

influence we spiritually bring forth fruit to God.
(Rom. 7. 4.)

There are very many more interesting details which may be noted in this precious Book of Ruth; the few remarks which I have made may serve to begin the subject for some of my young readers.

M. W. B.

A WORD IN SEASON.

“When the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.” (Luke 22. 14.)

TWO affectionate appeals made in recent years by honoured servants of the Lord, both now with Him, are here recorded as worthy of earnest consideration.

On one occasion beloved W. J., after speaking tenderly of the suffering love of Christ and of His *sacrifice* for us, raised the question of our response to that love, as expressed in our conduct. He then asked :

“Do you love the Lord Jesus ?

“How much do you love Him ?

“Do you love Him sufficiently to cause you to come to the meetings *in good time* ? ”

* * * * *

The other instance was when beloved R. D., referring to those who “watch over our souls as those that shall give account that they may do this with joy and not groaning,” said :

“One feels how laxity on the part of some puts groans on the hearts of those who care.

“Carelessness, indifference to the Lord’s interests,

coming late to the meetings, puts groanings of shame on the part of those that care.

“In the city of Philippi was a meeting well tuned—a meeting in the enjoyment of heavenly things, in full sympathy Godward and in the testimony to man in the gospel. *I do not think they came late to the meetings there!*”

* * * * *

Habitual unpunctuality must surely be an indication of spiritual indifference to what is due to the Lord Jesus and to His own.

He knows, however, whether it is circumstances over which we have no control, or whether it is lack of affectionate consideration for Him and His people, that is the cause of the lateness.

May the Lord give us grace to give heed to these words of exhortation. (CONTRIBUTED.)

THE HINDRANCE.—A PRAYER.

THE MUSINGS OF A YOUNG PILGRIM.

PART III.

(Written January, 1923.)

LORD, shew me the thing that stands in the way
 The stone that is under the wheel,
 Reveal the idol to be cast down,
 Lord, hear me as I kneel.

And, Lord, if I have not the strength to cut off
 The part that offendeth me,
 Nor have I the courage to overthrow
 The thing I love more than Thee :

Oh ! cripple the limb with a touch of Thy hand,
 To bear it give me grace,
 And when I awake to-morrow morn
 May the idol be on its face

THE NAME.

JESUS, I hail Thee Lord !
 Passing along my way,
 In the red heat of day,
 Or in the gloom of night,
 When darkness quenches light,
 Still art Thou light of life, to me supreme,
 Faith's radiant Object, Love's sufficient theme.

Jesus, I hail Thee Lord !
 Though all things fail me here,
 Save that I know Thee near.
 Bowing before Thy feet,
 In adoration sweet,
 Then, then, I breathe Thy name, mine all of praise :
 No sweeter sound, e'en heaven itself can raise.

Jesus, I'll hail Thee Lord,
 When at the trumpet's blast,
 With rapture to Thy tryst
 I soon shall rise. Ah, then
 Ever shall I remain
 Swelling the glory of my radiant Lord,
 In heavenly chorus, sweet and full accord !

A. M.



MORAL POWER.

HE who proclaims the word as in 2 Timothy iv. 2 is in the dignity that comes from the knowledge that that word will eventually triumph. Though, on the one hand, he recognises and accepts that what is of God is in reproach here, yet, on the other, he recognises that it must be

triumphant in the end. Every servant is below his testimony in one way ; that is to say, he has far more light than has yet become effective *in* him ; but still, if he is sincere, and is exercised on the line which the light indicates, he will encourage others to follow with him. The point with us ought to be, how far are we governed by what we proclaim ? How far are we formed by what we speak of ? Are we in accord with the light we present ? The latter chapters in 2 Timothy are a moral answer to the testimony in chapter i. One feels often the lack of moral power with us ; it is in consequence of where we are practically, of where our souls live. If we are in the presence of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, what power there is in the word ; how effective it becomes. In Mark i. the Lord enters into the synagogue, bringing with Him all the power of God, for He was with God, and the result is that evil is detected ; He was with God, and the power of His service was marked by that. So our service depends on where we are morally ; power lies not in the amount we know, but in what we are. We must be with God to be able to detect what is merely mental and what is moral ; we need to be morally affected by the truth ; and when it has truly affected us personally, then our word will be with power ; evil will be detected, and it will be effective in good.

W. JOHNSON.

Wimbledon, S. W.



The Lord connects the gospel with Himself here. "For my sake and the gospel's." It seems to be connected with the testimony in relation to the world to come. It speaks of what is going to be established on the footing of death and resurrection. The testimony to-day is of what is going to be established publicly. The gospel goes a long way in Mark. "He that believes and is baptised shall be saved." The gospel, when properly preached, puts people on another basis, that of another world and in relation to another world. The special thing with Mark is Christ *risen*. To walk in the light of another world involves partaking of the afflictions of the gospel. The reception of the gospel involves suffering in regard of this world.

Park Street, 21/1/13.



THE SANCTUARY AND THE TEMPLE.

10, CROOMS HILL, GREENWICH,
16th March, 1901.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I am glad to answer to the best of my ability your inquiry. The difficulty is in that we use words in a loose way, and often scripture words with a sense not quite in accord with that in which they are used there. I have looked up the word "sanctuary," and find that in the Old Testament it means "chapel," "hallowed place," "holy place." This evidently conveys the idea that it meant that which was, so to say, enclosed. David was charged to build a house for the sanctuary. In the New Testament there is no

distinct word for sanctuary, it is simply an adaptation of the adjective "holy." The plural form indicates the "holiest." In regard to the word "temple," two words are employed, namely, one signifying the whole, including the courts, and another signifying the building. These words are used carefully and never confounded. *It is clear that the sanctuary answered to the latter view of the temple.* Hence we cannot always take temple and sanctuary as synonymous. My impression is that the sanctuary is presented to us objectively, as that into which we enter: we are not spoken of as being the sanctuary, as we are of being the temple. We are not the holiest. I imagine that that is the revelation of God and of His will in Christ. Evidently in Hebrews the idea is objective. Yet we are said to be *the temple*, and that in the sense of the actual building. The conclusion to which one is compelled to come is that there were two ideas presented in the temple, one as the sanctuary and the other as where God dwells among men, so as to put Himself in touch with them. We retreat into the sanctuary, and there learn the secret of God; this thought comes out frequently. On the other hand, the temple is where God puts Himself in touch with men. In times of distress in Israel faith was taught to look to God's holy temple. This thought is realised in the church, the Spirit of God dwells there. As you say, "house" is a more general idea, and consists of those that have access to God's courts, and thus come under His discipline.

The temple is a type of the church as a

building, but I cannot quite see that the tabernacle is this, it refers more exclusively to Christ. I do not know whether the above is plain, but I trust that it will serve to make plain what is in my mind in regard to a very interesting point. I hope that you are well, and remain, with love in the Lord,

Your affectionate brother,

TO W. J.

F. E. R.



A SONG OF ZION.

OH magnify the Lord with me,
 With me exalt His name ;
 To Him both praise and glory be,
 Th' Eternal One, the Same.

His lovingkindness, oh how great !
 His mercy how secure !
 His faithfulness we'll celebrate :
 His word, His truth how pure !

The living, yea, the living, Lord,
 Thy praises shall extol ;
 Hades and death shall silence hold,
 The vict'ry's in my soul.

Come hearken, children, unto me,
 Who make the Lord your fear :
 This poor man cried, was heard and sav'd,
 God wip'd away his tear.

The house of God, my sole desire,
 Thither shall we repair
 With festive throng, their soul on fire,
 No company so fair.

The vale of tears from sight recedes,
 (Though wells we there have found) :
 The highways now re-echo glees
 Of gladder, holier sound.

“THE APPLE TREE.”

(SONG OF SOLOMON II. 1-4; VIII. 11-14.)

*Footings from an Address by W. J., at Streatham,
January 9th, 1913.*

THE measure in which we love Christ is shewn by the way in which we answer to that in which His love has been most fully expressed, that is, His death.

If we are not familiar with Christ in our individual pathway, we cannot be familiar with Him in assembly. If we manage to do without Him during the week—and this is very bad management—we cannot quickly perceive Him in assembly: there must be moral condition.

The Lord makes Himself known to condition, that you and I may know the shelter and satisfaction of “The Apple Tree.” The apple tree is *the covenant of grace*.

Intimacy with Christ is of the utmost value. No one will ever know the sorrow of solitude as Jesus knew it; no one will ever know the joy of companionship as Christ will know it. The apple tree answers to Habakkuk iii. 17, 18. The banqueting house answers to Zephaniah iii. 17.

One often hears the question, “Is life worth living?” Life is worth living for His sake.

He will love you into fruitfulness, but He must have the credit for all.

Paul’s desire was that Christ might be admired in the saints.

There is a great deal of discipline because we keep Christ at a distance. He says, “I claim you by my suffering love.”

“MASCHIL,”
OR “GIVING INSTRUCTION.”

(PSA. XXXII. AND CXLII.)

THESE two psalms bring before us the end of all God's ways with us, the object of all His instruction, that is, that we might come to know *Him*, that we might come to the knowledge of God. He takes us up and instructs us, in order that we might find our joy in all that God *is*—that is the end of all His ways with us, it is the object of His instruction. If we think of the scripture in 1 Corinthians xv., where we come to the final solution of all His ways, we see, “Then shall the Son himself be subject . . . that *God* may be all in all.” So that we see that whether we think of His ways with us now, or His ways publicly and finally in the future, both are to the one end, that we might know God, that He might be all in all to us.

Now one word as to these psalms, these Maschil psalms; these are the first and the last, but there are thirteen such psalms; they are all entitled Maschil, that is, “to give instruction,”—and the instruction is in the knowledge of God. They cover the instruction that the “wise”—the Maschilim—in Daniel xi. have been brought into; they cover the wisdom in which they will instruct the people of God in that coming terrible day of Jacob's trouble, the “great tribulation.” But these psalms give us the detail of their wisdom and the way God brought them into it. God never leaves Himself without such

as can instruct His people in any given circumstances; He will instruct them and teach them in His ways with them, so that they may be capable of helping and instructing others in like circumstances. So with the Maschilim: they will have so come under God's instruction for themselves that He will be able to use them for the help and instruction and comfort of His people in the day of great tribulation. God will see to it that there are those ready and capable of instructing His people then, of ministering to them the knowledge of God.

These psalms give us what God will instruct His people in then. I suggest that they cover the whole of the instruction of the Maschilim, that they shew their preparation by God that they may turn the many to righteousness and instruct the many in that coming day. If things go to the bad in man's hand, God takes occasion by that very fact to shew His care and His provision for His people. It is a blessed reality to our souls to find through the very difficulty of our circumstances what God can be for and to us. God has given us great light, beloved brethren, and He would bring us into the blessed reality of what the light tells us of. The light, I need hardly say, is all centred in Christ, and what makes it good to us is the work of the Spirit in us; He brings us into the good of Christ.

Now the first Maschil psalm is xxxii; it begins at the end, as in fact all psalms do; and the end is that God should be known as the rejoicing of His people. He would have

His people to rejoice in Him. The last Maschil psalm is cxlii., where we find that David is shut up in the cave, but he is shut up to *God* there. Nobody knew him; nobody cared for him; refuge had failed him, but he was *shut up to God*. The end of that is that God deals bountifully with him; he rejoices in God, and the righteous with him.

Psalm xxxii. is the first of the Maschil psalms, and it shews us how God becomes known to His people. It is not Christianity; perhaps it is not God known according to the height of the revelation of Himself, but it does shew this, that God is to be known in the souls of His people, and to this end He puts away our sins. So David describeth the blessedness of the man "whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered." It is what God *does*, He forgives sins and covers transgressions. But if He puts away our sins, it is that He may put Himself in the place of that which He puts away. That is the object of the forgiveness: that God may be known in the soul of the forgiven one. So that I can say, My sins are forgiven! But what have I got besides? I have got the knowledge of God, I have got the knowledge of Christ who put away my sins. So in this first Maschil psalm we come to this element of the knowledge of God: God is known as Justifier; He forgives the iniquity of our sins. Then further, He is our hiding place, "Thou art a hiding place for me." And He is our Guide; He instructs and teaches us in the way we should go, and the result is that we confide in Jehovah, we rejoice in all

that He is. We know the supreme happiness of having God before us, and not ourselves or our sins.

So the first teaching brings us to this, that God stands out livingly before the soul; He is *all* to us. If He justifies us from His side He will have a subjective answer in us, and that is He brings us to the point of "no guile." What always accompanies the grace of God in forgiveness is that we are without guile; we hide nothing from Him; we confess our transgressions to Him; we do not hide from Him, for He has won our confidence. Then secondly, we hide *in* Him in all that He is, and we are guided by Him. There is the consciousness on our part that the eye of God is resting upon us, and we are guided in the way in which we should go because He counsels us with His eye upon us. Then the end of it is that we rejoice in God; we boast in God; He is our joy for ever. That is the end of all His instruction whether for us or for Israel. When Israel has come to know God they, too, will find their joy according to their measure in all that God is for them.

Other Maschil psalms are xlii., xliv. and xlv., they shew us the way to Christ; it is the way of deliverance. Deliverance is reached when Christ is reached, when the Man is reached who has brought them out of all their distresses. So Psalm xlv. brings you to the King—the Beloved, and the excellences of the Man who is the King are detailed for us; they are reached in the soul, and we know deliverance from all our distresses, for we have reached Christ.

Then having learnt to appreciate the true Man, God's Man, we can bear to have the character of Antichrist unfolded to us; we shall know how to refuse Antichrist. So Psalms lii.-lv. are all about Antichrist; they shew us the true character of Antichrist, who loves evil rather than good and lying rather than righteousness. Then Psalm lxxiv. is instruction to call upon God when he has filled the earth with violence, when the tumult of those that rise up against God ascends continually, and then Psalm lxxviii. shews us God's sovereign goodness in all His ways with His people, feeding them according to the integrity of His heart and guiding them by the skilfulness of His hands.

Then we come on to Psalm lxxxviii., a psalm in which there is no comfort. J. N. D. said he was comforted in reading this psalm because it brought him to a spot where there was no comfort, "lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and my familiar friends into darkness." It is a very terrible experience to be brought anywhere near that, but blessed in its results. I need hardly say that this psalm speaks of the sufferings of the blessed Lord in being made a curse for us.

Well, the end of all instruction is that we may know God; that is what David is brought to in Psalm cxlii., he had to be shut up in a cave that he might learn God. And we, too, have to come to that, that no man cares for us, for then it is that God says to us, *I know you, I am for you.*

Beloved brethren, it is worth while going through all these experiences that we may come

to know God. Think of learning God in such a way, as the One who is for us! Let us grow by the true knowledge of God. Psalm xliii. says, "Send out thy light and thy truth: *they* shall lead me; *they* shall bring me to thy holy mount." The light and the truth meet us in the darkness and the distance, so that they may lead us and bring us to be at home in the place from which they came.

God wants to be our "exceeding joy"—think of it! Is He that to you? Well, our true blessing lies in the knowledge of God Himself. W. J.



A CONTRAST.

