of the worthy poor, the oppressed, the weak, the friendless and the downtrodden, the righting of their cause, the maintenance of their just claims, and the enforcement of truth and brotherhood between man and man; a power which lifts the mask from deceit, pretence and false show, puts each one in his true place according to what he really is, gives credit only where credit is due, and tries everything and everybody in the balances of a strict and impartial justice.

Think of the coming in of that power, of the havoc it must needs make in the whole order of things—of the confusion it will cause in the depraved cabinets, courts and legislatures of the world—of the revolution it must work in business customs, in corporation managements, in political manipulations, in mercantile and manufacturing frauds, in the lies and hollowness which pervade social life; of what it must do concerning playhouses, and rum shops, and gambling hells, and the unhallowed gains by which great masses of people have their living and keep themselves up in the world.

Think of the sudden collapse of all the haunts of sin, the rooting out of the nests and nurseries of iniquity, the clearing away of the marshes and bogs of crime, where every kind of immoral pestilence is bred, and the changes that must hence come—think of the summary abolition of all the infamous cliques, combinations and rings—political rings, whisky rings, municipal rings, state rings, mercantile rings, communistic rings, oathbound society rings, and a thousand kinds of other rings—all the children of wickedness, hindering just laws, suppressing moral right, crippling honest industry, corrupting the press, robbing the public treasuries, eating up the gains of honourable occupation, perverting public

sentiment, and setting all righteous administration at defiance.

Think of the universal and invincible dragging forth to divine justice of every blatant infidel, perjurer, liar, profane swearer, drunkard, drunkard-maker, hypocrite, -landerer, trickster, cheat, thief, murderer, trader in uncleanness, traitor, miser and oppressor of the poor. Think of the instantaneous going forth into all the world of a Divine and Unerring force which cannot be turned or avoided, but which hews down every fruitless tree, purges away all chaff from every floor, negatives all unrighteous laws, overwhelms all unrighteous traffic, destroys all unrighteous coalitions, burns up every nest of infamy and sin, ferrets out all concealed wickedness, exposes and punishes all empty pretence and makes an end of all unholy business. Think of the tremendous revolution, in all that the eye can see, the ear hear, the hand touch, the heart feel, or earthly being realise, that must needs attend the putting into practical living force of such an administration — the high it must make low, the rich it must make poor, the mighty it must make powerless, the loud it must sink to oblivion, the admired and worshipped it must turn to disgrace and abhorrence; the different impulse under which every wheel must then turn, every shuttle move, every hammer strike, every foot step, every mind calculate, and every heart beat.

A good thing it will be for the nations when that day comes. There can be nothing better than God's law. There can be nothing more just, more reasonable, more thoroughly or wisely adapted to all the well-being of man and the highest wholesomeness of human society. All the blessedness in the universe is built upon it. All that is needed for the establishment of a holy and happy order is for men to obey that law. And this is what is to be effected when the "children of the resurrection" get their crowns and go into power with Christ the All-Ruler at their head. They are to rule and deal with the nations as unerring and immortal kings and priests, to direct, instruct, and feed them with all the loving care of angels, but with "a rod of iron" in their hands to enforce docility, obedience and unreserved surrender to all the laws and requirements of the Lord God Almighty.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Office. As announced on this page last month, it has become necessary to change the Committee's office address to 18 St. Ives Road, Leicester, and therefore all correspondence without exception should be sent to this address in future.

At the same time it has become necessary to suspend for the time being certain sections of the Committee's service, in consequence of the restricted leisure time of the brethren who undertake this work. Until further notice, therefore, the following facilities are suspended. Notice of their resumption will be given in the "Monthly"

Services suspended:

Reference Library.

Loaning Service.

Second-hand and special books Dept. (Books listed on our price list can still be supplied.)

Memorial Emblems.

Class Information Bureau

The Committee will continue to receive subscriptions to the "Herald," "Dawn," and "Bible Students Monthly;" will still conduct the administration of the Benevolent Fund; and will still maintain the Bookroom for the supply of books and pamphlets useful to the friends. In thus continuing the main essentials of our service we look forward to the time when the lifting of various restrictions and hindrances will make it possible for our fellowship to go forward with renewed zeal in the effective prosecution of our message.

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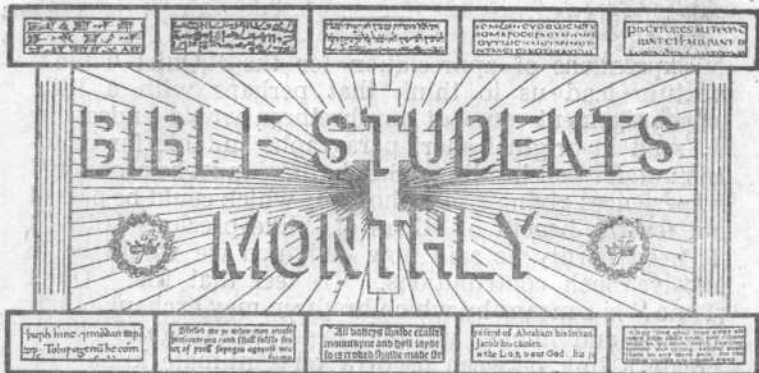
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Expressions of appreciation for the "Quiet Time" feature lead us to think that perhaps with a little encouragement more of our brethren would endeavour to send in original short paragraphs suitable for inclusion under that heading. Surely there must be occasional experiences giving rise to thoughts which could be passed on for the benefit of others of "like precious faith"! *It need hardly be said* how delighted we would be to receive such contributions. To feel that the "Quiet Time" is a means by which brethren may exchange their deepest and inmost spiritual experiences would surely create a link between us of a very intimate kind. Do not be deterred if you feel that you cannot express yourself in the best "King's English." Give us the liberty to "touch up" the words if by so doing they can be made to read more easily, and we will gladly co-operate with you in passing on your words of exhortation and comfort to others of our circle that they may be refreshed and established thereby.

One word more: If you send in an item which has been taken from some other publication, please be careful to say so, giving the name, and, if possible, the date of the publication concerned.

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RECONCILED TO GOD

—C. E. D.



The craving of many hearts to get nearer to God, to know something clearer about Him, His purposes, His work, and to be, in some inscrutable way, in harmony with Him, at one with Him, may possibly have been aroused by the well-known words "if with all your heart ye truly seek me, ye shall ever surely find me." based on Deut. 4: 29. A devout mind reasons, how can it be possible for anyone to seek God with "all their heart"? It should be able to be done, for it does not seem that *God would cause such a statement to be made if it could not, in some way or other, be accomplished.*

The doctrine of the Atonement explains that accomplishment. The Scriptures show that because Jesus tasted death for every man, and obtained eternal redemption, the reconciling would ultimately be accomplished, the first fruits unto God being the Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in heaven. Afterwards in due course the world of mankind would be dealt with, until God could be "All in All."

How closely this agrees with the typical arrangement made with Moses for Israel's benefit; for what God had spoken would surely come to pass. Lev. 16 gives details of the order for the Day of Atonement. Aaron was instructed to offer, according to the prescribed ritual, first a bullock; then the Lord's goat, afterwards to deal with a scape-goat "to cleanse you (children of Israel) that ye may be clean from all your sins" (v. 30). What did all this mean? Sins are facts, whether of words or actions resulting from the desire of the mind to say that which is wrong, or to do that which is wrong. If all these sins, large or small, were to be atoned for, then it is logical to take God at His word, that there must have been some effect on the children of Israel which they must have known about. Would not each Israelite experience by some keen mental perception that their heart, and mind, in some unaccountable way to them, had been made clean, pure and sweet? As each Israelite experienced this great heart relief would he not give spontaneously a cry of untold joy? Unitedly this would be a

great "shout," and they would naturally fall on their faces and worship God. It is interesting to note they were not told to do this, but they could not help it. The heart relief the whole camp of Israel must have felt must have been truly wonderful. Was it not to them that Psalm 103; 12 referred: "As far as the east is from the west so far hath He removed our transgressions from us?"

Consider Aaron on the first Day of Atonement. He must have felt a great responsibility in making atonement for "all the sins of all the people." He was treading in the unknown. There had never been such a day before to guide him. If he did accomplish the sacrifices successfully, what would be the effect on the people? How would they behave? Would they be any different after the sacrifices? His heart would be keyed-up. But when the work had been done, and when he and Moses came out to bless the people, and the people "shouted and fell on their faces" Aaron knew their hearts were clean, and he could lift up his head and rejoice.

Did not the same experience occur to each Christian at consecration? Were not all his sins forgiven, put away as far as the east is from the west? Did he not have a great peace come over him when "the love of God was shed abroad in his heart when the Holy Spirit was given unto him" (Rom. 5; 5)? Did he not experience a spiritual uplift, and did he not worship his God and Father as never before? Surely he did, or there was something lacking!

After the Day of Atonement, when the Israelites sinned they brought the particular offering specified, that their sin might be atoned for. They could not, however, take their offerings to God. All their offerings for their sins, which were many and varied, and involved the noble and the poor, the man and the woman, were brought to the priests, who made the at-one-ment for them.

How closely the Jewish Atonement Day fits in with God's Kingdom to come. When the Christian Dispensation sacrificing period is over, the Kingdom will start with a new "clean" order, the nucleus being the Ancient Worthies, gathered together in a "clean" place, the HOLY land, ruling from a "clean" city, the city of God,

the earthly Jerusalem. The nations or peoples who are alive will become "clean" as they enter into covenant relationship with God, until eventually all mankind, including those raised from the dead, will fulfil the grand prophecy "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2; 10-11).

In Israel it was an easy matter to take offerings to the priests. How will mankind in the Millennial reign take their offerings to the spiritual Kings and Priests? Will not a somewhat similar arrangement be then as now? Now, are not the angels ministering spirits to those who shall be heirs of salvation? No Son of God **now** knows who looks after his welfare, and it will not be necessary for mankind **then** to know who is looking after their interests, but the Divine Kings and Priests, having the privilege of reading the real hearts' desire of the contrite ones, will be able to grant them forgiveness, and their hearts will become pure and clean once more.

Sonship and Covering.—The Christian, being a son of God, and still on earth, is not yet "perfect." He still requires a covering, and the term "atonement" carries the thought of "covering." For that very purpose Jesus was made "Head over all things to the Church which is His body." So Jesus said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you." When Jesus has made His Church perfect, and they have part in the First Resurrection, there will be no need of a "covering," for their characters will be so crystallised that they will ever do God's will, and honour Him through the countless ages of eternity. In the age to come mankind will have a covering, Jesus, the Mediator, Priest and King, until He can say to mankind "come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom having been prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Let us examine examples of "covering." The ark in Noah's day was a protection from the great deluge, but God told Noah that the ark must be "pitched within and without with pitch" (Gen. 6; 14). How well this illustrates the true Christian. His heart must be put right first, then the outward behaviour will be in harmony with the heart. How different this was from the Pharisees, who made the outside clean, but were full of

iniquity within!

When the children of Israel had been delivered from Egypt, to worship God in the wilderness, they soon began to lose faith in God, and in Moses too, when he was forty days in the mount with God. They worshipped the golden calf which Aaron had made for them. God told Moses what the Israelites were doing, but it was only when Moses came down the mount and saw the idolatry that was being practised that he, like God, waxed hot; he was bitterly disappointed. The contrast had been so great; from perfect holiness to shameful evil. Moses did not rejoice in this iniquity; but notice the effect on this most noble of men. His heart was right, and it was shown on the morrow by words and by action. Moses had decided what to do, and briefly and quietly said: "Ye have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord. Peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin" (Exod. 32:30). This meek, faithful man, with a sad heart returned to God. The ascent was not easy; God was so far up the mount. Eventually Moses stood between God and the people. Moses "covered" the people, far down at the foot of the mount. He offered to die for the people. He could do no more, he could do no less. Surely Moses was a man after God's own heart. Here was this "servant" offering his life that others might go free. Ah, yes, Moses made atonement for the people.

Later on the Atonement Day was instituted, and the various sacrifices made known; how the people could have atonement made by the priests for their individual sins.

The three-fold point of interest is that "pitch" in Gen. 6:14, "atonement" made by Moses, Ex. 32:30, and "Atonement" details mentioned 68 other times in the Law, is none other than the Hebrew "**Kaphar**," a primitive root meaning "to cover."

Did not Jesus do exactly the same as Moses, in a far greater sense? Jesus alone could approach unto God, not only to offer His life, but to GIVE it, "to give His life a Ransom for many," as many as were involved in Adam's transgression. And all Adam's offspring were born sinners in the valley of sin, the valley of the shadow of death. Truly was it said of Jesus, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.

Atonement and Sin-offering.—In connection with Israel's priesthood the High Priest and under priests had to take part in a "sin-offering." Has the Christian, a true follower of Christ, any part in a sin-offering? It is written, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning," not for our rejecting, or ignoring, especially if the matter is a well-known one. Some things are "hard to be understood" as all will admit. In connection with the consecrating of the priesthood in Israel, as given in Lev. 8, we find that Moses had a very busy time, as he is given as doing every detail, and some were very minute. These details seem to show that in the Christian Dispensation God arranged all the details of the Christian's way. Scrutinising Lev. 8, it does not seem to appear that Moses had told Aaron and his four sons any of the details that would take place. Aaron and his sons did as they were told. If they had been informed they apparently raised not the slightest objection, or questioned Moses, "Why do you do this, or why have we to do thus and so?" If they had started questioning Moses it would have been doubtful if Moses would have finished the consecrating for some considerable time. Five men questioning, and each answer involving other points, would have meant an interminable discussion, if Job and his three "comforters" are anything to go by. It seems that Aaron and his four sons did as they were told, knowing that Moses had received his instructions from God, and they would not argue against God on such a day. Dealing with verse 14 we find Aaron and his sons placed in an indisputable position, one in which no mistake could be made, hedged in by one term "the bullock for the sin-offering." The entire verse reads "And Moses took the bullock for the sin-offering, and Aaron and his sons placed their hands on the head of the bullock for the sin-offering." The body of this bullock was burnt without the camp, in the same way as the bullock and Lord's goat of Lev. 16. It seems reasonable that Aaron and his sons did not know the bullock was for a sin-offering. In the same way the Scriptures do not intimate that when Jesus made His consecration at the Jordan He knew what God's arrangement was. Jesus just presented Himself to God, "Lo I come to do Thy will, O God." Jesus was begotten to the Divine nature. He received the Holy

Spirit without measure. Then it was that God turned the offering of Jesus into a sacrifice, a "sin-offering" according to Is. 53 : 10, "When Thou (God) shall make his (Jesus') soul an offering for sin." The Diaglott 2 Cor. 5 : 21 also reads, "For Him who knew no sin he made a sin-offering on our behalf." Since Jesus' day it may be said that in precisely the same way everyone who has made a consecration to God, over the sacrifice of Jesus on his behalf, had not the slightest idea of what God was going to do for him and with him. God did not beget any of the human race, who followed in Jesus' foot-steps, without any definite aim in view. No Christian can understand in the slightest the coming glory that is to be theirs because they love the Lord. It is God's delight to do with His children what He has in mind for them, but how can a Christian be "taught of God" if he ignores or discredits what God has caused to be "written aforetime for their learning." Should we not endeavour, as far as is possible, to look at all matters through God's eyes, to accept His ways as our ways, His thoughts as our thoughts? Whilst we may not fully understand what God has in mind in His outworking of Lev. 8 : 14, let us be fully assured that not one jot or one tittle will go unfulfilled. In the great antitype it is very definite that the few true and faithful Christians will be a Royal Priesthood, and that whilst they are in the flesh they strive to purify their hearts (1 Jno. 3 : 3), meditate on His law day and night, continually, let the word of Christ dwell in them richly, that they might be conformed to the pattern set before them in Christ Jesus. Is not God going to do with these few as seems well pleasing in His sight? Paul, one of the greatest of all Christians, had his difficulties. He desired to apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3 : 12). In our days we have our difficulties. None of us know for what particular position God has apprehended us, but if we do our best then we shall eventually occupy the position He had in mind. Call to mind, "the meek will He guide in judgment," "the meek will He teach His way," "Now we know in part but then shall we know even as we are known." God has yet many secrets to be revealed to His Divine sons. The wondering heart, both spiritual and human, has yet many joys in store when full reconciliation has been accomplished."

XXXXX THE QUIET TIME XXXXX

TRANSFORMED BY INSIGHT •

"We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image."—2 Cor. 3 : 18.

The outstanding characteristic of a Christian is this unveiled frankness before God so that the life becomes a mirror for other lives. By being filled with the Spirit we are transformed, and by beholding we become mirrors. You always know when a man has been beholding the glory of God, you feel in your inner spirit that he is the mirror of the Lord's own character. Beware of anything which would sully that mirror in you; it is nearly always a good thing, the good that is not the best.