IN a day when there is a widespread feeling abroad in Christendom that what is needed to put things right in the world is the appearance of a superman, who by his character and superlative genius will compel universal homage and respect for his direction and control, it may be well to direct the attention of Christians to the testimony of scripture as to the superlative greatness of Christ, remembering the exhortation of 1 John ii. 24, "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father."

Our Lord in resurrection spoke to His disciples of the three sections of the scriptures which testified of Himself and which needed to be fulfilled—the law of Moses, the prophets and the

HOMELY WORDS.

(JOB 32 18, MARGIN.)

Did you ever find a few words of scripture stand out in raised letters from the sacred page, burning themselves into your very being? That is when the Spirit makes contact between them and your soul. Read scripture in this way. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6. 63.)

★ ★ ★

W. J. speaks of "The Sufferings of Christ," by J. N. D., and "Discipline in the School of God," by J. B. S., as christian classics, to be read and digested by every Christian. This they truly are—classics for the moment. The first in its rugged, uncompromising, convincing terms, sending its advanced light over the holy ground of Christ's own pathway yet to be answered to by the soul in the school of God.

★ ★ ★

Study *the mysteries* of scripture. They will not fill your head with knowledge, but your soul with worship. They will suffuse your spirit with a holy peace, and order your walk in holy dignity as those who of yore bare the ark in its sacred mystery. Paul, the saint of the Lord, could speak of "stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. 4. 1.)

★ ★ ★

Have you got hold of the truth? Then you may lose it! But let the truth once get hold of

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS.

THE Book of Psalms begins with "Blessed is the man" and ends with "Praise ye the Lord." Man blessed *on* the earth and Jehovah praised *from* the earth gives a complete idea of the scope of the Psalms.

Psalm 1 is Christ *characteristically*. There is to be a congregation of the righteous.

Psalm 2 is Christ *personally* and *officially*, rejected by man but exalted and saluted by God. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

Israel said of Reuben, "Thou art my first-born, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of strength." Psalm 1 is the dignity, Psalm 2 the strength, answering to the two pillars in the temple. Jachin: "He will establish." Boaz: "In him is strength." The moral precedes the official.

Psalms 3 to 8 are five experimental psalms.

Psalm 3 is salvation. The man is heard and sustained from the place where Jesus *is* (the "holy hill"), while meeting with the opposition in the place where Jesus *was*. The opposition is against Jehovah and His anointed, as in Psalm 2. (See Acts 4. 23-31.)

Psalm 4. The appeal is to the God of righteousness. In the way of righteousness he is taunted by the sons of men, who turn his glory into shame; but in this way he has two compensations, "Jehovah will hear" (ver. 3) and the "light of his countenance." (Ver. 6.) A

heart assured and satisfied. Psalm 3 is the rest of protection; Psalm 4 the rest of satisfaction. In Psalm 5 he directs his prayer to God in the sense of what is due to Him in *holiness*. He hath not pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with Him, and drawing near to God in His house he worships in His holy temple. It is holiness which shrinks from evil, and confidence in God's deliverance, which is looked for and counted upon.

Psalm 6 is *discipline*. Chastened and sifted he has confidence in Jehovah, with whom he is in relationship.

Psalm 7 is the final vindication of the righteous and of Jehovah's ways with them, and this introduces us to the "world to come" in Psalm 8. The last verse of this psalm is the link, when he praises Jehovah for his righteousness, and sings forth the *name* of Jehovah, the most High.

Psalm 8. Upon the Gittith is the harvest home psalm. Here the name of Jehovah, our Adonai, is "excellent in all the earth." and all is in subjection to the Son of man. (See 1 Cor. 15; Heb. 2; Eph. 1.) It is the climax to the synopsis of the whole book, and brings us into the "world to come," setting forth the blessedness of that world where all is in subjection to the Lord, whose name is excellent in all the earth.

The first eight psalms are a complete little Book of Psalms in themselves.

W. J.

(To be continued.)

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS.

(Continued.)

PSALM 9 begins another section which more directly places us in the circumstances of the last days.

Psalms 9 and 10 seem to run together and form an alphabetical acrostic. In Psalm 10, from verses 2 to 12, the acrostic is dropped, and in those verses we get the man of sin morally described; the acrostic is resumed from verse 12 to the end. These two psalms seem to set forth the throne of God in a Man, and the throne of Satan in a man.

Psalms 11 to 14 give the exercises proper to the godly remnant in connection with the presence and power of Antichrist. In Psalm 11 Jehovah's temple and throne are recognised and looked to, therefore the foundations are not destroyed. Verse 6 is the antitype of the destruction of Sodom. (See Rev. 16. 18-21.)

In Psalm 12 the lips and words of men in their pride are contrasted with the words of God, which are pure. Verse 5 describes Pharaoh's pride and oppression of the people of God in Exodus, but Jehovah arises to set in safety the afflicted, crushed under the opposition of the wicked.

Psalm 13 expresses the desire under great pressure ("How long?") to be kept awake lest he "sleep the sleep of death." He confides in the lovingkindness of Jehovah and the psalm closes in great rejoicing.

Psalm 14 shews the folly of the exclusion of

God ; but Jehovah looks down from heaven to see, and finds none answering to Himself—“none good, no, not one.” Yet there were His people, His “afflicted” ones, with whom He could be on the ground of redemption. In principle Balaam and Balak question in verses 4, 5 and 6, but salvation is looked for “out of Zion.”

In Psalm 15 the questions are asked, “who shall abide?” and “who shall dwell?” Then later, the Man is described who shall “never be moved.”

In Psalm 15 the man is asked for who can dwell in the hill of Jehovah’s holiness, and in Psalm 16 the Man is *found*. “I have found . . . a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.”

Psalm 16 sets before us the Man who has God for His head. “The head of Christ is God.” It is a Michtam Psalm—a golden jewel, to be set in our hearts. There are nine characteristics of His holy humanity. Every sentence has reference to *God*, and is proper to a man who has God for his head. Note the way it is quoted in the testimony of the gospel in the Acts, both by Peter and Paul. The doctrine of the latter has its *moral* springs in this truly blessed psalm. It is the path of life, ending in fulness of joy at Jehovah’s right hand.

W. J.

(To be continued.)



“THE Lord values more that one should have *one thought* in common with Him in the day than that one should do a hard day’s work for Him.”

J. B. S.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS.

PSALM 17 is a prayer. There are five psalms thus entitled, which are very instructive. Here Christ is seen in the path of righteousness with *outward pressures*; in Psalm 16 we get the *inward principles* which governed Him.

His appeal is on the ground of righteousness, "Hear the right," and others are associated with Him as in verses 7 and 11. He awaits His vindication in resurrection, which is implied in the last verse: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Psalm 18 is also a resurrection psalm, and speaks of deliverance, righteousness and power. Here Christ, as God's King (ver. 50), in the triumph of His "great deliverance," secures all for Israel on the ground of the sure mercies of David, or the platform of resurrection. I judge that in 2 Samuel 22 *David* is more before us, but here it is *Christ*, and all is ordered and sure in Him.

These three psalms form a complete group.

Psalm 19 gives us, first, creatorial testimony, which is objective, continuous and universal. In the heavens are set the symbols of grace. (Rom. 10. 18.) Secondly, we have the testimony of the law, and this works subjectively, so that the Object of life becomes the rule of life within. It ends with a desire to know it and to answer to it. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy

sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer." (Ver. 14.)

In Psalm 20 Messiah is seen and appreciated in His humiliation. The remnant gives expression to its desires for Him, "Jehovah fulfil all thy petitions." (Ver. 5.) Mephibosheth, in the light of David's return to Jerusalem, can say of Ziba, "Yea, let him take all."

In Psalm 21 the desire is answered, and we have a glorified Messiah.

These two psalms exemplify what another has said, "He wins our hearts by His humiliation, and satisfies our hearts by His glory."

Psalm 22 is the great *sorrow* psalm of the first book, with its title "Aijeleth Shahar." The hind of the morning. It is the bitter night of weeping which ushers in the joys of an everlasting day. In the first part (vers. 1, 2) the Lord is entirely *alone*, but in verse 22 the platform of resurrection is reached, the brethren are embraced, and the name declared.

Note.—It is a worshipping seed which is secured and which is accounted to the Lord for a generation who shall declare His righteousness. Psalm 16 is the Man, Psalm 21 the King, Psalm 22 the Priest.

Psalm 23 presents to us the great Shepherd in resurrection. (See Heb. 13. 20.) He leads as Moses, He sustains as Aaron, He administers as David. The pathway ends in the house of Jehovah.

Psalm 24 states that the earth is Jehovah's, and its fulness, and they that dwell therein. It gives us His creatorial rights. The question is

raised in verse 3, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?"—that is, who shall hold things for God—and, "who shall stand in his holy place?" The One who stands *with* God is the One who holds and administers all *for* God. His hand is clean, His heart is pure, His soul is not lifted up to vanity, and "He shall receive the blessing from Jehovah, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." It is He who gives character to a generation who seek His face in Jacob.

This blessed One, who as Man holds all for Jehovah, is none other than the "King of glory," the Jehovah of hosts!

It is to be noticed that where the Lord's true and perfect humanity is unfolded His deity is asserted or implied.

This Psalm (24) ends a group of nine psalms in which is a very rich and comprehensive presentation of Christ.

W. J.

(To be continued.)



A PROPHEPIC UTTERANCE.

J. R. T. (CAMBRIDGE) draws attention to the following paragraph on p. 208, MUTUAL COMFORT for 1912, adding, that in the light of the past four years it seems to have been a prophetic utterance:

"Many have asked me lately, Is the coming of the Lord near? Have we solemnly weighed what that means? It means a condition of things exceedingly difficult and trying to us. I believe we are going to be terribly oppressed

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS.

(Continued.)

SECTION II.

PSALM 25. We now commence a group of fifteen experimental psalms, in which there is an apprehension of grace which must necessarily follow on Psalm 22, which presents the sin-offering. Previously there had been no confession of sin or desire for forgiveness; but here in Psalm 25 we have this confession and desire. (Vers. 7, 11, 18.)

It is in the form of an acrostic, so one could say it is the A B C of conversion, in which are formed all the moral elements of it: confidence in God, forgiveness sought, and a desire to be directed by God in His ways and paths. It closes with a desire that integrity and uprightness may preserve, and looks for redemption for Israel. This psalm calls for attention, as in it are found the moral springs of much that follows.

Psalm 26 is an appeal to Jehovah on the ground of integrity and confidence in Him; therefore he does not slip or waver. He loves the habitation of Jehovah's house and the place where His glory dwells. (Ver. 8.) He desires to act consistently with "the law of the house." "It is most holy." Note, this is said both as to the law of the sin-offering and the law of the house. (See Lev. 6. 25; Ezek. 43. 12.) In Psalm 22 the law of the house is established, and in this psalm the law of the house is recog-

nised, hence the intense separation from all that is contrary to that, the habitation of Jehovah's house which He loved. He being in moral accord with it both as to his hands and feet, has ability to approach; "to compass thine altar, O Lord," and publish with the voice of thanksgiving.

It concludes with the foot standing in an even place, where Jehovah is known and blessed.

Psalm 27 gives us his desire to dwell in the house (ver. 4); and not only the desire but the purpose, he *seeks* it. To dwell there all the days of his life, and to behold the beauty or graciousness of Jehovah. (See Psa. 63. 2.)

He desires the place for *communion*; but when there is *sheltered*, hidden, concealed, lifted up: so in the time of trouble he sings in the presence of his enemies. What God is for us inside strengthens us in the presence of our enemies outside.

The latter part of the psalm from verse 7 is rather difficult to connect with the former part, but rather suggests the testings of faith, and the last verse connects with the first verse—that is, the first verse is the result of his waiting upon Jehovah.

Psalm 28. The silence of Jehovah is deprecated (see Psa. 22. 2), but Jehovah is his Rock, the unchangeable One.

He lifts up his hands towards the oracle of his holiness; in the intelligence of what is suitable to Jehovah he sees the judgment of those who do not regard His deeds or the work of His hands, and predicts their downfall.

In verse 6 Jehovah has not been silent to him, so he blesses Jehovah, who is his strength and shield; also he sees Jehovah to be the strength and salvation of His people, the Anointed being its measure, a very important principle, and to be much noted in the psalms. We also have to learn that what God is for Christ He is for us.

Psalm 29 is the glory psalm. Here is found the expression "God of glory." In verses 1 and 2 all created intelligences are called upon to give Jehovah glory; it is their true happiness to do so. Verse 3 begins with the manifestation of glory, which seems to be figured by one of the storms prevalent in Palestine at certain times of the year. It begins in the north, and sweeping down through the land dies away in the wilderness of Kadesh.

This glory is manifested in His voice seven times, and it ends with a temple every whit of which says "Glory," a structure to utter glory. So the assembly in Ephesians 3, built up in Christ Jesus, is a fitting vessel to express the glory of God. The psalm closes with the assurance that Jehovah sits upon the flood, and will give strength to His people, and bless them with peace. It is a beautifully suggestive psalm, and is distinguished by the expression "God of glory," which is only found here in the Old Testament.

It seems to close the grouping of these five psalms.



that He would vouchsafe from the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth to-day.

W. R. P.

At Clapham, 3/5/18.



A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS.

(Concluded.)

PSALM 30. This psalm sets before us a deeply important and blessed lesson we all have to learn: the *morning* (ver. 5) is better than the *mountain*. (Ver. 7.)

It seems that David had been let down into death, but was healed, raised, quickened and delivered; thus he calls on all the saints to sing psalms to Jehovah (ver. 4), "For a moment is passed in his anger, a life in his favour; at even weeping cometh for the night, and at morn there is rejoicing."

In verse 6 he gives a past experience in which he was in apparent security: his *mountain* by the favour of God standing strong; but this favour was withdrawn, and he was plunged into the bitter night of weeping. A mountain in scripture seems to indicate blessing from God, established on the earth, something temporal, in which we recognise His goodness and favour. "By *thy favour*," not by his wit or skill: all was piously recognised as coming from God, but our true blessing lies in the knowledge of God Himself.

Jacob had to say, "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a

little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem." A "little way" through sorrow to Christ; and then as another has said, "The grave of our earthly hopes becomes the birth-place of our heavenly hopes."

So with Job, his mountain was made to stand strong by the favour of God, which he piously recognised; but he tells us in the midst of it all he had fears, and so it came to pass his *mountain* went, but he came by the loss of all to a true knowledge of himself, and thereby into a knowledge of God, thus finding that God was better than His blessings. The *morning* was better than the mountain. Hezekiah was let down into death as in this psalm, and brought up out of it; so after his recovery, at the conclusion of his writing, he says, "Jehovah was purposed to save me. And we will play upon my stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of Jehovah."

So here in this psalm, "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent."

So the Lord could say to His sorrowing disciples, with the dark shadow of His death and departure upon their spirits, "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you."

It was the joy of finding Him, and knowing Him the other side of death. The apparent loss of their earthly hopes was true gain, as they

were taught by Him, who owned them as "brethren," that heavenly relationship and blessing were greater than earthly blessing.

The "morning" is better than the mountain!