The golden rule for your life and mine is this concentrated keeping of the life open towards God. Let everything else on earth go by the board, saving that one thing. The rush of other things always tends to obscure this concentration on God. We have to maintain ourselves in the place of beholding, keeping the life absolutely spiritual all through. Let other things come and go as they may, let other people criticise as they will, but never allow anything to obscure the life that is hid with Christ in God. Never be hurried out of the relationship of abiding in Him. It is the one thing that is apt to fluctuate but it ought not to. The severest discipline of a Christian's life is to learn how to keep "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord."

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."—Psa. 37 : 7.

Stay still in the Hand of the Potter,

Lie low 'neath His wonderful touch,

He shapeth and mouldeth in mercy

The clay that He loveth so much ;

Surrender thyself to His working,

The curve and the hollow He wills,

Nor shrink from the pain and the pressure

For the vessel He fashions, He fills.

TRUST

"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."—1 Peter 5 : 7.

I can dread no care or sorrow
For Thy will is my delight ;
While on Thee I lean my weakness
Faith will stand instead of sight.
What Thou doest, Lord, I know not,
But I trust Thee all is right.

If in doubt I stand and waver
When the way is clouded o'er,
Do Thou whisper to me softly
And I'll clasp Thy hand once more,
And step onward, glad and fearless,
For Thy will is straight before.

Lord, the way can ne'er be dreary
Compassed by Thy Love Divine ;
Ne'er can sorrows overwhelm me
While I cast these cares of mine
On Thy tender heart and trust Thee
Till I lose my will in Thine.

H. M. Burnside.

UNION WITH CHRIST

Our love has its rise, and its strength lies, in our union with Christ, in Whom life is fulness of love, and love is that complete surrender of self in which union can be fully realised ; so that now I no longer regard myself as "having a separate existence, but as merged in Christ" (Gal. 2 : 20). He, living His life of love in us, will make us in all our contact with one another and in all our service to others full of love which is tender, unassertive, understanding, yielding, self-sacrificing, winning its response of love by thoughtful, patient, gracious service.

JUDGE NOT

A word wherewith to search the heart.

It is timely that we should reconsider the Scriptural teaching on the subject of judging and judgment, for if we obtain the wrong viewpoint we can inflict grievous injury upon others as well as doing ourselves serious harm. As all know, there are various shades of thought in the original which must be clearly distinguished, and the essential theme of our present meditation is the definite Scriptural injunction to refrain from **condemnation** of others. If we fall into this snare we are anticipating our future work **before qualified** to engage in that work.

Even in human affairs the procedure is very clear. Judges are selected from practising barristers (in this land), and the honour of being one of His Majesty's High Court judges does not come until towards the end of a brilliant legal career. No one would for a moment endeavour to deliver judgment other than the judge on the Bench, for to do so would be to offend against long-established custom and all rules of proper procedure. Moreover, the judge himself does not pass sentence until he has heard all the evidence on both sides ; with his trained mind he is able to sift that evidence and pronounce judgment accordingly. Let us apply these principles to the spiritual life.

It is understood that the new creation this side the veil are in training to qualify for the exaltation to the Throne of the Kingdom from whence they will judge both men and angels. It is for this reason, among others, that various experiences come to them in the School of Christ whereby they may learn to develop the faculty of judgment. No one **during his training** is competent to exercise the functions of the office for which he hopes to qualify, hence why should we try to judge, in the sense of condemning, while in our training days ?

There are several good reasons why we should not condemn others. Firstly, we **cannot read the heart** and, following the illustration given above, we are unable to have access to all the evidence. Time and again we make decisions which we afterwards find to be unsound because based on inadequate premises. If our decisions

have manifested themselves in condemnation, then we often have occasions of sadness as we think of our immaturity; if full of grace, we do at least endeavour to apologise so that our brother may not be stumbled. Again, even supposing we had all the evidence before us, it must be appreciated that our **judgment is faulty**; even the best of us can be mistaken, and at times we are woefully deceived. Moreover, our **knowledge of the law** by which God judges us is **far from perfect** and if we do not have a thorough grasp of the law in question—the law of love—it is obvious that we cannot administer that law. (The function of an earthly judge is to know the law and administer its provisions.)

Among the many things which tend to stumble the Lord's people is this tendency to condemn others because they may not agree fully with us—not only on matters of doctrine, but on conduct and their course in life generally. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7: 1-2). This outlook of condemnation inevitably tends to discourage, yea, to stumble others. Indeed, it is one of the many causes of the neglect of some to assemble together with those of like precious faith; they mistakenly feel that they are better at home instead of using that important means of grace—the ecclesia—for the development of the new creature.

In any event, condemnation can do no good at all. The Heavenly Father and the Son—the latter as the Father's representative—have the honour of judgment, and the Church will not share that honour until glorified. In many cases, the power of the message of truth is weakened because those who wield it do so in an un-Christianlike manner, and those who would otherwise heed, neglect to hear because prejudiced by what seems to them to be a spirit entirely foreign to the truth itself. Brother Russell aptly writes:—

"The fallen or carnal mind is selfish; and proportionately as it is **for self** it is **against** others—disposed to approve or excuse self and to disapprove and condemn others. . . . This habit is the more pronounced with advanced education. The mind recognises **higher** ideals and standards and forthwith measures every one by

these, and, of course, finds something at fault in all. It delights in rehearsing the errors and weaknesses of others, while ignoring its own along the same or other lines,—and sometimes, even, hypocritically denouncing the weaknesses of another for the very purpose of hiding its own or giving the impression of superior character along the line in question."

Time and again, we hear brethren assigned to the Great Company class. The writer has been so assigned himself on occasions, and this is specifically mentioned in order to emphasise the lesson before us. Moreover, this final condemnation is often called forth because of some more or less trivial difference of viewpoint not affecting the fundamental features of the "faith once delivered." This manifestly shows narrow-mindedness associated with ignorance and weak judgment. Is such a description in itself condemnation? This brings us to the next point.

Let no one misunderstand these observations. While we must avoid condemnation of others, we must nevertheless be **positive characters** knowing what is right as regards both doctrine and conduct. But instead of condemning let us be an **example** of the believers, in line with our positive outlook, for example is far more forceful than precept, and when precept is couched in terms of condemnation it is worse than useless.

We need to develop discernment, but this is a different kind of judgment from that of condemnation. The Apostle everywhere counsels that we be no longer children in the faith—tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. On the contrary, we must grow so as to appropriate to ourselves the "strong meat" of the word which "belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern **both good and evil**" (Heb. 5: 14). We should give a bold witness for the truth, and refuse to compromise the message on any grounds whatsoever. The same Apostle Paul who is so outstanding in this respect also said: "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For **I know nothing by myself**, yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both

will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart" (1 Cor. 4 : 3-5).

There is a vast difference between criticism and condemnation, especially when the criticism is constructive. The saintly writers of the Scriptures frequently criticised those to whom they ministered ; the Apostle Paul often spoke very plainly, as also did the prophets of old down to John the Baptist, while, above all, our Lord Himself made His witness very plain and clear. Even here, however, it is necessary to observe discretion and to follow the example of criticising wrong systems of teaching and unwise practices, rather than venting our criticism on individuals.

If we find it necessary to utter a word of criticism it must be spoken in love because it is designed to do good—to assist and not to stumble. If we witness definitely against systems and methods which we find to be unscriptural, then the individuals will readily heed if rightly exercised, whereas the personal method might not appeal at all.

We all probably think first and foremost of condemnation in relation to **doctrine** because this spirit of condemnation is so evident amongst us in this respect. But let us also emphasise the same wrong attitude in connection with **conduct**. The Apostle counsels : " Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted " (Gal. 6 : 1). While avoiding condemnation, it frequently happens that we feel it our Christian duty to point out in love certain apparently wrong courses taken by those who are brethren. To refrain from speaking would be to fail in our duty, yet it must be done in the spirit of meekness for the reason given by the Apostle.

There is a general tendency to-day towards slackness in this Laodicean period, but we often find on investigation that what we have taken to be slackness has been the very reverse. The writer realised this forcibly when one such an experience came his way, and the one whom he endeavoured to **help** remarked : " **You only see my failures ; you do not know of my successes, and how hard it is to overcome this fault.**" How striking ! How

cautious it should make us in dealing with others, yet ever remember that this does not give any authority for failure to perform our duty by others.

Never can we know the obstacles against which others have to contend. The Lord alone knows and can judge righteously. Finally, here is another pertinent comment from the Pastor's pen :

" But few of the Lord's people realise to what extent they judge others, and that with a harshness which, if applied to them by the Lord, would surely bar them from the Kingdom. We might have feared that, under our Lord's liberal promise that we shall be judged as leniently as we judge others, the tendency would be to too much benevolence, too much mercy, and that 'thinketh no evil' might be carried to an extreme. But no ! All the forces of our fallen nature are firmly set in the opposite direction. It is more than eighteen centuries since our Lord made this generous proposal to judge us as leniently as we will judge others, and yet, how few could claim much mercy under that promise ! "

A PRAYER

My soul rejoiceth in Thy salvation, I will rejoice in Thy work.

Thy mercy exceedeth Thy chastisements. By them Thou hast corrected me ; make me to know the path of righteousness.

Thou hast been a father unto me, O Lord ; and I Thy son desire to know Thy way ; and walk as he that pleaseth Thee.

All the day long give me understanding, and fill me with Thy wisdom ; that I may not rebel against Thee ; or forget Thy righteous laws.

Make me to know my weakness ; that I may not boast in my strength ; which is as a reed by the water, that is soon broken.

In Thy chastisements of my soul, bring me forth corrected ; that I may praise Thee, and inherit Thy salvation, O Lord, my deliverer.

W. F. F.

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THE QUESTION BOX

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Q.—If the animals in the Ark were the only ones preserved, and the Flood was universal, how did the animals get to countries separated by miles of ocean, such as Australia, where species are found which exist nowhere else?

A.—There is no reason to suppose that the flood of Noah's day affected the entire earth. Of the many scientific theories which have been advanced to explain the causes and nature of the Deluge, that propounded by Professor Vail and outlined in the "New Creation" is probably the most familiar to our readers. According to this hypothesis and the researches of Prof. Wright, also recounted in the "New Creation," the North Pole floods swept over Siberia, Western Asia, Northern Europe and North America. The South Pole floods were absorbed by the great oceans of the Southern Hemisphere, and left no signs on the land except in South Africa. There is no other theory that suggests even this extent of land as having been affected by the waters, the majority of explanations confining the catastrophe to Western Asia, or even only the plains of Mesopotamia.

The Genesis account is written from the standpoint of an actual observer. It has been frequently pointed out that the narrative is in the form of a "log-book" or daily record of events. There is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that Noah himself wrote the story concurrently with the events as they happened, and in this case one can easily see that he would write of the earth as he knew it, i. e., the inhabited world of his day. The expression met with in the story, "the whole heaven" (Gen. 7; 19) has parallels in other places in the Bible where it is manifest that our entire planet is not meant. See, for example, Deut. 2; 25, "I will put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven," and Acts 2; 5, "every nation under heaven," where it is evident that only the nations around the Mediterranean Sea are indicated.

The whole of Noah's world was drowned; that much is clear. When he came out of the Ark, it was to a new world which was to be peopled by his family. That is the meaning of the expression in Gen. 9; 19, "of them was the whole earth overspread." It is a fact that every branch of the human race, with the exception of the original natives of South Africa and Australia, cherish traditions of a great Flood which destroyed all humanity save the few who were saved in an ark or ship, and that from that few all present men are descended. It is probable that the Flood did overflow all the habitations of man, and in this sense the whole world was destroyed; but at the same time vast areas of the continents, replete with animal life, and destitute of men, were unaffected, and so the types of animals, birds and plants peculiar to those localities were not disturbed.

SOMETIMES

Sometimes I wish that I were young again,
But with the wisdom that is mine to-day,
That wisdom bought with years of grief and pain,
The price of folly everyone must pay.

But as it cannot be, why waste a sigh
On that which might have been in days long past;
The lessons still remain, so let us try
To learn from them the peace and joy that last.

Since all that has been God knew all about,
And did not force us other ways to take,
It must have been that by our finding out,
We'd love the better for its own sweet sake.

'Tis God's design that we shall work with Him,
And learn to know He always works in love;
And though our vision still be somewhat dim,
Beyond the clouds His sun shines bright above.

So, let our faith lay hold of grace each day,
And let our lives be moulded, hour by hour,
Rejoicing happily to walk His way,
In glad submission to His Spirit's power.

S. R. S.

“They read the Law distinctly”

Timely words from one, who, being dead, yet speaketh.

There is a power for good in the Word of God which can be found nowhere else. Higher Criticism has much responsibility in connection with the growing lawlessness of the world. “The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul”—transforming the being. Higher Critics in all of our colleges and seminaries are doing a terribly destructive work, in comparison to which the works of Voltaire, Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll were as nothing. It is safe to say that three-fourths of the graduates of colleges are unbelievers in the Bible, and that their influence is being used persistently to undermine the faith of others. The errors which led them to infidelity are liable to influence others. The Bible itself is a study, and only what it teaches should be believed, whether favourable to or contrary to our former creeds.

This is the law of the Church's progress and growth. When a Christian, or a church, becomes convinced that it has nothing more to learn, there follows stagnation and decay. And yet what else than this is the prevalent assumption that all Bible truth is locked up in our Confession of Faith, and that it is a heresy and crime to think beyond it? No greater mistake was ever made by Reformed churches than this quenching of the Spirit in the Body of Christ by the denial to its members of the liberty of progressing beyond the limits of their creeds. Confessions are good for purposes of instruction, but not to bind the conscience. Enforced creeds should content themselves with stating only the great facts and primary beliefs of Christianity, as they are given in the language of Scripture, such as, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” “I believe that He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.” Human formulas, founded upon these facts, and explanatory of them,

should always be held open to amendment, as God may bestow increasing light until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the perfect knowledge of the Son of God.

Stripped of the outer shells we see that the **true church** is not composed of two hundred million professors, but instead is a “little flock” of fully consecrated believers, among whom are not many great or wise or noble or rich according to the estimate of this world. And we find the faith of this true church as different from that of the mass as its numbers are different. It has three steps to which none of the true church can object: (1) **Justification** through faith in the precious blood of Christ; (2) **Consecration** in thought, word and deed to God and His cause as best they understand; (3) **Growth** in grace, knowledge and love.

Standing thus free, untrammelled by human creeds, but personally united to Christ, each will find in the others “members of the body of Christ,” and affinity, fellowship and love will unite them in the **only** “union” that is not injurious; union in Christ, to Whom, as living “branches” in the Vine, each is personally united.

But such liberty will not mean anarchy and disorder; for the wisdom that cometh from above is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits,” and the words and example of our Lord through His apostles will instruct them as to a propriety of order in their assemblies, for the benefit of all. “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

The **physical** union of the church, the entire body of Christ, will be in glory—at the completion of the first resurrection: for “we ourselves also groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption (deliverance) of **our body**,” the body of Christ (Rom. 8: 23).

It is self-evident truth that the age of doctrinal uniformity has gone past; equally obvious that no doctrinal platform whatsoever, however comprehensive and liberal, can serve as the gathering-place of deep, profound, and Christ-like thinkers. This raises an issue at once threatening evil and disorder, and yet prophetic of good and harmony. The only truth capable of bringing about a reconciliation of divergent opinions, or which

will help to spread genuine charity, is that there is a church forming within all churches, and in the minds of all true and noble thinkers, disclosing to all true minds higher views of truth than the sects can any of them hold, and imparting to all intellects that turn to the Lord a life which the sects as such cannot give; that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming nearer and nearer in spirit, and that this energy is creating a new thought, and an entirely new affection among men; that this spirit is not evolving a new sect or ecclesiasticism to which men point and say, Lo! here, or Lo! there; it is a quickened spirit from the Lord, and out of that spirit a new theology will arise, more reverent, more heavenly and practical, before which the old scragged dogmas will melt off and fall away.

It is no more surprising that these truths relative to God's plan for the blessing of **all mankind** should have been but dimly seen heretofore, than that the call of the Gentiles to be heirs of the Abrahamic promise (Acts 11; 18, Eph. 3; 5, 7, Gal. 3; 29) should have been but dimly seen until the Gospel Age began to dawn. We can understand Scriptural statements only as they become due. Thus—"Light (truth) was (long ago) **sown** for the righteous." When due, the light springs up and gradually unfolds. Thus our Father has made abundant provision for the household of faith; and the true servants will bring forth things both **new** and **old**, that the household may have meat in **due** season. The cause of opposition, on the part of many, to the truth now due, is failure to recognise this progressive and unfolding character of God's revelation of His plans. Most Christians take for granted that good men of the past, who walked in the light then due, had all the truth worth knowing. Knox, Calvin, Luther, Wesley and others were good men and sincere, earnest Christians; but more truth is due in our day than in theirs. According to God's plan, the light should shine more and more until the perfect day. And so it is that many Christians of to-day make a great mistake, and sit in comparative darkness, when they might be walking in glorious light, because they search the theology of men instead of the Word of God.