Psalm 31. Here the godly soul is in the presence of adversaries, "the sons of men," who are very fully described, but his confidence is in Jehovah his God, whose goodness never fails. "How great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee." God had known his soul in adversity, and had not shut him up into the hand of the enemy.

This psalm very fully shews how God is for His people, and the blessedness of confidence in Him is also greatly emphasised. In the language of verse 5 the Lord upon the cross expresses this confidence to His Father, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." How fully is this in keeping with the gospel in which it is found.

In some features the preceding psalm is much like John, and this like Luke; but we must bear in mind we have not in the Psalms what is proper to christian relationships, though they may be suggested anticipatively. W. J.



"SUCCESS often takes us out of the place of communion, because it is our success when we do not acknowledge God in it. The faith which waits on God turns to God when the blessing comes, and the joy is much greater." J.N.D.

Coll. Writ., vol. v., p. 43.



THE DISCIPLINED MAN.

(GEN. 28, 10 TO END ; 48. 1-7, 14, 19 ; 49. 1, 2.)

THE need of the moment is not only to find a passing pleasure in the things brought before us in ministry but to meditate upon them, and give ourselves wholly to them in prayer and exercise.

With this in view I thought it would be profitable to look at Jacob, as presenting to us the disciplined man. He stands before us as the man who was disciplined into his blessing. He did not take the way Abraham did, he stands in contrast to Abraham, but he reaches the same point at the end. This is suggested at the beginning of his history, and the end proves it. I shall also refer to some points in his history with the thought of giving encouragement to any who feel that we are under peculiar discipline at this time. I think that the history of Abraham and Jacob is far more interesting than that of Isaac or Joseph, though they are perhaps not so typical. If we read Hebrews it brings before us the way in which faith wrought. You will remember what it says in regard to Jacob, "By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph ; and *worshipped*, leaning upon the top of his staff." He was a worshipper. I do not know anything greater than that. I do not know that there is anything said about that in regard to the others. Jacob's history is intensely interesting. His was a tortuous history and he had a stormy pathway,

but he had a bright sunset. He has a clear outlook : he is with God, he is looking at things in the light of God, he has reached what was proposed at the beginning, that is, the house of God, and he answers to the name which God gave him in chapter 32 and confirmed in chapter 35, he is Israel now. Many of us know very well we have not walked normally, but it is a very great encouragement to know we are in the hands of our God, and that He is set for our blessing and will never let go His purpose. Whatever our ways may be He holds to His purpose and His purpose is to bless us. What a magnificent thing that is, in the midst of our exercises and sorrows ! God has given us the truth that it might be wrought in our souls, in order that there might be an answer to it for His pleasure. We cannot play with these things. There is a danger on our side of being engaged with it in a mental way, and finding mental pleasure in the consideration of truth ; but what God wants to do is to reach the heart and conscience through exercise according to the light of the truth. I am speaking now of divine knowledge : your knowledge lies in the knowledge of God Himself, and you reach that through discipline.

Now the pattern of a disciplined man is Jacob. He has a large place in the prophets and the Psalms. God says in Psalm 24, " This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob." That is to say, they will be encouraged by-and-by with the mercy of God as shewn to Jacob. They will say, " If

He was all that to Jacob!" He proved the longsuffering of God, and Jacob turned into Israel. Jacob is the natural man, the failing man, the man who needed to be disciplined into his blessing, and Israel by-and-by will come into blessing in that way.

Now I will say a word suggestively on the features of discipline. I think scripture presents discipline in four distinct ways. There is *corrective* discipline, and that is presented to us in connection with the Lord's supper in 1 Corinthians 11; then there is *preventive* discipline, and that is connected with the Lord's people in His service. In the case of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12, we read of a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him. How the Lord cares for us in every way! Now discipline is presented to us again in Hebrews 12, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." There the discipline is not so specific, but is more *general* and *formative*, that we might be made partakers of His holiness. That is the great point in Hebrews 12. It is discipline that forms you.

In John 15 we have *reproductive* discipline, which is sweeter than all. It is the gracious way in which He purges us that we might bring forth much fruit. Hence the four distinct features of discipline, as another has pointed out, are (1) corrective, (2) preventive, (3) formative, and (4) reproductive.

Now let us consider Jacob. He stands in contrast to Abraham; his way was exceedingly tortuous because of what he was. He was

a most crooked man, but he stands in contrast to Esau because God saw in that man's heart an appreciation of blessing. He was not like Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Esau was a nice man outwardly, but he did not appreciate his birthright. But Jacob appreciated the blessing of God. He took a tortuous way to get it, but he appreciated it. The way he took to get the blessing was all wrong, and if you take a wrong course you have to suffer the consequences of it. So Jacob had to flee from the wrath of his brother. The deceiver was deceived. What a man sows that shall he also reap. But God had regard to that poor lad there in his loneliness. It was night time, and if God visits you in the night it is that He might bring in the day. God proposed to bless Jacob, and what he saw was a ladder which reached to heaven. That suggests the thought of the future for this world, when the world will be no longer divorced from heaven. What is the meaning of all the trial and tears and sorrow? I would like you to get the moral reason for it all. The reason is that earth is divorced from heaven; suffering is the result of the divorcement of earth from heaven. We have to pray, "Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." But the time is coming when the divorcement will be over. That is the solution of it: God's will will be done. What a simple thing, but how profound and far-reaching! This world is governed by *man's* will. We pray, "*Thy* will be done." There is no confusion in

heaven, there are no tears, no bereavement, and why not? All is under one will and all that will is love. I would like you to get the moral sense of that in your soul; if you have been brought to God it is that you may understand the reason for all these things.

Well, there was this lad, and it is very wonderful he was to be the one from whom should spring all the blessing that this earth awaits. This earth will never be right until God's earthly people Israel have their place as the centre of all blessing for it. Deuteronomy 32. 8 is the key of the ways of God. All the nations of the earth are round the twelve tribes of Israel. You cannot have anything here for man until Israel is established as the centre of the earth; and it is through this man, Jacob, that it is coming to pass. The promise was given to Abraham that all the nations of the earth should be blessed through him, and it is confirmed here to Jacob. Well now, he wakes up and he could not realise it. How could he? Think of the work that had to be done in him before he could appreciate such a thing; but God tells him the best thing at the start, and then works that he may be in the good of it at the end. He said, "This is a dreadful place"; but it was not a dreadful place to him at the close. Then he makes a bargain with God. He limits God. He says in effect, If He brings me back then I will do so and so. How little he understood the marvellous blessing he was taken up for, and yet at the same time there was confidence in God, feeble though it was; and he proceeds on his

journey and God took care of him. There is no communion with God, but God cares for him providentially.

He works fourteen years for his wives and God takes care of him. "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand." (Psa. 73. 23.) How sweet to know that God takes care of us, that He holds us. Then he was disappointed and he had hard thoughts of God. What an evil thing to have hard thoughts of God and yet be a Christian! God knows all about it. We say, He has denied me this, that and the other. He will not keep anything back from you that is good. He is good in what He gives, and He is good in what He withholds.

Now in chapter 32 Jacob comes back, and he sees the angels of God and says, "This is the host of God." He was right doctrinally, but he was not right subjectively; although he said it, he went home and contradicted it in practice. We say uncommonly fine things at our readings sometimes, but what do we do when we go away? Do not you think it ought to exercise us? This man said, "It is the host of God," and yet there he is trembling before his brother Esau, when the knowledge of God should have covered him. We would have thought the host of God would have dispelled every fear, for God was saying in that revelation "I am for you." Then he tries to pray. Often we make our plans first, and then pray to God. Let the truth come to expose you. One of the greatest blessings of the moment is to know where you are in

your soul's history with God. God wants us to be in the reality of our true condition as in His sight. Never mind about the brethren, it is what *you* are with God, that is the point.

Well, all through this dark night it is the working of his will. It is quite possible for people to be going on in the routine of what is proper from scripture, and yet not to be making a single step forward spiritually. We cannot judge people merely by their outward interests, it is exercise that we want. And so he went through this long night wrestling with God. As long as your will works you will never make a step forward spiritually. The Lord would call your attention to your present spiritual condition as in His sight. I do not say that to cast you in upon yourself, but to bring you to God. Jacob wrestled all night until the day was breaking, and he said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." But God put His hand out and took the strength out of him, and brought him into a position where wrestling was over and communion came in; and He said, "What is thy name?" "Jacob." Thou shalt "be called no more Jacob, but Israel." God said, "I will give you that name, and the same day you shall answer to it." He was beginning to answer to it in clinging. He was a crippled man, but the sun was shining. Oh! how blessed it is, there he was ever to cling. The sorrows that are deepest are the secret sorrows that no one could ever know but yourself and the blessed God who permits them to come upon you. It is not what is visible to the eye, nor the greatest sorrow that

you can speak of. It is always there and always to be there, but you have the face of God shining on you.

Then he went on from there, and he built an altar and called it "E!-elohe-Israel," and he called on the name of the Lord. That is what God is to me. It was very beautiful as far as it went, but, alas! the idols were still there, and so there was disgrace and trouble. It always is so if you make *yourself* the centre. The end of it was he said, You have made my name to stink and I shall perish. He was in dire distress and he was afraid. He was not with God.

If you are with God you are not afraid of anybody save yourself. People will be afraid of you; persecution is always the result of fear—that is the reason why God's people are persecuted. "Then there was great fear, for God was in the congregation of the righteous."

Then God says to Jacob, "Go up to Bethel," and then he makes a move. Every spiritual movement towards God is the result of the removal of that which hinders. Jacob said, Put away the idols: we are going up to a holy place. There was a great movement. Are you on that line? Are you moving towards God? Do you desire to have communion with God? Do you ever go to Him and say, "I want to come near to you?" What do you think He will do? He will point out this, and that, and say, "*That* is the hindrance; if you want to come near to Me you must put it away." It is the little fox that spoils the vine. If you ask God to shew you what is the hindrance, do you

not think He would delight to do it? Suppose He does, are you prepared to give it up? I beg your attention to these little exhortations. Well, Jacob goes up, and he rears an altar and calls it El-beth-el. Not El-elohe-Israel; not my blessing. It literally means, "God, the God of his house." You are in the house of God and your interests are with God, and you see everything in the light of God.

Then God appears to him again and Jacob makes his start, for God reveals Himself now. "I am Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect," was what He had said to Abraham. So now Jacob is free, he has got God before him—"God, the God of the house." Not what God is to me, but what God is in His house. He puts up a memorial. Abraham did not do that, though he was constantly with God, but he did not put up memorials. In the house of God there is the memorial of Christ. He pours a drink-offering on it. He is on the line of what is agreeable to God.

Does his discipline end now? No; Rebekah's nurse died, then Rachel, and Jacob put up a pillar upon her grave. It is to this he alludes at the close of his history. He sees everything in the light of God's interests, his own interests disappear entirely. He is a worshipper. He has got clear of himself, he has clear perceptions now. When you are in the house of God you begin to see everything in the light of the house of God. As he looked upon Joseph and his sons, he said, "You have earthly hopes, all *my* earthly hopes have gone Rachel died by

me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little distance—only two miles—to Bethlehem.” As another has said, “The grave of your earthly hopes is the birthplace of your heavenly hopes.” I ask you here, in His blessed presence, is He not competent to fill up every breach? Is it not greater gain to find Him, to find Christ? If you have to travel through sorrow to get a greater knowledge of Him, it is the greater gain. He is more than competent. So out of the sorrow shall come the sweet singing, the valley of Baca shall become a well. The Lord had a purpose to make known to me that I might sing my songs on stringed instruments. So Hezekiah (New Trans.) said.

Now he blesses the sons of Joseph, and he crosses his hands. He has been stumbling about all his life, but his crooked pathway is all over now and he sees everything in the light of God's house. Joseph said, “You are making a mistake.” “No,” said Jacob, “I have been making mistakes all my life, but I am not making a mistake now.” He is in the light of the house of God. How beautiful it is to see our blessed Lord in John 11. We read, “Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus”; but that was not the governing principle. The governing principle was the glory of God. Will He not intervene? No. Is He unmindful of their sorrow? He was there in spirit; He saw them all through the days of darkness. Was He unsympathetic? No, He was not. The bereaved hearts were dear to Him, but He would not intervene. Why? Because of the glory of God.

I would like to call attention to this before I close. Mary was there. Isaiah 50. 10 gives us the condition in which Mary was. She was in the dark, but she was trusting. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?" What do you do then? Mary was sitting still in the house. Where do you learn to sit still? At His feet. I do not know what is going to be the end of this, but I will stay here until He calls for me. "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Then it goes on, "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire . . . ye shall lie down in sorrow." Are you looking round for sticks? you will always find sticks. You get the sticks together and you say, "That is very providential." In the dark Jacob was wrestling; in the dark Mary was trusting. But the blessed Lord was in the light of day. "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" Oh, for hearts to trust Him! Not to be wrestling in the night of our self-will, but if we have no light let us turn to God. Let us not gather providential sticks; if we do we shall lie down in sorrow.

Now let us return to Jacob for a moment. Jacob said, "Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father." He was a prophet, and he portrays in a remarkable way the history of God's earthly people from start to finish. He had

light, his eye was clear because he was delivered from his own interests. This chapter gives us the whole history of God's earthly people from start to finish.

May God in His great goodness be pleased to encourage every heart. Do not cherish the hope that there are going to be easier times here in the future, but there is going to be, if the Lord delays His return, a very great awakening of affection for Christ. If through your sorrow you get to know Him better, He will bring you forward to the very spot where the glory shines and maintain you there in all the brightness and blessedness of it.

W. J.



EXTRACT FROM LETTER OF J. G. B.

“It will not do,” says dear Rutherford, “to be living amid the rumbling of the wheels of second causes, saying, ‘if it had not been for this circumstance,’ or ‘if this had not happened.’ We must get out of the hearing of that jarring and din of confused noises, and run up at once to God with ‘It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good’ before the soul will find her rest.”

This is beautiful. I can admire it; would that I could do more!



“WE have to learn that He is above us, and uses circumstances for us, so that He may use us for Himself.”

G. V. W. on Psalm 18.

What a standard of obedience and submission is thus reached in the Son become Man that He might carry out the good pleasure of God! Obedience unto death, and that in the perfect One.

P. R. M.



GOD'S KING.

THE blessed Lord has qualified Himself as Man to hold everything for God. Hence, when the thief was on the cross, the blessed Lord was there dying for him, but the Spirit of God was brooding over his soul and doing a mighty work in him. The effect of that brooding was this: that he travels a marvellous moral journey. He must die, but he took a magnificent journey. He journeyed from the man that was here, to the Man that had done nothing amiss. He travelled from the man who had done everything amiss, to the Man who had done nothing amiss. He saw the excellence of dignity; he saw the moral beauty of the One who was dying at his side.

Hence he came to the conclusion that this Man must be KING! the One who said, "I hold up the pillars of it," for he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." That is, he recognised that such an One should be King; he recognised these two things in that Person. There was nothing outwardly to speak of it, but the Spirit of God brooded over his soul, and caused him to understand that although *he* was the man who had done everything amiss, here was a Man who had done nothing amiss, and that Man must be King!

W J.

UNITY.

(ZECH. II. 7-14; 14. 5-7.)