Subduing the Earth.

An Example of
Millennial methods

Preparation for the Kingdom continues. The inventive genius of men, largely put to evil uses at the present time, is nevertheless being applied in some cases to **problems** which will require intensive action when earth's new King is in control. We know that, in that day, the earth will yield her increase, but that to achieve this desirable end it is going to be necessary for men to take up vigorously and zealously their commission to subdue the earth and make it fruitful. That means the elimination of those vegetable and insect pests which wreak such havoc at present in many parts. It is of interest, therefore, to note the efforts even now being made to this end, as an example of what may be a very familiar thing in days to come.

There has just been published the results of two important projects of this nature, one from Australia and one from South America. In the Australian case, a European weed known as St. John's wort, had, as far back as 1870, become introduced into Victoria, Australia, and has since spread so rapidly as to become a serious menace. Wherever the wort penetrated, native vegetation and pasture grass gave way and disappeared, with disastrous results to farmers. By 1917 it was met with in nearly every part of Australia. The problem of its eradication had to be tackled.

To-day that problem is in fair way of being solved. Certain European beetles which live upon this particular weed were introduced, and have begun to multiply in the regions which afford such abundant supply of their favourite food. Already the weed is receding and the native vegetation reappearing. Men have called in Nature to restore the proper balance, for whilst the weed is extensive the beetles will swarm and multiply exceedingly, and then as the weed-infested areas are reduced and the food supply becomes scarcer, the beetle population will decline correspondingly. Hence, by purely natural means, there will be maintained an automatic balance between weed and beetles, and the menace to other vegetation will disappear.

In the South American instance, malaria-carrying

African mosquitos had been carried across the Atlantic to Brazil by aeroplane or fast steamer, and, settling in marshy places, had multiplied and become the source of malaria epidemics, hitherto unknown. It was in 1930 that their presence was first reported, and by 1938 the problem had become so serious that the Brazilian Government was compelled to take action. A force of 3,500 workers was mobilised, and, under the direction of experts, they systematically treated every building, vehicle and patch of water over the whole of the extensive territory affected. Millions of separate applications by chemicals and thousands of tests had to be made, but by 1941 the work was complete, and the experts are satisfied that the African mosquito has been completely eliminated from Brazilian shores.

These two instances afford some indication of the work in store for men, in this direction alone, in that day when God shall speak peace to the nations. "It will surely come."

"WONDERFUL WORDS OF LIFE"

Jesus said, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall never pass away.—Mark 13 : 31.

Christ's enemies themselves bore witness that "Never man spake like this man." All His words together which have been preserved to us would not occupy more space in print than half a dozen ordinary sermons; yet it is not too much to say that they are the most precious literary heritage of the human race. His words, like His miracles, were expressions of Himself.

They took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus—Acts 4 : 13.

God loveth a cheerful giver. The word suggests (Literally, an hilarious) an element almost of gaiety in the Christian life, a lightness of spirit, an almost irresponsible happiness. He who gives to God's cause is not to do it grudgingly, or of necessity; he is not to give because he must; he is not to be remembering all the time how much it costs him; he is to give with a light-hearted happiness, to give almost with a jest.

The Lord Jesus said, It is more blessed to give than to receive—Acts 20 : 35.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.



Gone from us. Brother J. S. Lightfoot, latterly of Portsmouth and formerly of London, passed away on September 10th last. The funeral was conducted on the 14th by Bro. Stracy, of Yeovil. Our brother was well known to a great many of the older brethren and for many years was an elder of the church at Forest Gate. We are sure that the sympathy and prayers of many will go out to Sister Lightfoot at this time.

Anonymous. We would acknowledge with sincere appreciation the receipt of 10/- for the Benevolent Fund and £1 for the General Fund, under date 26th September.

The Office. The attention of friends is drawn to the recent change of address for all correspondence, which latter should now always be addressed to 18, St. Ives Road, Leicester.

The office will be closed for correspondence and orders between 16th and 27th December. We would particularly request the friends to see that their orders for books, etc., required before Christmas are in our hands by the 16th.

Christmas Cards and Calendars. Will the friends please note that Christmas Cards and calendars will not be available from the Bookroom this year. Brother F. Lardent, of 174 Forest Hill Road, London, S E.23, is again able to supply his well-known Art Calendar, two months to the page, with Scriptural illustrations. The paper is thinner than before to conform to further Government restrictions. They may be obtained from Bro. Lardent at 2/9 each post free.

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Redemption and Redemption's Day

The earnest of our inheritance
 The redemption of the purchased possession
 The praise of His glory

Just as a ray of sunlight, passed through a triangular glass prism, comes out on the other side split up into a number of chromatic colours, so the great purposes of God, passing through the Spirit-illumined mind of Paul, come out split up into a wide range of inter-related themes, each of which has its own special terms and phrases to describe it. The great design is vast, embracing heaven and earth; angels and men; good and evil; holiness and sin; time and eternity.

This great array of things and principles, some finite, some infinite; some relative, some absolute, is far too comprehensive for man to grasp with ease. Even the cleansing of the earth from sin is a project much too deep for the earth-bound mind of man to comprehend without aid from God.

Living in an environment of sin, and with emotions of sin fighting against his better self, even the Christian finds it difficult to understand the real revolting nature of sin as it is seen from the standpoint of pure holiness. Even the deliverance from sin which the Christian enjoys is only a deliverance in part — he still finds the earth-bound senses warring against the spirit of his new mind, and realises at times that he cannot always do as he would. It is also a task too big for him (even if he does close his eyes for a moment — or for many moments) to realise what it will really mean to have a sin-cleansed earth, with every countenance radiating perfect health and perfect love to God and man. The scenes of sin and sounds of woe are too prevalent around him today to allow the contrast to be drawn sharply enough between the perfections of that future day and the sinfulness of this. Thus because of frailties in himself and sinfulness in the unbelieving world around, the Christian cannot assess, at its proper value what the present and future phases of "Redemption through His Blood" really means.

At best we see things but darkly — as in a brazen mirror, in which the details are indistinct even though

the outline may be clear. It is exactly thus with the opening section of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. So far as the earthly phase of the promised universal redemption is concerned, Paul shows it to us through the mirror of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. He has that structure, with its hidden meanings and ceremonies, in his mind as he sets forth the tremendous thoughts of the cleansing from sin, and the full redemption then to be realised when the appointed day has come.

Paul's mind was saturated through and through with the teachings and influences of Mosaic and prophetic days, and though he was the chosen vessel to proclaim the deeper things of God the thoughts he was inspired to make known were mainly cast in the ancient mould of Tabernacle days. Both training and experience had made that Tabernacle to him the mirror of "the Truth." Sin and sacrifice were the main features of his nation's religious polity, which met him at every turn.

When the great change came into his own intensive life on the Damascus way, these same realities of sin and sacrifice came over into his Christian outlook and philosophy, but were thenceforth linked up to higher things. Ugly, repulsive, rebellious and forbidding as sin had been in his earlier days, it became more intensely wicked than before, making the need for an expiatory sacrifice more imperative than hitherto.

Always and in all places, from the first new-fledged labours in the oldest city of the world (Acts 9 : 20 - 22.) through all his chequered services and wanderings he wrote and spoke of "Redemption through the blood of Christ." In the first letter from his pen we read "God appointed us . . . unto the obtaining of salvation (redemption) through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us . . ." (1 Thess. 5 : 9). In Corinthians he says, "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf . . ." In his letter to the Romans he reaches truly great heights when he writes " . . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith by His blood . . ." (Romans 3 : 23 - 25). Such are the great words written by Paul in his pre-prison days. Space does not permit us to pile quotation upon quotation from

all these epistles, but every student knows they are there. This scarlet strand woven into his Ephesian letter is composed of the same two related threads — Forgiveness (or cleansing from sin) — an inheritance for the Saints in present days ; and "Redemption," an inheritance for future years. They are the same thoughts which belonged to Tabernacle days, but now transferred to higher things. There was no other reminder or definer of sin, except the Law — nor was there any mode of cleansing from sin, except by sacrifice. That ancient system of Mosaic days out-crops at several points in familiar words and phrases in Ephesians which, when strung together form a revealing background to the enunciation of eternal things which stretch from those far-distant times when God first laid out His Plans, to the still future days when those plans will be complete. Here are the outcropping layers of thought, to which we refer — "He chose us in Him" ; "that we should be holy and without blemish before Him" ; "redemption through His blood" ; "forgiveness of sins" ; "sealed with the Holy Spirit" ; and "the redemption of God's own possession" (R.V.). Every phrase and word has its counterpart in the Tabernacle privileges of the Aaronic priest, the possession of which gave him right of entrance into the typical "heavenly places" of his system and his day.