It is a very great exercise to speak on such an occasion as this. I desire that the Lord may give a word directly from Himself, so that our present need may be met. It is quite possible to say something perfectly true and interesting, and a passing pleasure might be found in it; still it might not be *a word from the Lord*. That is what makes it so serious to get up and speak to you. Hence it is absolutely necessary that both speaker and hearers should be found together in exercise. I wonder how many here have been exercised as to these meetings. Exercise leads to prayer—to desire. How many of us are found here in faith—waiting on the Lord? We are tested as to how far we can count on His love, expecting from Him that which will meet us in our present need. Though I feel it serious to speak, yet I feel encouraged in the thought that the Lord cares for us, and can meet all the exigencies of the present moment, and prove to us the way of His love in a very peculiar and blessed manner. He is still the Blessor of His people, and our need will only bring out the strength of His unchanging love.

We could not expect anything from Him on the ground of our faithfulness. A spirit of pretentiousness would be very distasteful to the Lord. I hope we have chastened spirits, the effect of being in His presence. What has happened, what is happening, and what will happen should make us very serious. We have never passed through such times, yet they are blessed times because they will bring out what the Lord can be

to us. The pressure will not cease, it may be increased, it may assume another form, but pressure there will be until the Lord comes. Do not anticipate its removal, but greatly anticipate what His love can do for us. Hence we must not look back regretfully at the past, but if there is any future accorded to us here, let us look forward most hopefully. It is better on before, only we are in danger of being swept away. Being in fellowship and having taken a certain position will not save us. The needed thing with each is downright exercise of soul.

I have said all this by way of preface. I might have chosen other scriptures to bring my subject before you, but I have read these as suiting that which is pressing on my spirit, I trust from the Lord, the subject of UNITY. Appreciation of Christ always produces unity, and unity always secures blessing. I want to bring it before you in connection with the Spirit of Christ as being necessary to it. His blessed Spirit is seen in the last scripture which I read. Many are anticipating unity, it is in their minds, but to us it is exceedingly painful, because we know it is vain and futile. They hope that peace will be secured by the unity that is in *their* minds, but it is all in vain. If you think of unity down here, you will find that it is God's intention to bless this earth through a unity produced by the Spirit of Christ.

If you go back to Genesis II we get there the moral springs of that which has happened since. Men sought unity in connection with *their own glory*. They proposed to build a tower that would reach to heaven, in order to make a name for themselves. This attempt to secure unity in con-

nection with their own glory was frustrated. They sought to build a tower from that which was of this earth. They made brick, and slime had they for mortar, but nothing having its origin in earth can reach heaven. The only thing that can reach heaven is that which comes down from heaven. We are born from above and hence heaven is our portion. The attempt to build a tower was frustrated and confusion was the result.

God called Abram to be the heir of the world, and his call indicated that God had created this earth for *His own glory*. It was "the God of glory" that appeared to him, and by His call indicated that He purposed blessing for man, saying, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Whatever may happen, God always keeps to His purpose. Nothing thwarts Him. All the counsels and efforts of men come to nothing. If we were nearer to God, we should see what a poor puny creature man is, but away from Him our thoughts of man are exaggerated. Hence it is repeated to Isaac and again to Jacob that the nations of the earth should be blessed in them. It was a very small beginning, was it not? but a great comfort to read that which the Lord said in Isaiah 51. 1, 2, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him *alone, and blessed him, and increased him.*" Out of that solitary couple God has blessed and is blessing to-day. That is God's way. He begins from Himself. The gospel opens with this fact, that Jesus Christ was the son of Abraham.

Let me recall to your memory the time when

Jacob slept by the road side, *a lonely stranger*, away from his father's house ; there was a ladder, not a tower, but a ladder that reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it, that speaks of intercourse between heaven and earth. How beautiful is that ! A number of sad things are happening which we feel, and rightly feel if we are with God. I do not believe in people being Stoics. The reason of all the sorrow is that earth in people's minds is divorced from heaven, but by-and-by that will be over. It is a great thing to see that : it will give stability, and prevent your being carried away by the thoughts of men. A confederacy is coming to pass as surely as it took place in the days of the tower of Babel.

When Jacob was at the end of his course, he prophetically goes through the history of that which would befall his sons in the last days. When we are in the light of the glory of God, we get a fine outlook, so this prophetic vision of Jacob gives the history of the people from the start to the finish. When he comes to speak of Judah, it is Christ that fills his vision (Christ is seen both in Joseph and Benjamin) but Shiloh was to come of Judah, and Jacob says, "Unto him shall the gathering of the peoples be." There is going to be unity, but He is the Person that will secure it ; it will be upon earth mediatorially through the twelve tribes of Israel. The key verse to these ways of God is found in Deuteronomy 32. 8. "He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number (that is, the *twelve* tribes) of the children of Israel." There will not be blessing on this earth until there is unity in Israel. The

twelve tribes must be united, but this comes from their being brought under the anointing of the true Aaron and drinking of the dew of heaven. It will be in their appreciation of Christ that the twelve tribes of Israel will be knit together, and through that unity will be the blessing of the nations. (See Psa. 117.)

What can be more touching than this passage in Zechariah 11. I want you to see what God's thought is. Zechariah is a very rich prophet—richer than any other save Isaiah. The blessed Lord is before us here, He is here seen as the Shepherd in the midst of the flock. You have Matthew's gospel in a nutshell. They were a flock of hatred towards Him, but He was there to feed them. Blessed Shepherd! How we need a Shepherd! "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." (Gen. 49. 23, 24.) That is verified in Psalm 22. Then we have further, "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel." How beautiful scripture is! Psalm 23. must follow Psalm 22. What a Shepherd for Israel! He had been hated and grieved and shot at, but He shepherds the poor of the flock. See where His love led Him! He was the staff "Beauty," but they abhorred Him and hated Him. Beloved brethren, you will never find out your badness from a book, you will not discover it until you have learned the true character of human nature, that when Jesus was presented to your natural mind, you abhorred Him. Many of us never reach it save in theory. We may know *the doctrine* that in the

flesh there dwells no good thing, but I mean more than that. The real sense of it would break you up, and lead you to appreciate Christ. To use one of our current coins, "the removal of the man"—that must be realised, but no one could ever appreciate "the removal of the man" till they have learned the true character of the man. You learn it by way of contrast. What a contrast to Christ is fallen man. The Almighty God put Himself in the presence of His creatures, and He asked the price they would give for Him—"Give me my price." Think of it! They weighed for His price thirty pieces of silver—the price of a slave!

I speak in fear and trembling, but let me say that our spiritual growth is not measured by our knowledge, it lies in the appreciation we have of Christ. Do we not hear His voice at the supper saying, as it were, "Give me my price" (that is, At how much do you value me?). I am fully aware that the supper is introductory to the privileges of the assembly, but in it He appeals to us, "Give me my price." Pay attention to it, dear brethren. How it should come home to us! I do not know anything more sanctifying than the supper. It is love's appeal to us every Lord's day, and your spiritual growth lies in the value which you set upon His love. There may be great ability to expound scripture and so on, but with it all there should be increasing affection for Christ. He looks upon every one of us and He sees how our hearts are in relation to Himself. We shall value our brethren rightly as we value Christ. If all the dear brethren spoke of me as a spiritual man, the great matter would be, What does God think of

me? He sees where I am in relation to Christ, for He prizes affection flowing out to His dear Son, though it may be imperfectly.

I verily believe that some of us think that spirituality lies in correct statements. No, it does not, it lies in affection for Christ. One would not desire that saints should be unintelligent, but let intelligence be the result of affection. What did Thomas say—ignorant Thomas? He only saw the Jews and how they sought to stone Jesus, but *He* walked in the light of God His Father, and saw neither Jews nor stones. Thomas said, "Let us also go that we may die with him." Very ignorant, but very affectionate, full of affection. Surely the Lord prized that: He did. Life is not worth the living where Jesus is not—so we may regard the words of Thomas. I am not putting a premium on ignorance; but mark well, that spirituality does not lie in correct statements.

There was another ignorant person, yet full of affection: Mary Magdalene—*she only thought of Jesus as being dead, and she sought His dead body.* "Tell me," she said, to the supposed gardener, "where thou hast laid *him*, and I will take *him* away." The Lord prizes such affection. Thomas said, "Let us go that we may die with him," and Mary said, as it were: I have no home where Jesus is not. Are you conscious of decline? Listen, and let Him speak to you, "Give me my price." What will you sacrifice for Him? That is the point. I see men who will lay down their lives for their country. What will we do for Christ? What trifling things worry us, shame on us! What will you give up for Christ? What are you prepared to sacrifice for Him? Let it

come home to each one. Are you prepared to suffer for His sake?

The religious leaders of Israel prized Him at thirty pieces of silver, and with the money they bought a field to bury strangers in. It was called the field of blood. Now mark the Spirit of Christ speaking through the prophet, He accepts their valuation, and breaks His other staff "Bands." As a living Messiah He ceases to be the bond of brotherhood between Judah and Israel. Now pass on to chapter 13; there the Spirit of Christ again speaks, not as taking the place of a prophet but as accepting the position brought in by Adam—"I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground; for man [Adam] acquired me as bondman from my youth." Is that how Jesus is known? Was there ever such a Person? He who subsisted in the form of God taking the form of a bondman, and as such He became obedient unto death to serve guilty man. Do we take the place of service to the saints? Who is the greatest man in the meeting where you are? The man who is in the Spirit of Christ, and is marked by the love of Christ. Why are we not charmed with that? Why are we charmed with that which is official, which often gives a spirit of pretentiousness? The greatest man in the meeting is the man who is the servant of all in the love of Christ. Where the love of Christ is present in a meeting there will be unity. Where there is no gift in a meeting, there is often more spiritual prosperity than in a meeting where there is gift. You cannot *localise* gift, it is for the whole church of God. The moment you localise it you spoil it. I say these things that you may be exercised.

Where there is unity there is blessing. There is gathering power if we love each other. No matter how few there may be, if there is lowliness God will bless. There will be the recognition of our nothingness, but God will be praised. Where there is unity, there will be the outflow of praise. I could indicate it from other passages, such as Psalm 132; unity is realised when the ark of the covenant finds its place. There is the delight of David as he dances before the ark. He takes no place of prophet or of king, but he found his joy, because the ark of the covenant had been brought into its place. His wife (Michal), who was full of proprieties, despised him in her heart. In her eyes he was making a fool of himself. She was a true daughter of her father Saul, who said, "Honour me now before the elders of my people." She despised the man who would take off his kingly robes, and dance before the Lord in the joy of his heart. Hence she was not fruitful; legal people are not fruitful. In the Book of Psalms there is a moral order and Psalm 133, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" follows Psalm 132. The secret is in being near Christ. Let us avoid questions which gender strife. He is now saying to us by the Spirit, "Come near to me, I pray you," as Joseph said to his brethren. If I understand the movement of the Spirit, I think that is what Christ is saying; and as we have "come near" to Him, so we come nearer to each other.

May the Lord be pleased to bless what I have tried feebly to bring before you. I have endeavoured to shew you how unity is brought about

in the future by the appreciation of Christ, and it is brought about now in the same way. In Psalm 132 the ark of the covenant is going up to its place on Zion, and in the Epistle to the Ephesians we see Christ set in His place at the right hand of God in the heavenly places. Then in chapter 3 we have the true subjective state of the assembly, and Christ dwelling in the hearts of His saints by faith—thus we may say there is a resting-place for Christ maintained by the Spirit down here, and hearts drawn out to Him in affection and also to one another. May we realise it, beloved brethren, and if you are conscious of anything inconsistent with unity in the meeting where you may be, may this word produce exercise as to it. May we each be able to say, as it were, "I am no prophet"—but take the low place, ready to be the *servant of the saints in the Spirit of Christ*. May God grant it for the sake of His own dear Son.

W. J.

(Notes of an Address.)



PIETY.

(SUMMARY OF READING WITH R.D. AT KINGSTON,
18/4/19).

(I TIM. 2; 3. 15 to end; 4. 8-10.)

ONE'S exercise has been to consider the thought of piety and to see the importance of piety from our side. Everything depends on it from our side. It is very evident from the way in which the apostle writes, that he wants to impress Timothy

READING AT PARKSTONE.

THE LAST MINISTRY TO THE SAINTS OF OUR LATE
BELOVED BROTHER, W. JOHNSON.

(PHIL. I.)

(He suggested reading Philippians, as following Ephesians, which we had just finished.)

THIS is not a doctrinal epistle, but experimental, and the writer was a living expression of the truth he brought forward: "For me to live is Christ." (Ver. 21.) Therefore, he does not address himself to them as an apostle, nor does he address them as an assembly as such, although recognising assembly order, but links himself up with Timothy, as "servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Paul is like a class leader, giving his experience to help and encourage the saints.

It is important to see that in all Paul's epistles he addresses himself to *state*, always touching the weak spot. (Chap. 4. 2.) But before the defect is mentioned there is the ministry to meet it. Hence it is most helpful to see the structure of the epistle. Chapter 1 is introductory: chapter 2, one love, one will, which delivers you from the will of man. In chapter 3 the glory of Christ eclipses the glory of man: and in chapter 4 you are superior to all circumstances down here, rejoicing in the knowledge of God's care over you—which is present salvation.

In the Epistle to the Thessalonians, you get the May-day or spring-time of Christianity. But

here you get the autumn, when the mature fruit is in evidence. (Ver. 11.)

Speaking of verse 11, a sister asked a few days ago what righteousness was. I referred her to John 7. 18: "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." Therefore, if I glorify myself, I rob God of His glory, and I am not righteous. The first act of righteousness is to own that *I* have none.

Special attention should be given to the prayer in verses 9-11, which embraces the whole scope of Christianity. You will find in the epistles there are more prayers for the saints who are in a good state than for those who are in a bad state.

The apostle was encouraged to pray for them on account of their spiritual prosperity. A prosperous state *naturally* is most dangerous, and such need our special prayers. How often do we pray for the saints who are going on, that their love may abound more and more? We are too often occupied with failure and weakness, and saints in poor circumstances. But how many brothers who have been going on well for years, and who are open especially to the attacks of the enemy, have become shipwrecks before they finished their journey? The apostle's desire is for them to continue sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, which is the display of His glory, when the whole earth will be under His beneficent influence as Head. The Philippians being in the light and present enjoyment of this, brought them into conflict, and the conflict is the confirmation of the gospel. (Ver. 7.)

We are inclined to act on prudential lines, and to consider for our own safety. Paul was a prisoner at Rome, over a thousand miles from Philippi, and at the time when Nero was casting two and three hundred saints a day to the wild beasts. Notwithstanding this, the Philippians did not content themselves with merely meeting in a room to pray for the apostle, but sent Epaphroditus, who, at the risk of his own life, conveyed comforts to the prisoner at Rome. They were not fearful, shutting themselves up in a room, but came out into the open to meet the necessity of the apostle, thereby bringing themselves into conflict. Suffering was to them a part of christian privilege. (Ver. 29.)

Ephesians prepares you for the conflict, for which you require the whole panoply of God. Philippians gives you proper christian state. In all the epistles is found a model brother, and in this epistle Epaphroditus is held up as one.