Let us briefly review some of these correspondencies. First, let reference be made to the remarkable phrase of verse 14, as it stands in the Greek text. Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit is an earnest of our inheritance until "the redemption of the possession" (see the Diaglott word-for-word text for this shortened phrase). What does this mean? Exposition of this point has always been laboured and difficult, most expositors believing that Paul left it as an unfinished phrase—an ellipsis, as so many of them call it.

It is not an unfinished phrase, but a perfect and complete phrase, if we can take Paul's own standpoint when explaining it. The sense of "possession" that ran throughout all Israelitish days, and all Israelitish things, and to which all her past and future experiences had been directed (or have yet to be directed), were repeatedly expressed in a two-fold (or double-sided) phrase, "I will be yours, and ye shall be Mine." "I

will be your God, and ye shall be My people." The great intention always was that Israel should "possess" her God, and that God should "possess" His people—"Mine" and "Thine" in mutual possession. This great "possessive" thought had its primal expression in God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 17 ; 7) " . . . I will establish my Covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee . . . to be a God unto them." It took still more definite shape in Lev. 26 ; 12, " . . . I will walk among you and will be your God, and ye shall be My people." Many times Moses reminded Israel, in his exhortations and songs, that Jehovah was their God, and that they were His people. Passing to the time of their return, Ezekiel repeats the double-phrase in Chapters 11 ; 20, 34 ; 28, 36, and 37 ; 27, and assures the people that henceforth the possession shall become a reality—exactly as it is pictured in no less a place than Rev. 21 ; 3. As the Holy City settles down to earth to end the long night of sin and estrangement in Israel, a voice from the Divine throne assures all in the four-square city of God that "they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be their God." Here the hopes of long ages past reach their complete realisation, and thenceforth Israel "possesses" her God and God "possesses" his people.

This is the great thought that Paul weaves into his argument—a golden thread that links Abraham's distant day with the great future Day of God.

For the time being that "possession" has been suspended by reason of Israel's blindness and hardness of heart. When God's time came to move on and up to higher things—the system of "better" things—Israel was unready and unwilling to leave the beggarly elements (the poor rudiments) of the old days. She preferred to continue under her old covenant, with the consequence that God refused thenceforth to accept her carnal sacrifices, and she was left to suffer the penalties of her broken law, without any "kaphar" or "propitiatory covering" as theretofore. All that that old covenant can now do for her is to remind her of her sin, and hold her in the way of punishment. She is a captive to a useless arrangement, from which she has no means of getting free by her own endeavours. She is wedded to a system which cannot confer Divine blessing, but

which loads her life and experiences only with sufferings and maledictions.

But though Israel is now accounted an enemy, for the Church's sake, she is still beloved for her fathers' sakes, and God proposes to redeem her from all her disabilities and distresses. To that end a "day of redemption" has been provided for. In that day she will regain her "possession" in God, and in turn become again God's "possession." Paul refers to this day when he tells his brethren that they had been sealed with the Holy Spirit, "unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4 ; 30). Also our Lord refers to this when He said "when ye see these things begin to come to pass, look up, lift up your heads, because your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21 ; 28).

The Prophet Isaiah also tells of this day: "The day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of My redeemed is come" (Isa. 63 ; 4). Thus the "redemption of the possession" means the setting free from its ancient bondage of the people to whom God had said, "I will be yours," and "Ye shall be Mine." God's inheritance in Israel will be set free from its encumbrances, and He will then "possess" and "be possessed."

The relationship of the Church of the First-born (who have the first-fruits of the Spirit as a pledge-penny of a full inheritance) to the "people of the redemption" is akin to that of the ancient priesthood in Israel, but on a higher level. That is exactly the thought suggested when Paul says God had "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." In these words he draws a comparison with Israel's tabernacle reared up (as it were) "end-on" with its Most Holy Place in Heaven, where God's glorious presence actually is, and with its Holy Place set far above earthly things. Those who are in Christ—those who are begotten, anointed and enlightened by the Holy Spirit—have the related but loftier privilege accorded to Aaron and his sons, who after their anointing were permitted to enter the Holy Place, and walk by the holy light, and feed on the holy bread. Those in Christ—in the Anointed—are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies," and enjoy holy light and feed on holy food. And like Aaron and his sons, they were "chosen" of God, to become joint-heirs with His well-beloved Son. All such have received

as a first instalment of the "Redemption" the forgiveness of their sins.

This places the Church of the First-born on a parallel with the House of Aaron, at that stage on their Atonement Day, when the blood of the bullock had been applied, as a propitiatory covering for their sin, when they were then accounted clean and free from sin. The "nation" had to wait a little longer, till the "Lord's Goat" had been slain, and its blood presented in the Most Holy Place.

So with the "people of the possession"—Israel has to wait a little longer yet, till all the sacrificing is complete, and the great High Priest appears a second time without sin—without any more sacrificing for sin—"unto salvation" or redemption.

Thus the linking together of these separated phrases (even though set amidst such tremendous lofty thoughts regarding God's eternal purposes, bridging as they do the vast stretch of time from eternal ages past, to distant ages yet to come), reveals to our minds the Hebrew mould in which Paul's thoughts were cast. Paul sets two institutions of God in parallel, and illustrates the greater invisible institution by a lowlier visible organisation.

As God predestinated Aaron and his house to the Priesthood before calling them to their sacred office, so God, when planning His purposes, pre-destinated the entire Christ. As Aaron and his house received the anointing with the holy oil, so the entire Christ have received the anointing with the Holy Spirit. Thus, the typical anointed and the real anointed were pre-destinated and set apart.

As the anointed in Israel had access to hidden blessings in a holy (or heavenly) place, so the anointed in Christ have access to "all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies." As the anointed in Israel were first to experience ceremonial forgiveness of sins, so also the anointed in Christ are first to experience real forgiveness of sins, and as redemption of the "possession" came in Israel with the end of the Atonement Day, so again, the full redemption of the "possession" will come with the close of a greater and better Atonement Day.

What a wonderful mind the Apostle Paul surely had! How easily in his maturer days he comprehended the

deep things of God, and how sublimely he set them out for his brethren of a later day, so that we may understand more of the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths of God's great love and of His great Plan, stretching from the eternities past into eternal years to come, revealing the cleansing and restoring powers of grace Divine as it overcomes and eradicates the sins of men, yet cast into the Divinely appointed mould of Israel's tabernacling days, when priest and people, with blood of bulls and goats were used to represent the "better things."

But let us pause to ask ourselves if it could possibly have been otherwise, when everything in Mosaic days was made and instituted according to a pattern shown to Moses in the holy mount. The Heavenly Architect of the great Divine Plan accorded to Moses a vision of those plans, delineated and drafted in the shape and pattern of a tabernacle, and its furnishings, with express command to copy it in every detail and particular. If, then, Divine wisdom compressed and crystallised eternal Truth and an eternal plan into the lines, angles and measurements of a curtained court, and a skin-covered tent; into the shapes of altars, a table and a candlestick; into the form of a mercy-seat, crowned with its open-winged cherubim, and into the robes and ministries of anointed priests, need we wonder when we behold the reverse procedure employed, and when we find Tabernacle and Priesthood becoming the shadowy semblance of eternal truth again! Is there really any ground for marvelling when the Holy Spirit of truth draws forth, and expands those same eternal truths from the Tabernacle and its furnishings, which it once compressed and incorporated into that Tabernacle?

There is indeed no ground for marvelling when Paul links those great eternal truths, as they are made to develop and expand before his Spirit-illuminated mind, with the outlines of the carefully and precisely made copies (the Tabernacle, etc.), of the pattern showed to Moses in the holy mount.

There is something here of supreme importance to think about. We cannot successfully put asunder that which God has joined together! If God has been graciously pleased to compress and concentrate the re-

redemptive features of His Plan into the shape of a Tabernacle, and has illustrated what He purposes "in redemption" to do, by its ceremonies and services, no student of the Divine Word can hope successfully to comprehend the full extent of that redemptive Plan without frequent and continued reference to that Tabernacle, and its services.

No student can progress in the Truth except by aligning his doctrine with God's designs in that structure built in conformity with His own original "Pattern".

Do these seem strong words? Paul's own method in expressing these deep eternal truths is their justification and warranty. On his methods we cannot hope to improve.