Beloved brethren, doctrine is not enough, important as it is, but what matters is life and vitality. "For me to live is Christ," which brings to mind an incident in connection with G. V. W. when travelling from Australia to New Zealand in company with Captain S——. They had just left the boat when Mr. W—— turned round and said, "I've left my Greek Testament in my cabin, underneath the pillow." The captain immediately turned back to fetch it, and asked the officer in charge whether he had seen a Greek Testament belonging to Mr. W——. He said "Yes," and remarked, "There never has been a man on board like him." "Why?" asked the captain, "Did he have anything to

say?" He replied, "Not much, but he was just like Jesus." That is *testimony*. We often hear the preaching of the gospel, and holding meetings in a room like this, spoken of as testimony. Testimony lies in *vitality*, not merely in what we say. What precedes the expression of life is the enjoyment of it.

Paul trusted that in answer to their prayers he might be released from prison, in order to visit them again, that was far better than writing a letter, but the longing desire to depart and be with Christ was very great with him, nevertheless to abide in the flesh was more needful for them, and he had confidence that for their sakes he would be preserved.

* * * * *

One of the last remarks made by our beloved brother was, "I am going to heaven because *love* wants me there."



THE TEMPTATION.

THERE is something very sublime about the temptation of Jesus Christ the Son of God. He has come down into all the circumstances that the first man Adam had plunged the whole human race into (save that He did not become sinful), even coming in the likeness of sinful flesh.

Adam was surrounded by every token of God's goodness, yet yielded to Satan over one single restriction. Jesus was surrounded by the wild beasts and the whole place was a wilderness—the ferocity of Satan and the ruin of man—yet was led by the Spirit to undergo the temptation for forty days, cruel and crucial as it must have

JOTTINGS OF A READING.*

J. W. B. proposed as subject—The difference between knowing the Scripture and knowing Christ.

W. J. The case of the eunuch, which we read this morning, is a good illustration of it.

ACTS VIII. 25-40 READ.

W. J. Many read the scriptures, and even read them a great deal, but do not seem to know much of the Lord personally.

In Luke iv. the Lord goes into the synagogue, and the book of the prophet Esaias is put into His hands to read. He reads the prophetic scriptures, but there He was Himself, the *living Person*, in their midst. He reads and then says, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Now look at the eunuch "Sitting in his chariot he read Esaias the prophet." It was well for him that he was reading the scriptures, but he had not got yet the key to them.

* At The Farm, Quemerford, June 7th.

C. "They are they which testify of *me*."

W. J. Yes; but it was the "*Me*" who blessed the eunuch.

J. P.—T. It is very interesting to see the order in which the eunuch is led on. First, there is interest in the scriptures; then he gets the key to scripture—Christ; and then there is the moral effect—"What doth hinder me to be baptised?"—he is baptised. He had found Christ, and he goes the same way that He went; he goes into death.

J. W. B. The great characteristic of Christianity is that it is a living, loving *Person*, not a system of doctrines.

J. P.—T. I do not think any one gets right as to doctrine who makes doctrine an *object*; we must have the *Person*. Take the case of Cornelius (Acts x.), there was evidently a work of God in him; he had desires, and God sent Peter to enlighten him.

All here is in the death of Christ, but death is the path to resurrection. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more;" there is no such Christ to be known now as Christ after the flesh.

W. J. I think many do not understand the presence of the Lord in the assembly, they have never

touched it, and so when the word is ministered they do not feel that the Lord has touched them in it. The great thing is to have a sense that the Lord has spoken to you—that you have come under His influence, that *He has touched* you. You might remember all that was said in the ministry, and yet it might not be one bit of good to you. It is everything to get a sense that the Lord has touched me *secretly*. It may be that He has put His finger on something which is hindering me in my service.

W. E. Have we an example of it in Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus ?

W. J. Yes; she came under His influence. People read scripture and know a great deal *about* the Lord, but they do not *know Himself*. It is by the Spirit that you come into the good of things, not by the letter.

J. P.—T. I think faith is light in the soul of what is presented, but if it does not bring you into exercise and near the Lord, you do not gain much.

W. J. Take the late meetings that we have had here. Honoured servants have ministered to us, but if we only come under the influence of the servants, that will not do; we must come under the influence of the Lord Himself. That is the only way to get the good of the ministry or to get any real knowledge; it is what you

receive from the *Lord* that is effectual. We may go to and fro like a door on its hinges; we may listen to ministry and enjoy it; but if it be only a general knowledge of all that has been said, it does me no good. What I want to feel is, that the Lord has spoken to me in it. The eunuch could say good-bye to Philip, who had been used to him in such a wonderful way, and go on his way rejoicing because he had *Christ*—he had the key to scripture. He had found the Man who had died, risen, and gone up, and so he could do without the channel that had been sent to enlighten him. When we come to these Quemerford meetings, we are often depressed afterwards, because the Philips are taken from us; but if a fresh link has been formed between your soul and Christ, you can go on your way rejoicing. If you *neglect* the gifts, you are all wrong.

J. W. B. But if you have the truth only as what Mr. So-and-So teaches, it is no good to you; you must have it as spoken to you from God.

W. J. Philip was God's man for the occasion, and the eunuch could not have done without him; but when he has got the key to scripture he can go on his way rejoicing, though Philip was taken from him. The fact was, his soul was linked with another Man and another scene.

It is possible to read scripture, and even to find pleasure in it, and yet not to get linked with the Lord by it. But *mind you this*, this man *did not throw away his roll*; doubtless he valued it all the more—he held on to scripture, but he had got the key to scripture in personal contact with Jesus. It is a *living thing*. Many a time I have thought of the Bible as a gramophone; you must get not only the *words* but the *living voice*.

W. T. P. "Till I come, give attendance to reading, &c." Would you say we could do with the Lord apart from the scriptures?

W. J. No; but in the early days they had not the New Testament scriptures. We see in the Thessalonians the moral effect. The apostle could say of them: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope," &c., there was a moral effect. Certain facts had been ministered to them, and believed by them, and certain moral effects were produced. The apostle says, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit." The scriptures are given to direct us, without them we should get into mysticism.

REM. "Shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."

W. J. That is it; and now we are living in

the midst of a Judaised Christianity, so it is all the more necessary for us to reason out of the scriptures. Supposing you went out as a missionary to the heathen, you would need to carry the gospel to them livingly as well as the scriptures. You would state the truth to them, but you must be the moral expression of it for them to see.

W. T. P. The Lord said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

W. J. Yes; He was there the living Person. The eunuch came in contact with that living Person, and he could go on his way rejoicing. Paul says to Timothy, "The holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It is good to preach Christ to people; but you must preach One whom you *know*. Then how necessary it is to be near the Lord and to know Him for this.

"Preach the word" is a very large expression; it does not mean the scriptures, but the testimony of God; the record of it is in scripture. You are "Mighty in the scriptures" if you know *the Lord*. I think it is interesting to see how things are set forth in the Acts. In chapter viii. we have the eunuch; he gets the key to scripture in Christ. Then in chapter ix. we have Saul; he is brought to own Him as

Lord: "*Lord*, what wilt thou have me to do?" Then Ananias, "Behold I am here, *Lord*." The question is not—Do I read the scriptures or do I pray, but do I in my spirit confess Him as Lord? Is it the habit of my life? People do not know Him much as Lord.

QUES. Might not a young believer know Him as Lord?

W. J. Yes, it is proper to him to know Him thus.

QUES. Do you mean that if you know Him as Lord, you know what suits Him?

W. J. That would follow as result. Take the Ephesians. Paul says of them, "After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints." They had the Lord Jesus objectively before them, not as their Saviour simply, but as Lord.

W. E. How is it that so many of us do not know Him personally?

REM. There are degrees of knowledge.

W. J. There are. There are two characteristics of a Christian. He believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and on God who raised Him from the dead.

I believe in God *now*; I believe in Christ *now*; it is not a question of what I have believed, it is a continuous and present thing.

If you simply believe in scripture, there is nothing *living* about that.

W. T. P. Is there any difference between knowing the Lord individually, and knowing Him in the assembly ?

W. J. Yes ; but you will not know Him in the assembly if you do not know Him individually. Do you not know the difference between reading scripture and praying in a religious sort of way, and coming into *living contact with the Lord* ? When one points out these things, people say—you are undervaluing scripture ; but there is no moral work in the soul apart from living contact with Christ. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we find that there is a living voice in the house of God. When a living Person is presented, your affections are brought into play, Every precept in scripture, all that we find in Psalm xix., is presented to us in a Person. If I take up precepts apart from the Person I am on legal lines.

REM. "The words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life."

W. J. It is the contrast between "spirit" and "letter." How could you understand what He had been saying to them otherwise ? "I am the bread of life," &c.

B. B. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

W. J. I sometimes ask young Christians, and I ask myself—Do you know what it is to come under the influence of the glory of the Lord ?

J. W. B. The effect is you are transformed into the same glory.

W. J. Yes ; it is quite different from merely reading scripture ; you come under a moral influence. I have a living Person *in* me—the Holy Ghost ; and He links me with a living Person in heaven. Sometimes I read, and read, and then shut my Bible and say—I will get near the Lord ; then you get wonderful things unfolded to you.

None of us express Christ unless we enjoy Him first. The value of true ministry is that it links you with Christ Himself ; “Married to another, to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

J. W. B. I suppose you must be withdrawn from all that is of man to get under the influence of Christ ?

J. P.—Tt. So it was with the eunuch in baptism.

W. J. Yes ; he was severed from this world and put in touch with another world.

We are often tested in connection with these things. You must get things from *the Lord* or you will never get on.

READING.

(PSALM XL.)

W. J. Psalms xl. and xli. should be read together: it is the conclusion of the first book.

The title of the first Book of Psalms is, "I have found a man to my pleasure"; and in that One He will bless us. God finds the Man after His own heart, who will fulfil all His will, and in Him we are blessed. In reading this psalm you should begin at verse 5, because it is a conclusion arrived at. It is a psalm of the deepest interest.

In the first Book of Psalms you get Satan's man. We learn by contrasts. In Psalm x. you get the moral features of Satan's man, but he is only introduced to make way for God's Man, who comes out in Psalm xvi. The wicked one of whom the apostle speaks in Thessalonians is there. Everything comes out in the Psalms. Then God describes His Man. In Psalm xv. He is described, but in Psalm xvi. He is found—the One who is after His own heart, and who shall fulfil all His will. But this psalm involves resurrection. He could not be a Head except in resurrection. In His person it was all

there, but it was not available for us save by death and resurrection. There is the horrible pit and the miry clay, and then His feet are set on a rock: that is resurrection.

The strict application of the Psalms is to Israel, but the principles apply to us. The remnant learn that if Messiah comes to them, it is that they might be identified with Him. The principle of double identification comes out all through scripture. Hebrews establishes the same principle: He comes to our side, that we may go to His side. It is a great thing for our souls to get hold of by the Spirit the thought of double identification. If His feet go where my feet go, my feet must go where His feet go. That is the key to the understanding of this psalm. Take Hebrews ii. 11. The Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one. That is identification; we go to His side. Then we get (ver. 14), "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."

J. W. B. If God is to bless us He must bring us into suitability to Himself.

W. J. What God has established in Christ is the security and ground of our blessing. That is the point of this psalm. Verse 5 starts this psalm. "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward." It refers to

Israel, but has its application to us. The thoughts of God could not be expressed in type. Here in this psalm we get the One who takes everything out of type. "Thy thoughts to us-ward." The happiness of the creature is to give the Creator His pleasure. "For thy pleasure they are and were created."

J. W. B. That is we are to be for God's glory and man has come short of that.

W. J. Yes. The principles are the same in their application to us as to Israel. "Bringing many sons unto glory" is God's thought to us-ward. Then verse 5 of Psalm xl. corresponds to Hebrews ii. 10. It has been said that we have the universe of bliss suggested here in connection with one Man; but if you can get one Man, then you can get myriads of men.

J. W. B. What is a universe of bliss?

W. J. It is a universe in which God is revealed and perfectly responded to. God *all* in revelation, and *in all* in response by the power of the Spirit. The revelation and the response come out in the same Person. It is brought out in one Man, and in that way the universe of bliss is suggested here.

J. W. B. There will be a scene filled with the blessing of God.

W. J. You get in Psalm xl. the Man in whom all is established, and in Psalm xli. you are told to consider Him.

J. W. B. Why is He called the poor Man?

W. J. We like a man who can assert himself, and he has wealth in the way of resource. The poor man is the opposite to a man who asserts himself. No man will praise a man when he does well for God. Men will praise you when you do well for yourself.

J. W. B. The poor man is akin to the meek man.

W. J. Yes. When we get God's Man, we get Satan's man in juxtaposition. Read this psalm and John xiii. You get God's poor Man, and then Judas. Psalm cix. is the same, God's poor Man, and Judas, Satan's man. Then God says to the poor Man, "Sit thou at my right hand." He is put at the right hand. Psalm cx. is the answer to Psalm cix. When Judas goes out then the Lord says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." We ought to love the Lord for that. That is God's poor Man, who glorified God at infinite cost to Himself. God's poor Man is glorified by God. The life we have from Christ in its principle is a God-glorifying one, and therefore the moral sequence is that we must be glorified: it must be glorified by God. The sequence of things is very remarkable. We have had the moral sequence of things brought out the last few years; that is the moral necessity of things.

In Psalm xl. it is the Head presented, and in

Psalm xli. the blessedness which belongs to the Man who considers Him. If I am finding the will of God down here then I am happy; but if not, then I am not happy. Verse 12 of Psalm xli. is the key to the book. "Thou . . . settest me before thy face for ever." Therefore it ends with a doxology.

G. O. He had found His Man.

W. J. We have found our Head.

J. W. B. It is like "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

G. O. It is the moral necessity.

W. J. If our souls were on these lines we should learn things morally. Mr. Bellett said, You learn truth morally in the Psalms; you may learn it doctrinally in other portions of scripture. Verse 8 (Psa. xl.) is the key and all the rest is the result. If God's law is within His heart He must do things rightly. Types and sacrifices could not set forth God. Then He comes, and He says, "Lo, I come . . . I delight to do thy will, O my God." He takes them out of type, and God's thoughts are set forth in Him.

G. O. Israel was only a type of man.

W. J. The first action of the life of Christ in you is according to verse 8; you love God. We constantly think the action of life is in conduct, doing things rightly. The first great thing is to have life expressed Godward. We are so trained up in legality, and we get occupied with

proprieties; but the first great action of life is Godward. The source of life is the object of life. We have not received life from Christ to be occupied with life in ourselves, but we have received life from Christ to be occupied with life in Him. Life is Godward. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." What is that? To love God; and what is the law of sin and death? To love myself. The expression and action of life is very beautiful. Christianity is a living spring of life Godward, and righteousness is the outcome. Then you get proprieties.

J. W. B. That is abiding in Him.

W. J. Yes, it is. Look at the three sentences, "he was manifested to take away our sins"; secondly, "in him is no sin"; and thirdly, "whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." Put these three together.

J. W. B. What is abiding in Him? What is that to you?

W. J. It is, I am kept under His influence. It is all a question of affection. A flower abides in the sunlight, and therefore it reflects the light of the sun; the sun produces the colour. "They shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." When you see His face then His character will be reflected.

QUES. Has verse 12 reference to the cross?

W. J. We do not get the cross here. It is

the cry of the victim before the altar, as Psalm xxii. is the cry of the victim on the altar.

P. A. E. S. That can be present—we see His face.

W. J. Oh, yes; we behold His glory and reflect it. Psalm cxii. is “His name shall be in their foreheads”; Psalm cxi. is “they shall see his face.” His beauty is seen, and then the result is the beauty is reflected. Work that out, and think of it. I like suggestions. It is beautiful to see in the Person of the Lord that He perfectly revealed God, and as Man responded.

G. O. None but He could do it.

W. J. It was important what came out as to the Headship and Lordship. He was morally qualified for these official glories, but what gives strength to all is that He was the Son of God. Christ has qualified Himself for Headship and Lordship. It has been pointed out that Lordship and Headship come out in Acts ix., “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Here I am, Lord. But in Acts x. Peter had to learn that Headship involves “whosoever.” Peter went to college to be stretched out to the width of the sheet; he was too Calvinistic. Our tendency is to be unbalanced. The purposes of God are most blessed; but when you come to Headship, it contemplates everybody. Across the great sheet you get whosoever written. It is one of

the most instructive chapters a preacher can read.

P. A. E. S. How far do we carry the thought of double identification?

W. J. Double identification is that He came to our side so that we might go to His side. The "horrible pit" is our distance, Christ has gone into it; "miry clay" is our state. He identified Himself with us where we were, and therefore we are to be identified with Him as the result in the highest glory. In the sacrifices you get God beginning with the burnt offering, and ending with the sin offering. In the latter, the offering is identified with the offerer; the fire of that goes out; in the former, the offerer is identified with the offering, and the fire never goes out. Therefore you can never weaken your acceptance. Then I see in this psalm the three things, faith, love and hope. You get the same features spoken of the Thessalonians, "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope." The Head was reflected. In the Psalm it is all in Christ. See the simplicity of Christianity. These Thessalonians were set up in the true relationships, "in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." Look at the simplicity of it! People only converted three months, and yet see their state; there was moral space for God. It was the universe of bliss commenced for God. The disciples in the end of the gospels

were looking for the public display of what they were in morally.

P. A. E. S. It is very wonderful.

W. J. We come under the impression of ministry; you like it because you have a life which answers to it, it stirs desires; but when you go away, what are you going to do? We may refuse the light. But am I going to be exercised by it?

G. O. If you are exercised about it, you will pray.

W. J. I know what it is to be fascinated by the truth, enjoying it as light, and yet not knowing the reality of it. It is the call of the Lord at the moment; the light has been given; but we have not been exercised by it; we have not answered to it.

"He inclined unto me, and heard my cry." He will answer me not according to my cry, but according to the cry of Christ. In Psalm xxii. 24 He says, "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard." I am speaking of identification. The remnant will measure everything by Christ, and we are put on the same line.

J. W. B. Where was the identification?

W. J. If I was down in the depths He went there. He was identified with the depths where

we were. So God will answer us according to the cry of Christ.

It is interesting to notice that the second Book of Psalms begins with the falling barometer. Then in Psalm xlv. you get the Head, "Thou art fairer than the children of men." So Christ is the secret of the rising barometer. We shall embrace our Head. He is all I want to me. Romans vii. is a great study—a man wanting to do a thing, and he cannot do it. Then you must find your Husband, and you must admire your Husband. We sever Romans vii. and viii. too much. We are "married to another, . . . that we should bring forth fruit unto God." I am not called upon to look upon the expression of life in me, but upon the perfect expression of the life of Christ. My Husband is my true self.

G. O. It is not I, but Christ liveth in me.



THE GOSPEL IN THE PSALMS.

IT is no uncommon thing, especially in country districts, to see some aged inmate of a cottage sitting with the Bible opened at the Psalms. Often has the writer's heart been cheered by such a sight. Poring over the sacred page the aged reader has doubtless found there what could be found nowhere else. Yet what ignorance, alas! there often is even with such, touching the gospel of the grace of God, which in its fulness and blessedness is unfolded in the New Testament.

Now, the gospel is not the subject of the Psalms. Still, in the Psalms we do find what constitutes the gospel; that is, we find *Christ*—"The sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter i. 11); and it is with the thought of presenting Christ that we desire to take up certain Psalms in a gospel way.

Let us suppose the reader to open the Book of Psalms for the first time. He shall begin with Psalm i.: "Blessed is the man." How sweetly the first word falls on the ear—"Blessed"! It is what God pronounces him to be who answers to the description given in this psalm. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he

meditate day and night." What a beautiful life this is both in its negative and its positive side! My reader, can you claim blessing from God on the ground of answering to the description here? Have you *never* walked "in the counsel of the ungodly"? Have you *never* stood "in the way of sinners"? Have you *never* sat "in the seat of the scornful"? Have you delighted in the law of the Lord, and in His law meditated day and night? Let such questions be answered by you in the presence of God. No, your life and mine have been far otherwise. One Man, and one alone, could claim blessing from God on the ground of what He was. It is *Jesus* who fully answers to the picture—that unique and beautiful Man over whom God could open the heavens and say, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Surely *He* was that "tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." It is Jesus, who was all that a man should be. His beautiful life should convince us of sin.

We have all, like lost sheep, gone astray—*He* never; and He could perfectly say, "By the word of Thy lips I have kept Me from the paths of the destroyer." *We* have found pleasure in doing our own will; *He* could say, "I always do the things that please My Father."

But let us look now at Psalm xiv. 2: "The

Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." What did He see? "They are *all* gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." How emphatic and sweeping is this verse—"all," "altogether," "none." No exception among all the children of men. Bow thine heart here and say, "O God, I own that Thou hast in this scripture given me my moral photograph." This is repentance. God would convince thee of sin, in order that thou mayest take the place of self-judgment, and we know that He will never condemn those who condemn themselves. Psalm i. then is Jesus, not I; Psalm xiv. is I, not Jesus.

Now we come to Psalm xxii: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent." Well do we know Who it is that was thus abandoned of God. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour *Jesus* cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The forsaken Man of Psalm xxii. is Jesus the Son of God; the blessed, perfect Man of Psalm i. Dear reader, ponder these words: "why," "Thou,"

“forsaken,” “Me.” And when no answer came, then from out of that awful solitude, and from that heart—that broken heart which was a shrine for God’s glory—came the answer which vindicated God in that forsaking: “*But Thou art holy.*” In 2 Cor. v. 21 we read: “For He hath made Him to be *sin* for us.” “Made Him sin,” is the answer to “forsaken Me.” A holy God forsakes Him because He was made *sin*. But this same scripture testifies, “He knew no sin,” for He was the perfect Man of Psalm i. But here in Psalm xxii. He, blessed be His name, takes the place of the “filthy” men of Psalm xiv. None may know what it cost Him, and none can fathom that ocean of sorrow. There are other sorrows in this wonderful psalm—sorrows resulting from man’s hatred; for poor, wretched man is there. “For dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet.” They can even gamble for His garments. (v. 18.) But the sorrows of verses 1, 2 are atoning sorrows—it was what He endured at the hand of God as in Isaiah li. 10, “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; *He* hath put Him to grief.” Oh, wondrous love to give His Son! oh, infinite holiness that put Him to grief when made sin! Can we wonder at the streams of blessing flowing out from verse 22 right on to millennial scenes to all who trust Him? The bitter “night of weeping” is over in verse 21,

inasmuch as He was heard and taken from the lowest point of death—"the horns of the unicorns"—after having met all the righteous claims of God, and Satan's power. (Hebrews ii. 14, 15.) All—all was met there; and now joy, eternal joy, comes in the morning. It is the resurrection morning. All our blessings are secured in resurrection—"I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." (John xx. 17.)

How beautifully the psalm ends. Mark the closing sentence, "He hath done this." Let your eye rest upon it—"He hath done this." Now put believingly two other words—"for me;" or write your name in full at the bottom of that psalm—

"For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died,
And I have died with Thee;
Thou'rt risen! my bands are all untied,
And now Thou liv'st in me.
The Father's face of radiant grace
Shines now in light on me."

Yes, you say, "for me"—for the "me" of Psalm xiv.

Now turn to Psalm xxxii. Again are we greeted by that precious word "*Blessed*." "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord

imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Now this is true of thee, dear reader, if thou hast written thy name at the foot of Psalm xxii. Thou art without doubt the blessed man of Psalm xxxii. God accounts thee righteous—the God "who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. (Rom. iv. 24, 25.) It is not what we think, feel, or realize; but it is what God *says* in His word. (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.) So the sinless man of Psalm i. dies in Psalm xxii. for the sinful men of Psalm xiv., in order that the sinful men of Psalm xiv. may be in the blessing of the man of Psalm xxxii.

It is interesting to note also that this is the first "*Maschil*" Psalm. "*Maschil*" means "giving instruction." It is the first instruction God gives to men. May you, my reader, be thus instructed and blessed.

Another word. The man who is thus blessed and instructed can now go back to Psalm i., and seek to walk in the footsteps of this blessed One. He hath left us an example, that we should walk in His steps. (1 Peter ii. 21.) Who are the people of whom this is said? In chapter i. 9 we are told they had already received "the end of their faith," the salvation of their souls. And again in chapter ii. 24, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead

to sins, should live unto righteousness." It is because they were forgiven, justified, saved, that thus they were exhorted. So in 1 John ii. 6, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." But note a little lower down, in verse 12, he says, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." They were in the blessing of Psalm xxxii. We must know Him as *Saviour* before we can have Him as an example. We must be *instructed* and *blessed* before we can be exhorted to walk in His footsteps. May it be our joy and blessing thus to walk

"Till travelling days are done."

W. J.

SPIRITUAL DIPLOMACY.

"And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

1 COR. ix. 20-22.

HERE is the ruling law of the apostle Paul's life. It was not spun like a mental web out of his head; but it issued with burning earnestness from a heart thoroughly devoted to God's glory, Christ's interests, and the blessing of his fellow-men, whether Jews or Gentiles.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

WHAT a triumph for God is this, that He should take advantage of our deep need to display His own nature! Our sin and wretchedness serve but to bring out in all its noontide splendour the love of God. "God is love."

In the Old Testament we seek in vain for this. Those long years of man's history of which it treats were but the testing-time for man, in which his condition was fully made manifest. It closed with the final test, the sending of God's Son. As it is written, "And last of all He sent unto them His Son, saying, They will reverence My Son." In the rejection of God's Son man proved how irremediably bad he was. The Old Testament times were characterized by the words which ended the solemn events connected with the giving of the law at Sinai—"The thick darkness where God was." (Exodus xx. 21; Ps. xviii. 11.) What a contrast to John i. 18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." We get gleams of light in such expressions as these, "Thy lovingkindness is better than life," "He crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies," and kindred passages. Both light and love are rather pro-

spective here. As in the eastern sky at early morn the horns of light do but herald the rising of the sun, "which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber" (Ps. xix. 5-7), so we must wait for the advent of the Son of God into this world before we can get such blessed words as these, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) Familiar words, yet so beyond us; for here the depths of God's heart are told out. And in this Scripture we find the Son of God calling attention to that which is before Him—the lifting up of the Son of man, His own death as a sacrifice—this a proof of God's love. Mark that little word "*for*." If we look at the lifting up of the Son of man as man's act (see Acts ii. 23), his hatred to God was shown thereby. But God's love was shown also; for what brought out the sin and hatred of man's nature proved the light and love of God's. The Son of man *must* be lifted up. Our sins and God's holiness demand it. But love provided what the holiness demanded.

It may be helpful to the reader if we turn to some passages which speak of this wonderful love of God.

We shall look at it in five different ways or connections—its Manifestation, Commendation, Perfection, Manner, and Measure.

I. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE LOVE.

We will turn to 1 John iv. 9, 10. I quote the passage in full. "In this was *manifested* the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Now mark, in verses 7, 8 the apostle exhorts the children of God "to love one another." It has been said by another, "God never needed to be exhorted to love; we do." But in order to produce the manifestation of love towards each other, he calls their attention to the manifestation of God's love towards them. So before God's love can be manifested in us it must be manifested towards us. Now see how the love is manifested toward us in the sending of His only begotten Son into the world that we might *live* through Him. As children of Adam we needed a new life. "Ye must be born again," were the words of Jesus to one of the fairest specimens of the children of men. You, Nicodemus, need a new life. The love of God is *manifested* in connection with this need. He gave the Son that we may have life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

But not only do we need a new life, but we need, as *guilty* sinners, the remission of our sins.

This too the love of God has provided. "He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." So in these two precious verses we find the manifestation of God's love is connected with our twofold need. We need a new life, and we need the remission of our sins. Thank God, we have both in Him who is God's love gift.

II. THE COMMENDATION OF THE LOVE.

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) Note here too, in verse 5, where the love of God is spoken of as shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, that we are immediately directed to *when* and *how* the love was displayed. We are turned from the realization of the love *in us* to the display of the love *toward us*. How many are looking for the love of God in their own hearts, instead of looking away to when and how the love was displayed. It was when we were "without strength," "ungodly," "yet sinners," and "enemies," Christ died for us; and herein does God *commend* His love. It was when we had nothing of good to commend us to His love that God, by that very fact, commends His love towards us.

"Inscribed upon the cross we see,
 In shining letters, God is love.
 The Lamb who died upon the tree
 Has brought us mercy from above."

It was when the high tide of our evil rose at that cross that the love of God, in overwhelming volume, rose to its greatest height. That love is written legibly there in the fathomless sorrows of Him who came to make it known.

III. THE PERFECTION OF THE LOVE.

If we again turn to 1 John iv. 17 we read, "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because *as He is, so are we* in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."* Now mark again, in this passage there is no thought of *our love*. No, it is God's love with us made perfect. It is a love that has given us the same place that Christ has. I beg your attention to that precious sentence at the end of verse 17. Linger over it. Remember Who it is that says it. Turn not to your poor wretched self, but let your thoughts rest on Christ, where He is, and what He is. A Man in the glory of God, let the eye of faith rest upon Him; and while you gaze, let these words, the words of God, sweep out of your poor trembling heart every cobweb of fear. "Boldness in the day of judgment: because *as He is, so are we in this world.*" Who is the He? It is Christ. Who are the we? All believers in Him. So that even the weakest may say, "*As Christ is, so are we.*"

* See marginal reading.

So the perfection of the love is seen in giving us the same place Christ has, "that we may have boldness in the day of judgment." It is this perfect love that casts out fear. There can be no fear if we remember that the love of God has given us the same place Christ has.

Where He is and what He is is the answer to where He was and what He was for us.

We were under our sins; so was He. He is clear from our sins; so *are we*. We were *sin*; He was made it. He is God's righteousness; so *are we* in Him. (2 Cor. v. 22.) We deserved the judgment of God. He bore it, and is clear from it; so *are we*. We were in death; so was He. He is now in life; so *are we*.

May you, dear reader, thus know what it is to be without fear. "Perfect love casteth out fear." We can now say, as in verse 19, "We love Him because He first loved us."