Let us then, dear brethren in the Lord, apply ourselves more diligently in days to come to these sacred Oracles of God, for in them we have in very deed the way of life and Truth. And let us not neglect those old shadows of the Truth, thinking we need them not because we have access to the newer and better realities of this Age, and because our calling is to heavenly things. God has blended the realities into the shadows—to get them down to our human consciousness—and none may separate what God has joined without injury to his faith!

JOHN BUNYAN ON SECTARIANISM

Was not that old saint, John Bunyan, who lay for years a prisoner in jail in Bedford, England, because he preached the doctrines of Jesus and the Apostles, right when he said: "Since you would know by what name I would be distinguished from others, I tell you I would be, and hope I am, Christian; and choose if God would count me worthy, to be called a Christian, a believer, or other such name which is approved by the Holy Ghost. And as for those faction titles of Anabaptist, Presbyterian, Independent, or the like, I conclude that they came neither from Antioch, nor from Jerusalem, but from Hell and Babylon, for they tend to divisions."

THE QUIET TIME

"STICKING FAST"

"My soul **followeth hard** after Thee." The word here used means properly to cleave to; to adhere; to be glued to; to stick fast. Then it means to attach oneself to anything; and then, to pursue or follow after. The Psalmist's meaning here is that he adhered firmly to God, as pieces of wood glued together adhere to each other; that he, as it were, STUCK FAST to Him; that he would not leave Him or be separated from Him. The language represents the feeling of true piety in adhering firmly and constantly to God, whatever there may be that tends to separate us from Him. The adhesion of bodies by glue is a striking but not an adequate representation of the firmness with which the soul adheres to God. Portions of matter held together by glue may be separated; but nothing can separate us from the Love of God.

"Thy watchful eye pervadeth space,
Thy presence, Lord, fills every place;
And wheresoe'er my lot may be,
Still shall my spirit **cleave to Thee.**"

SAVED TO SERVE

O Lord, I pray,
That for this day
I may not swerve
By foot or hand
From Thy command,
Not to be served, but to serve.
This, too, I pray
That for this day
No love of ease
Nor pride prevent
My good intent,
Not to be pleased, but to please.
And if I may,
I'd have this day
Strength from above
To set my heart
In Heavenly art,
Not to be loved, but to love.

GOD FIRST

Let me learn to **begin each new day with God**. I would accept the day from His hand as a new gift, and a new opportunity. I would take a forward look at the road I have to travel that day, the encounters that are awaiting me, the difficulties that may lie along the road, and claim afresh from Him the strength and wisdom and courage I shall need for that day's march.

Guide me in Thy truth, and teach me ; for Thou art the God of my salvation.—Psalm 25 ; 5.

THE LORD IS THERE

In the end of the prophecies of Ezekiel we have the plan of the city, a little picture of the city of God and the closing words of his prophecy are these : " And the name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah-shammah " (The Lord is there). How we rejoice in the prospects of that day with the peace and satisfaction to men which will come as a result of **the Lord being there**.

In these days of food difficulties we particularly appreciate the sentiments of the Christian who wrote : " My wife sometimes apologises for the dinner on the table, and says : ' If I had only known that you were coming to dinner I would have had something better.' I always reply : ' If you sit beside me I shall be satisfied.' It is not what is on the table that makes the feast for me, but those that sit around it." " A dinner of herbs where love is, is better than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." If the Lord dwells in the home His presence constitutes a continual feast. If it can be said, not merely in words but in reality of our Christian homes and experiences, Jehovah-shammah, the Lord is there, ours is a happy and satisfying experience indeed.

Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of.—2 Tim. 3 ; 14....

It is only by Divine grace that we are able to continue along the paths upon which we placed our feet when we began the Christian life. We began on the principle of FAITH. Our entire confidence was centred in the Son of God. We relied implicitly upon the Word of God. We rejoiced to know that the Spirit of God dwelt in us. We also realised that we owed everything to the GRACE of God. Let us continue along these lines.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GREAT COVENANTS OF SCRIPTURE

Doctrine is vital to the child of God. When rightly viewed it is recognised to be essentially practical and a potent means of exhortation. All this is claimed, and more, for the understanding of the three great Covenants of Scripture—the Abrahamic Covenant, frequently termed the Promise, the Law Covenant, and the New Covenant. In this preliminary survey, therefore, it is desired to examine the real value of a correct appreciation of these Covenants.

All true followers of the Master recognise the Apostle Paul to have been used in a special way to declare the " whole counsel of God," for " he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words," and while it was not lawful for him to utter those things, it is generally conceded that they tinged the whole of his teaching. It is very significant, therefore, that this great Apostle attached great importance to the subject of the Covenants. If we lose interest in the Covenants, or regard them as unimportant, then we manifest less wisdom in this respect than the Apostle evinced.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, in particular, Paul deals with the Covenants in a masterly fashion. For the present, it is not our purpose to examine his words in detail, but to note that this Church had become very confused on the subject of the Covenants, hence the need for the Apostle's exposition of the subject. They had been " bewitched " (Gal. 3 ; 1), due, of course, to the subtlety of the Adversary.

As we look back upon the Harvest period, so we are able to see similar severe tests amongst the Lord's followers concerning the same subject of the Covenants. The Adversary has once again " bewitched " many with confusion of mind on this important doctrine, and in view of this it should be clear to each one that there must be some good reason for these tests.

Any doctrine which is the special object of the Adversary's " devices " must obviously be important, and, so

far as the Covenants are concerned, it is mainly because they are intimately connected with the **hope** of each Age.

Once this is conceded, the doctrine of the Covenants is seen in its proper light. The Covenants are not "dry" or "hard" as some mistakenly believe; an understanding of the Covenants provides an outline of the Divine Plan of the Ages and, what is most important to us, it gives us a **firmer basis for faith** in the wonderful hope set before the saints of the Gospel Age. This is clearly confirmed in that wonderful passage of Scripture— "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things (that is, the promise and the oath), in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a **strong consolation**, who have fled for refuge to **lay hold upon the hope** set before us" (Heb. 6; 17-18).

In this day, there are many sources of discouragement if we look at others or at the conditions even amongst the Lord's own people; this accounts in part for the fact that many who once rejoiced in the full vision of Harvest truth have now lost interest, some having gone back to Babylon and others into the world. We mention these **facts** as a warning to each one of us and to emphasise that the Covenants can play an important part in assisting us to "abide" in Christ. In the Scripture quoted above, the Apostle testifies that the Abrahamic Covenant, with its wonderful hope to the "heirs of promise," affords "strong consolation"; indeed, the hope it contains is likened in verse 19 to "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil"—that is, into heaven itself, "whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

The Law Covenant contained the hope of the Jewish Age and related to perfect human life. The New Covenant likewise concerns the hope for the race generally; it contains earthly blessings only which will accrue to mankind when that Covenant goes into operation in the Millennial Age. Meantime, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Promise, contains the heavenly hope, even as we are called in the **one hope** of our calling. This, in itself,

clarifies our understanding of the Divine Plan to no small extent, namely, that in each Age one hope only operates. In the Gospel Age, the only hope held out is heavenly, while the "flesh profiteth nothing"; in the past and future Ages the hope is earthly, and will relate to perfection on the **human plane**.

As Bible students, it is feared that we often overlook the importance of the Old Testament. We are possibly all of us much more familiar with the New Testament than we are with some of the detail of the Old, but "all Scripture" is given for our edification. In our Lord's day there was no New Testament, and His hearers would therefore think of the Old when He prayed "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth" (John 17; 17), although the principle equally applies to the New Testament. Our Lord, too, gained strength and comfort from the things "written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms" (Luke 24; 44).

Let us, then, illustrate the importance of the Covenants from the Old Testament Scriptures, and, for this purpose, a few passages in the Book of Deuteronomy will be examined.

Moses draws the attention of the people to "this law which I set before you this day," and immediately exhorts the people "take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest thy heart depart from thy heart all the days of thy life" (Deut. 4; 9). It is not suggested for one moment that it is incumbent upon us to keep the Law, for it has ended, but we may here see an important principle—exhortation associated with doctrine.

In the same book there are several passages designed to impress upon the people the sacredness of the Covenant there mentioned, and, once again, we may take the principle to ourselves with even greater force. "Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God" for "he will not forsake thee . . . nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them" (Deut. 4; 23, 31). In this particular instance, the writer undoubtedly refers to the Abrahamic Covenant, and if he enjoins the people not to forget the Covenant because of its importance, **how much more**

does this exhortation apply to us, the actual heirs of Promise?

In chapter 7, too, we find a very helpful lesson in line with our present theme, namely, the importance of the subject of the Covenants generally. The writer explains to the people "the Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people . . . but **because the Lord loved you,**" and then he adds another reason, "and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers" (verses 7, 8). If the typical people were exhorted by God's servant along these lines, **how much more** should we rejoice to know that God has chosen us for the same reasons, namely, because He loves us and because of the Covenant to which we are related. In view of this, we can likewise take unto ourselves the counsel of verse 9, "know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." Yes, our God is faithful as seen, in particular, in His Covenants, for "he keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him," whether in this Age or the next.

It is clear that the ancient, typical people of God—at any rate, those who were rightly exercised—found in the Covenants great delight and comfort as they endeavoured to serve God in their day. They likewise recognised the faithfulness of the God who made the Covenants, hence their exhortative power, and this is equally true to-day.

It follows that the great Covenants of Scripture are an important part of the "armour" provided for the Lord's people, and especially in this day of the Church's direst need by reason of the subtleties of the Adversary. Let us, therefore, see to it that we do not overlook the importance of earnest and careful study of this subject of the Covenants so that our hope may be kept bright and living until that time when it is realised in heavenly exaltation, as implied in the words uttered so long ago by God Himself and confirmed by an oath—"thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies and in **thy seed** shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22 : 17-18).

? THE QUESTION BOX ?

Q.—There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another" (1 Cor. 15 : 40). What is the meaning of the words "celestial" and "terrestrial"?

A.—In plain English, heavenly and earthly. "Celestial" comes from the Latin "caelestis," meaning heavenly, and "terrestrial" from the Latin "terra," the earth. It would seem that the translators of the Authorised Version used the Latin words as rather more appropriate to the loftiness of the Apostle's theme. In the Greek the words are *epourania* (belonging to the heavens) and *epigeia* (belonging to the earth), so that in "celestial" and "terrestrial" we really have very correct Latin translations of the Greek. With our own understanding of the distinction between human and spiritual natures it may be that these words are more descriptive than the every-day "heavenly" and "earthly." To speak of a heavenly being may easily call to mind the picture of a glorified man descending from the skies, somewhat along the lines of the old idea that the spiritual body is merely a glorified physical body. The terms "celestial being" and "terrestrial being" may better fit the fact that there are two separate and distinct planes of being, each having its own characteristic inhabitants, fitted and adapted to their own environment and ordained by God to be for ever the glory of those environments—angels, "celestial beings" in heaven, and men, "terrestrial beings" on earth. But in reading the passage, we are certainly literally correct if we use the every-day English words, and read: "There are also heavenly bodies, and bodies of earth; but the glory of the heavnlies is one, and the glory of the earthlies is another."

He had been told the significance of the coming Kingdom—that it is to endure for a thousand years. His seven-year-old mind tried to take in the meaning of such great figures. Suddenly a smile of understanding illumined his features. "Oh! what a long time to be happy," he said.

Gathered Grain.

VOICES

There are little sights and sounds with which we are all familiar, that have a healing effect upon the mind that is overstrung with work and worry. The ripple of the silvery stream beneath the shady trees; the hum of the bees and the chirping of the grasshopper in the clover; the golden corn waving in the soft breezes; the flitting butterfly amid the fragrant flowers; the glittering insects in the grass basking in the warmth of the sun; the rustle of the rabbits in the undergrowth; the cheerful singing of the birds; the fleecy clouds floating in the blue skies; the melodious skylark soaring exultingly above all. Such influences are too subtle for human explanation. Little voices they are, proclaiming the grand harmony, the peace universal in nature, and they act as a restorative mentally and physically.

But there are other little sights and sounds of a spiritual kind that tend to heal the heart that is overwrought with failure and sorrow. These are little voices proclaiming a loving God who is watching and caring; a great High Priest who is sympathetic, understanding and ready to help. What sights and sounds are these? The kindly word gently spoken in a tone of cheer; the sudden sparkle of a gracious smile; the unexpected gleam of a sympathetic tear; the little extra pressure of the hand; the secret act of self-sacrifice, unseen, unheard; the silent look that can find no words yet shows it has heard and understood. These are powerful little voices. They require no scholarship, no talent, no skill beyond the scholarship, talent and skill that the spirit of God bequeaths to every loving and earnest heart.

"Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing.

Forest Gate Bible Monthly

THE BOOK OF BOOKS

"What books ought you to read?" There are some books that are indispensable—a few books. Almost all books have their own use, even the silly ones, and an omnivorous reader, if he reads intelligently, need never

feel that his time is wasted even when he bestows it on the flimsiest trash that is printed; but there are some books that are absolutely indispensable to the kind of education that we are contemplating, and to the profession that we are considering; and of all these the most indispensable, the most useful, the one whose knowledge is most effective, is the Bible. There is no book from which more valuable lessons can be learned. I am considering it now, not as a religious book, but as a manual of utility, of professional preparation, and professional use for a journalist. There is perhaps no book whose style is more suggestive and more instructive, from which you learn more directly that sublime simplicity which never exaggerates, which recounts the greatest events with solemnity, of course, but without sentimentality or affectation; none which you open with such confidence and lay down with such reverence. There is no book like the Bible. When you get into a controversy and want exactly the right answer, when you are looking for an expression, what is there that closes a dispute like a verse from the Bible? What is it that sets up the principle for you, which pleads for a policy, for a cause, so much as the right passage of Holy Scripture?"

—C. A. DANA.

"THOU SHALT REMEMBER"

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee"—Deut. 8:2.

'Tis good to remember the way He hath led us—

To view, once again, both the track and the road;
To muse on the fact, that unailing He fed us.

Our faithful and loving compassionate God,
'Tis good to review how He surely was leading,
Though we saw Him not, nor knew all He had planned.

'Tis good to recall that whate'er we were needing
Was wondrously met by His bountiful hand.
'Tis good to remember that He Himself brought us
Through all of life's journey, right unto this day;
Forgave all our sins and our blunders, and taught us
To cleave unto Him, and make Him our Stay.

'Tis good to remember; to pause! and to ponder!

It stirs us to worship, and tunes us to praise;
Such retrospect helps us of Him to grow fonder.

Whose goodness and mercy have followed our days.

BE PATIENT, BRETHREN



We sometimes wonder why our Lord doth place us
 Within a sphere so narrow, so obscure,
 That nothing we call work can find an entrance ;
 There's only room to suffer, to endure.

Well, God loves patience ! Souls that dwell in stillness,
 Doing the little things or resting quite,
 May just as perfectly fulfil their mission ;
 Be just as useful in the Father's sight.

As they who grapple with some giant evil,
 Clearing a path that every eye may see,
 Our Saviour cares for cheerful acquiescence
 As much as for a busy ministry.

And yet He does love service—where it is given
 By grateful love that clothes itself in deed ;
 But work that's done beneath the scourge of duty ;
 Be sure to such He gives but little heed.

Christ never asks of us such heavy labour
 As leaves no time for resting at His feet ;
 The waiting attitude of expectation,
 He oftimes counts a service most complete.

He sometimes wants our ear—our rapt attention—
 That He some sweetest secret may impart.
 'Tis always in the time of deepest stillness
 That heart finds deepest fellowship with heart.

Then seek to please Him, whatso'er He bids thee—
 Whether to do, to suffer, to lie still ;
 'Twill matter little by what path He led us
 If in it all we sought to do His will.



DAWN



**" For as the brightshining, that cometh out of the east
 and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the presence
 of the Son of Man be."—Matt. 24 ; 17.**

Yonder, friend, behold the darkness,
 Lightly tinged with streaks of grey,
 Far beyond the Mount of Olives
 Comes the glorious radiant day.
 See how pink and rosy fingers
 Clamber up the lightening sky ;
 Heralds of the sun's own glory
 Soon to reign supreme on high.
 Now the light has reached to Hebron,
 Priests and watchmen cry aloud,
 Men are rousing from their slumbers,
 Heads in prayer and praise are bowed.
 Lo ! the sun itself, in splendour
 Rises high o'er Zion's hill,
 Pouring down its life and blessing
 Free for men to take their fill.
 Come thou thus, O blessed Jesus,
 To this darksome world of sin,
 Bringing rich Millennial blessings,
 Calling men to enter in,
 Thus the glory of Thy presence
 Manifest to all will be,
 Glory that enshrouds creation
 As the waters shroud the sea.

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The Office. The attention of friends is drawn to the recent change of address for all correspondence, which latter should now always be addressed to 18, St. Ives Road, Leicester.

The office will be closed for correspondence and orders between 16th and 27th December. We would particularly request the friends to see that their orders for books, etc., required before Christmas are in our hands by the 16th.

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