We now come to

IV. THE MANNER OF THE LOVE.

"Behold, what *manner* of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." (1 John iii. 1.)

Here we find the manner of God's love is to have us in His family *as children*. It is children here as (note verse 29 of previous chapter) "born of Him." It is thus we are children. This is

the blessed relationship in which we stand to God. He is our Father; we are His children, as begotten of Him. (Chap. v. 1.) The consequence of this blessed relationship is, that the world knoweth us not, because it knew *Him* not. Who is the *Him* here? It is Christ, that blessed One who could say, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee."

So that the *manner* of the love is, that God has given us the same relationship and place that Christ had when here on this earth. May it be ours to enjoy this relationship more, and thus be found in *separation* from all that is not of the Father, remembering what is said in the previous chapter, verse 15, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

We come now to our last point—

THE MEASURE OF THE LOVE.

For this we must turn to John xvii. 23. In this marvellous chapter we get the outpourings and tender solicitude of that heart which "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end." His desires for us as to the present and the future are here expressed. And in this verse 23 He is looking forward to that bright and blessed day when the whole family will be seen in its perfection in that glory. "I in them, and Thou in Me . . . that the world *may know* that Thou hast sent Me, and *hast loved*

them, as Thou hast loved Me." Oh, precious sentence! Let us hang upon it, beloved child of God. It fell from His blessed lips in this world, and is here in God's unchanging Word for our present comfort and blessing. If we can measure that love, the love of the Father for Him, then we can measure His love for us. And remember this is true *now*.

Oh, what a thought, our Father loves us as He loves the Son! And not better shall we be loved in that glory than now. We shall be in its sphere—the Father's house without a cloud—and shall enjoy it to the full, and in the glory of it the world shall know it; but it will not be more true *then* than *now*.

So here in these precious words, "Hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me," we see the measure of the Father's love.

I have thus endeavoured to bring before you the love of God in its Manifestation, Commendation, Perfection, Manner, and Measure.

May you, dear reader, knowing and believing this love, be enabled to say in holy triumph, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

W. J.

That seemed to bring him definite rest of soul, so that it was with peace and joy filling his heart and thrilling his voice that he recited the triumphant concluding verses of the chapter:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Now in happy liberty through self being displaced by the power of the Spirit of God, dear E— rejoiced over that wondrous verse that has brought assurance of faith to many:

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life.”
(1 John v. 13.)

T. K.

RECOVERED FOR GOD'S PLEASURE.

(2 KINGS IV. 1-7; V. 9-14; VI. 1-7 and 13-17; 2 TIM. I. 8-12.)

IT is of great importance to see that the days in which we live have been foretold by the Spirit of God so that we may not be taken by surprise.

There is no epistle more encouraging than the Second Epistle to Timothy, which foretells the condition of things in the presence of which we now are. On the one side there is the faithful portrayal of these days, while on the other there is the great encouragement for us in them, because that which cannot fail is presented to us—that is, the testimony of the Lord. No matter what happens, or what departure there may be, the testimony remains, and it has been God's way all through, in the darkest day to have the brightest testimony. That is distinctly encouraging. I am encouraged by it myself, and I should not be here but for what is set before us in this epistle. I want to be in that testimony—that is what we should seek above all things—and to respond to it practically.

The testimony of the Lord is Christ, or what God has in Christ—that blessed One; nothing can fail that is established in Him.

I want to shew you, in the simplest possible way, from the narrative that I have read from the Book of Kings, how the testimony of the Lord spoken of in Timothy is illustrated.

There is a striking analogy between the times of the Old Testament of which I have read, and the times in which we live. It

was the darkest moment in the history of God's earthly people, but God did not fail His people. God's testimony was with Elisha.

There are four things, in the order in which I have read the narratives, to present to you illustrating what I think is set before us in Timothy.

In this remarkable passage in Timothy we get the origin, manifestation and final triumph of the testimony. There is first the origin of it, then the manifestation of it by the appearing of Jesus Christ, and finally the triumph of it in that day. There is

Grace, Cleansing, Recovery, Power

in the testimony, and the four incidents that I have read from Kings set forth those four points.

It is a very great thing to taste that the Lord is gracious. I suppose there is not a word more frequently used than "grace," but it is one thing to speak of it and another to know the taste of it in our souls. It is not simply that I can explain it, but my soul has tasted it—I like that word "taste." Have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? Grace is set forth in the testimony of the Lord, and that grace is in Christ, because Christ is God's testimony.

The first narrative that I read to you is an

exceedingly simple one. The woman was in the presence of responsibility—she had no way of meeting her liability and was in very great distress, in that her two sons were to be sold, but she cried to Elisha because the testimony of the Lord was with him. Let us look for a moment at this little picture; we all need to be established in grace, for we are greatly lacking in it. Our constant tendency is to be legal, and that is because we are not established in the grace that comes in the testimony of our Lord.

The prophet asks the woman what she has got. All she had was a pot of oil. Elisha tells her that she is to shut herself in with this pot of oil. She was to be shut in with God and her deep need and that little pot of oil.

The door was to be shut. People are more or less in the presence of man, but man must be excluded. If we were more with God we should have a deepened sense of the blessing. It is because man is so much in presence that we are so weak.

That little pot of oil is the Spirit of grace that is in Christ. You remember how the Lord speaks, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor," etc.—there we get the anointed Vessel of the marvellous grace that came into this world.

Now I ask you—have you been shut in with God and a risen Christ? I would ask you with great anxiety—do you know what it is to be shut in with God, man shut out, and to be there in the presence of God to learn God's disposition towards you in that blessed Person who lives before His face and who was down here on earth in the power of the Spirit? That is the way to learn that God is gracious.

He is God's unfailing resource—the risen Christ in the presence of God, “who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification,” etc. “By whom we have access into this grace wherein we stand.” There was sufficiency to meet all our need, and in the Spirit it all becomes available to us.

Grace never fails. Do you think that there is a moment when we might think that it does? I may know doctrinally that grace never fails, but there is such a thing as putting your soul through the drilling and to keep the sense in your soul of God's disposition towards you, to measure what God will be to you by what He finds in Christ, not to measure what God will be to you by what you find in yourself: He whose going has been established and whose feet have been set upon the rock.

Well, the woman's debt was paid, and

she lived on the remainder. May the Lord establish that word in our souls.

* * * *

Now with Naaman it is not a question of responsibility but condition. The very next lesson I have to learn after tasting the grace of God is, what sin in the flesh is—that is, what I am. The story is often preached from, but I have always had a difficulty because I could see it was not a question of guilt but of condition—Naaman was a leper.

A little maid knew where God's testimony was, but the King of Israel did not know. It is little people who may know where God's testimony is when big people miss it. If you want to be in God's testimony you have to be little. I do not look for the great people of this world to be in connection with the testimony, but obscure people often know where the Lord's testimony is.

Well, Naaman is greatly disappointed when the servant of Elisha comes out with the message "Go wash," etc. He says, "I thought, He will surely come out to me . . . and strike his hand over the place." What I understand by "the place" is, that he had not learnt that he was *altogether* unclean. It is not "the place"—our pride, or our temper, or whatever it may be, it is *ourselves*. Naaman had to learn that he was leprous all over. Not the place but the whole man.

“But,” he says, “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?” He had to wash in Jordan. Jordan means descent. You must go down to the river Jordan. Why there? The ark has been through that river. Think of it—death has been annulled because He (Christ) has been down into it; He has made that river efficacious and turned it into a means of cleansing. That is the spiritual meaning.

Naaman had to dip seven times—seven times we are taught to appreciate the death of Christ in real soul history.

Your measure of the appreciation of the death of Christ is the measure in which you have been made to feel your need of it. It is the triumph of God—He has annulled death, and death is the cleanser. That is the way you are taught to love Christ—every time you dip you are taught to love the One who made it efficacious at such a cost to Himself. Oh, blessed death! If you have tasted it yourself you will understand me, but not if you are a mere doctrinal person. Love has made death efficacious. That is the cleansing. He has made death the cleanser, and I am taught to appreciate it seven times—a life-long lesson.

* * * *

I come next to the axe-head, which is re-

covered. Christ has brought life to light, it is recovered for God's pleasure. The axe-head went down to the bottom—it was lost, but God brings the axe-head to the surface. I am convinced that this illustrates the beauty of the testimony of our Lord; that is, that life and incorruptibility are brought to light.

The thought that I have been recovered for God gives me the greatest possible pleasure—that He should think it worth while to recover me for His pleasure. It gives me peculiar pleasure—I was the axe-head and it went down, and no human power could bring it up. The axe-head—I, a poor lost soul, utterly sunk in the depth of ruin, have been recovered for God's pleasure.

That is the great idea in Luke's gospel, that we are recovered for God's pleasure in the life of another Man—Jesus Christ.

Life involves the revelation of what God is, and a response to that revelation; that is to say, He annulled death because He brought to light the love of God in the very spot where sin and man were removed.

Then on the other hand He gives us the capacity to answer to it in His own life, in the power of the Spirit.

It is very simple. There was a tree growing by Jordan—there was life there. Let us look at it—"I delight to do thy will, O

my God: yea, thy law is within my heart"—that marked the tree growing by Jordan—a thing of beauty.

I refer now to Psalm xiv.—“The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God,” but He found none, there was not one man answering to Him; no, not one. What desolation! What awful degradation! In the next psalm we get, “Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” In Psalm xvi. the voice is heard, “Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.” God found a Man to answer to Himself perfectly. Do you find peculiar pleasure in the thought that one Man here had God for His head?

Psalm xvi. is most blessed. One Man having God for His head—answering to God absolutely, and our recovery for God is in that Man. That one Man has pledged that He will recover us for God's pleasure. “I delight to do thy will, O my God.”

The tree was cut down and had to go into death in order to make it possible—He has annulled death and brought to light life and incorruptibility. How does He do this? *He* gives us the ability to respond to it. He stooped into death to write the law of love on the fleshy tables of my heart. The writer is the perfect revelation of God. He

has brought the axe-head up—I am recovered for the pleasure of God, in His life.

Now He has brought life to light and gives the ability in the power of His own life to respond to God. God sees the best part of man—what is the best part of me? My heart—He sees if my heart is responsive to Him and that gives Him pleasure. He has so revealed Himself to us that He gives us the ability to answer to Him in holy affection. The first action of the life of Christ in a Christian is that he responds to God. The result is, "In thee do I put my trust." It is love that gives us confidence, and it is the heart that confides in God.

Do you know the luxury it is to trust God, to be shut up to Him when no creature can help you? Man disappears and God supports you. Life for the Christian is the love of God; to live is to love, and to love is to live.

* * * *

Then if I am recovered I need power. Satan is not so much against people going to heaven when they die, as he is set against anything that is for the pleasure of God down here. If you have a sense in your soul that you are recovered for God's pleasure, and you respond to that holy love, you have got pressure—all the pressure is against such an one. It means a great deal.

There was a host of people surrounding the village of Dothan, and the young man says, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" There were only two to stand against the host. The testimony of the Lord was with Elisha, and he prayed, "Open his eyes, that he may see." It is a great thing to have your eyes opened. When his eyes were opened he saw that all the power of God was with Elisha—with the testimony of our Lord.

The power of God is with that testimony because it is *His* testimony and according to God.

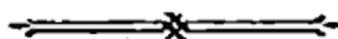
The Spirit is here, but He gives you the ability to look to the Lord in whom the power is, and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Do you believe, dear reader, that there is an irresistible power down here, far greater than any physical power could be? Do you believe the Holy Ghost is here? Do you know anything stronger than such a power as this? That power is available for us.

One may be inclined oftentimes to give up, for Satan is opposed to anything for God's pleasure down here; he does not mind our adopting religious notions, but if it is anything for God's pleasure he will oppose it. But the Spirit of God is here, so let us be encouraged.

My own anxiety is to be with the singers—where the testimony of the Lord is there is very sweet music. I want to be with the singers—with those who sing *with* the Lord. Every Christian sings *to* the Lord—he would not be a Christian if he did not. So many Christians are in Babylonish captivity where they cannot sing. The moment you get away from the testimony you get into Babylonish captivity.

May the Lord bless His word and establish us in grace so that we are recovered for the pleasure of God.

W. J.



FRAGMENT.

I SAY, beloved friends, and I desire to feel it, that a great responsibility rests upon us to set forth the reality. I do not speak of a responsibility that you are not able to meet. That was the responsibility under the law. The responsibility of a Christian is a responsibility which he is able to meet. There is no responsibility now that is not in keeping with a privilege. If you fail in your responsibility, you have not acted up to your privilege. The law disclosed the inability in man to accomplish its commands. The responsibility, or injunctions that are given to us, are actually to manifest that power that is given to us.

J. B. S.

THE LAW OF THE HOUSE OF GOD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

(PSA. XXII. 1-3 ; XXVI. ; I COR. X. 14-22 ; XI. 17-27.)

SOME one has said: "If we confine our attention to the Old Testament we are *legal*; if we study only the New Testament we are *theoretical*; but if we study both Old and New we shall be *practical*"—so I read from both.

Last week the subject before us was the way to the house of God, and we were looking at the Songs of Degrees as setting it forth, and to-night my subject is the law of the house. If you do not recognise the law of the house you will not appreciate the the privileges of the house. I believe that this is the need of the moment. You cannot turn from this subject, for before you can enjoy privileges you *must* face the responsibility: but I want to speak of this in a way that will make you feel, and respond to, His love.

You may ask where we get the expression, "the law of the house." I refer you to Ezekiel xliii. 10-12, where it occurs. Of course I only apply to ourselves a passsge which refers to a future day. "It is most holy"—

this is the law of the house. And I may say that in the last verse of the Book of Ezekiel you will find the privilege of the house, "The Lord is there." That is what will make it so beautiful in a coming day. If the Lord is there you may depend upon it there will be blessing. "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it." That is the privilege of the house.

The reason why I have read Psalm xxii. is to shew that in death the Lord secured the privilege of the house. In this psalm the Lord appears in the bitter night of weeping. The title of the psalm, "Aijeleth Shahar," means "the dawning of the day," and it is the dawning of the everlasting day. You get first the bitter night of weeping, and then the joy of the morning. God puts things in the right order. It is not morning and evening, but "the evening and the morning were the first day." If there is a bitter night of weeping, you may be sure that God will secure a morning of joy. It always follows the night. If you have to go through a night of sorrow, look out for the joy: it will be sure to come, and mark you, *that* joy lies outside the reach of death; if you touch it, you reach what is beyond the shadow of death.

What do you possess outside the reach of death? I ask myself that question, and it

always does me good. I am sensible of God's goodness to me in earthly things, and I thank Him for His mercies, but death's shadow is there. The joy of which I speak is the deathless joy of the house of God. Christ went into death, into those afflictions and sufferings, to secure a dwelling-place for God, a habitation for God where the joy of that morning should be known.

The Lord said, "Be not *thou* far from me." If all others forsake me, do not Thou forsake me, but He has to say, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" No one can fathom those depths. But when He was in that dark and distant spot, His own blessed heart answered back, He gives the reason why He was there. The first reason He gives is, "Thou art holy," and then God dwells in the praises of His people. In that dark spot He could look into eternity, and see that every bit of praise that God would get must be secured by Him there.

How fitting that He should lead the praises! And there never will be a bit of praise in which God will take pleasure that Christ does not lead. He is the great choir-master.

"Thou art holy," that is the law of the house. It will not admit of anything that is not holy. In the end of the psalm there is a glorious stream of praise that He leads.

Wherever you read such passages you will find He was there to secure a people for God. "A seed shall serve him," that is, "worship him."

I turn now to Corinthians. I said that the Lord secured the law of the house in death, and that love will recognise it. The Epistle to the Corinthians is written in a spirit of jealousy. The Lord has a right to be jealous; there never was such love as His, and He has a right to be jealous.

I call your attention to the last chapter. In the midst of warm christian greetings the apostle stops, a feeling of jealousy comes over him. He pulls himself up, and says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." He was an apostle and could say that. I could not, of course, say it, but in these days it is well to read these words, and one is made to feel the propriety of them.

The love of Christ burned in his heart. That is what we want—love to Christ. Paul's eye was resting on the glory, and his heart filled with love to Christ, and he could say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And here he says, "Do not let us provoke the Lord to anger." (Chap. x. 22.) He wants my heart to be so affected by the love of Christ that I may be jealous over myself.

If we are not jealous over ourselves, it provokes the Lord to jealousy. Are we stronger than He?

The apostle had to write to the Corinthians in this corrective way. There was great carelessness as to their associations, and we also are weak on this point. Chapter x. is separation, chapter xi. is seclusion. If there is not separation from things without, there will not be seclusion within. The apostle brings before them the nature of christian fellowship; he is not giving the *order* of the Lord's supper, you will notice he mentions the cup first. Death is the introduction to it. Fellowship is set forth in the cup. He says to them, You are committing an outrage upon the death of Christ. They were going off to heathen temples, and he says, You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.

I am a baptised Christian, but I say to the Lord, Give me to know what my baptism means; and to be true to my baptism I have no right to a will—I am to live to God. "You are baptised unto his death," you have no right to a will. As our hearts are under the power of His love, where the affections are in play, there it is that we are true to our baptism—we live to God.

I have no *right* to a place here; martyrdom is the idea. To the early Christians it meant

martyrdom. Of the people of God it is said, "We are killed all the day long." Things are altered, I know, but this is what it means, "accounted as sheep for the slaughter." What put them there? Their baptism. But those people could not be separated from the love of God, nothing can separate us from the love of God.

That is the answer to the question, What do I possess beyond the reach of death? The LOVE OF GOD. If I died to-night it would not take me out of my joy.

It could be said to a Corinthian saint who went to a heathen temple, You are committing an outrage against the death of Christ, for if a man identified himself with Jewish or heathen temples, he did not keep the law of the house. "Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity"—that is insisting on the law of the house. There is nothing but confusion if we look around, but in scripture it is plain: "The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." They are to purge themselves from the vessels to dishonour, to be sanctified for the Lord.

There is much to be thankful for, because the Lord is so good, but there is much to be deplored. There is not the separation there should be. We are paralysed by our asso-

ciations, so that when we come together we are spiritually feeble. May God give to us a large heart and a true conscience!

In Psalm xxvi., verse 8 is the key to the psalm: "I have *loved* the habitation of thy house." You must put it side by side with Psalm xxii. 3. And you will remember how in Psalm cxxxii. he says, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

"They shall prosper that love thee," spoken of Jerusalem, is true to-day, for if the assembly is loved there will be spiritual prosperity. Let us wake up to these things. The man whose soul is growing prosperously is the man who loves Zion. Do you feel a spring in your soul when you turn your back on your place and come to His place? The Psalmist says, "I have loved thy house." It is for all the time, although especially when God's people are found together.

In verse 3 his conduct is in accordance with that: "Thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes; and I have walked in thy truth." Moved by this loving-kindness there is the desire to be consistent with the place he loves.

Then verses 4 and 5, "I have not sat with vain persons . . . I have hated the congregation of evil-doers." Those two verses sum

up 1 Corinthians x. I will be true to the law of the house; true to His death, and touch nothing that is contrary to it. It is what is due to the love of the Lord that secured the law of the house. He washes his hands, he keeps himself pure, feet and hands preserved from evil.

Now suffer the word of exhortation. *We* must be careful about these things—have our hands clean, and our feet clean. There must be personal separation and purity in our dealings with others. “So will I compass thine altar, O Lord.” It is easy to open the hymn book and give out fine hymns, but if the hands are not clean it is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. What are you doing that disturbs your conscience? You must not play tricks with your conscience; God grant us to take this word seriously to heart!

Think, for instance, of a man who is in debt taking part in the assembly! It is a frightful thing for a Christian to be in debt. We must pay our debts. I appeal to you that we may be true to His death.

“My foot standeth in an even place.” Then he is free to praise. “In the congregations will I bless the Lord.” I pray God to make a mark on my soul as much as upon yours as to this. If you love the house you love the law of the house. Do not provoke

the Lord to jealousy, but may we be provoked to jealousy of ourselves, that we may be true to the law of the house out of love to Him who secured it.

I Corinthians xi. 17 to chapter xiv. is one complete section. These people came together to have a feast; such a state of things could not be now, not in that outrageous way. They spread a meal for themselves, while others hungered, and some of them even got drunk! A very shocking state of things, but the point of the passage is that there were divisions among them.

Where the Lord is apprehended in the supper, there will be accord. The great choir-master puts the choir in order. It is the love that puts us in accord. You do not take the Lord's supper as an individual, you take it with others. At the supper it is the Lord's love to the company: we eat *together*, drink *together*—it brings us together.

Think of two brothers severed in thought and feeling from each other: how can they eat the Lord's supper? Nay, they do not eat it. If you eat the supper you are made one. We are the objects of one love. The Corinthians had missed it.

The One who secured the place, the choir-master (I say it with reverence), puts the choir in order, and if it is not in order there is no singing; better pray then. Nothing

gives Him greater pleasure than to have us in company with Himself. Let us see to it that we are.

Chapter x. is SEPARATION from things without; chapter xi. is that we are to be in the ACCORD OF LOVE. Love must be supreme. I pray God we may not be legal.

Do not let us be formal, but let us understand what the spirit of the supper is—the LORD'S LOVE.

He leads the praises in the assembly.

Let us get alone with the Lord, dear brethren, get under the impress of His love, and be filled with the Spirit. W. J.



SHORT PAPERS ON THE CHURCH.

No. 9.—CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

IN 1 Corinthians x. we have three classes, or companies, of people brought before us, which are distinguished the one from the other religiously. They are Jews, Gentiles, and the church of God.

(1) The *Jews*, as we well know, were God's earthly people. At the beginning of their history as a nation they were delivered from Egyptian slavery, and at length they were established as a kingdom under the

brother, Come with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I also will go with thee into thy lot." What was the sequel? Victory after victory.

Have we found our God-given lot? Have we put the foot down on a little bit of heavenly territory and possessed it? If so, let us help one another to maintain it.

Brethren, the conflict is still raging, but the end is in sight. The good fight of faith has yet to be won, and victory is assured! The testimony of God—Christ morally presented in the saints—has still to be maintained, and "the grace that is in Christ Jesus" is still inexhaustible.

May we then, like Timothy, "war a good warfare," and thus be "helpers of the war."

"Till of the prize possessed,
We hear of war no more,
And oh! sweet thought, for ever rest
On yonder peaceful shore."

S. J. B. C.



THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

(HEB. III. 1; V. 5-9; VII. 24-VIII. 2.)

I WANT to speak of the priesthood of Christ. I do not think we know His priestly service *on our side* sufficiently. We

know much that is true, know it as light, but I hope we want to know how the truth works out in a practical way.

The reason why we are not more at home with the *Lord* in the assembly is that we do not know Him enough with us through the week.

There are five points before me :

(1) The righteous basis of priesthood.

(2) The people for whom the priesthood is exercised, and how are they designated.

(3) Who the Priest is, and where He is. (These two points depend on each other.)

(4) The way He has qualified Himself to be our Priest.

(5) The way He exercises His priesthood.

(*First.*) The Lord Jesus could not be a Priest here ; it was after the sacrificial work was over that He entered on the priesthood. Perhaps some are not established in the benefit of the sacrifice. To such let me say this : the God to whom you are responsible, and who alone could rightly measure the character of your responsibility, has come in to settle it according to His own estimate of it and to His own satisfaction.

It is remarkable that we get three questions answered as to the Priest in the first three verses of this epistle : who He is, what He did, and where He is. Who is He ? A divine Person, He alone could give divine

satisfaction, and He became a man to do it. He is where He is because He did what He did where He was.

A man who was under conviction of sin, listening to the gospel for eight weeks, said to me after each meeting, "God is just, sir." That was all he could say. I never saw such exercise of soul—he was in intolerable anguish. One morning I met him and he said, "It is all right now." He had got a step further, and knew not only that God is just but that

He is the Justifier.

He said, "I saw Jesus on the cross for me, and then I saw Him in the glory, and it is all clear from there to here." That is peace! I hope your soul is established on that solid basis: what *He* has done. God has come in from His own side to meet the question of your responsibility.

(*Second.*) The Spirit puts a volume in a few words. "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Such people are invited to consider the High Priest of their profession, Christ Jesus. In the end of this verse there are two thoughts about the Lord—He is the Apostle and Priest.

All that God is to me He is to me in that Person, for He is God. The fulness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in Him. My

desolate soul finds that that blessed One has met my need for ever. God is all that He is to me in Him, in order that I may know Him. He brings me to God that I may enjoy all that God is.

He is *Apostle* because He brings God to me, and He is *Priest* because

He brings me to God.

How could any person enjoy God apart from knowing that they are made suitable to Him? but *He* has made us suitable.

Look at chapter ii. 14. "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood"—we are the children—"he also himself likewise took part of the same"—became a man. Death had no claim upon Him, but He came where the children were. There was this terrible power, and He went into death to deliver those who were under it. He has been into death to destroy Satan who held the power of death, and to deliver the children.

Next (ver. 17), He makes "propitiation for the sins of the people." On the one hand, Satan's power broken up; on the other, propitiation made to God. He comes into our place. He comes where the children are; our hearts are drawn to Him when we see Him doing that. You must learn this, the journey He took from the abode of love, where the children were thought of, down to

the place where the children were found. Oh, that we were more affected by the love of God. We want to walk under the spell of His love, and our conscience pure in the presence of God.

In Psalm xl. He says, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay." He went into distance and darkness—it was horrible to Him; He went there because we were there, but His feet were brought up from that pit.

"Miry clay" corresponds to Sinai; we have no footing with God on the ground of what we are, we cannot stand before Him; our nature is sinful, but He was made sin. We went into it, but He has come out of it.

Psalm xl. 3 says, "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." If His feet are on the rock, we are on the rock; if He sings, we sing.

Now look at Hebrews ii. 11. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." I think that establishes the principle of double identification—that is the platform. The Spirit of God can lead our souls into the blessedness of what it means. The measure in which you have been made to feel the need of His death is the measure in which you appreciate His death.

Verse 11, "not ashamed to call us *brethren*"; verse 12, "I will declare thy name unto my *brethren*"; verse 13 is *sonship*, association; you put your trust in Him. Your knowledge of verse 13 is the measure in which you understand verse 12. Before you can know the privilege of the assembly you must know the path. If we are not in the path of life as children, we shall not know the sweet and blessed privilege of verse 12. If you are characterised by "self" all the week, you cannot enjoy the assembly on the Lord's day.

(*Third.*) Hebrews v. 5 says, "Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee." That is a quotation from Psalm ii. In that psalm we are taught the impotency of man and the majesty of God. If you are timid and in fear of man that will help you. Men are banded together against God and His Christ, you have to face that when you go into the world, but in Psalm ii. you see what a poor thing man is. You and I have to do with GOD, and man is impotent against God. God says, "I *have set* my king on my holy hill;

he is my Son."

The rejection of Christ brings sonship to

light. CHRIST HAS BEEN REJECTED FROM THIS WORLD! Let that fact rest on your spirit. God says: *You hate My Son, I kiss Him.* Christ is greeted as the Son, as man; He always was the Son, but now as man He is greeted thus, "Thou art my Son." That sets forth a new and heavenly relation for us. Thank God *we* have kissed the Son; through grace we have been made to do that. Now God wants us to know Him.

You remember when the tax-gatherers came to Peter and said, "Does your master pay tribute?" Peter said, "Yes." Afterwards, in the house, the Lord spoke of it, and explained that the children were free, and told Peter what to do so as not to offend them; but these are the words I want you to notice, "that take and give unto them *for me and thee.*"

Is not that beautiful? I quote it to shew the identification. If it is sonship for Him, it is sonship for us. We have been taught that we go with that Person, like Aaron and his sons. If you have never tasted that, I pray God that you may do so.

Now let me draw your attention to Galatians iv. 4, 5, 6. I read the end of verse 4 and the beginning of verse 5 as a parenthesis. "When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth his Son . . . that we might receive sonship." We learn in Him what son-

ship is, and we have His Spirit in us that we may be able to cry, "Abba, Father!" It is a great joy to be able to say that, and God finds His pleasure in it. It is not prayer. God loves to have our hearts responsive to His love. It is not asking for things, but having our hearts led into His love, so that we may say, Father! Father!! in rapturous joy.

To return now to Hebrews v. Christ is greeted as Priest when He took His seat up there: "Thou art

a priest for ever

after the order of Melchisedec." (Ver. 6). The spot that claims Him is the spot that claims us. The heavenly calling comes to view when you know Him where He is. "Partakers of the heavenly calling" is seen in Christ where He is.

Can you say, "Heaven is better than earth"? Of course it is, you say. But is it? Is it better to *you*? The Lord has lost the earth for the moment, and heaven *is* better than earth. If you come on these lines, you will find you need a priest. A people going to heaven (not when you die, but *now*) need a priest. Heaven is not a place of refuge, it is a *home*.

(*Fourth.*) How He qualified Himself to be our Priest. (Chap. v. 7.) The days of

His flesh are over, He has reached the goal, but He has been here, He has tasted this pathway. He was heard for "his *piety*." What has He not tasted? He was hungry, weary, in sorrow and joy. He has qualified Himself to touch us as none other can. Why do we not go to Him? He will never misunderstand you. He will attach your heart to Himself as He draws near to you. When none else can draw near, He will.

The "days of his flesh" are set forth in Psalm cix. "For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer," &c. Here we have the complaints of Christ in

His lonely path

of life here. "Do thou for me, O God . . . I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me." When hated down here, He says, "I put my trust in thee." He was absolutely perfect in it. This weeping, supplicating, poor Man knew what it was to have God at His right hand (ver. 31), and in Psalm. cx. God says, You come to My right hand. He has qualified Himself to be the Priest for ever.

Psalm cii. is His bitter cry in view of death. If you want to know your blessed Lord, turn to Himself and ponder the scrip-

tures which speak thus of Him. We learn that this blessed, weeping, supplicating, pious Man is "God over all, blessed for evermore." Wondrous, wondrous thought!

Just see how it endears Him to you. "Though he were a Son, yet *learned he obedience* by the things which he *suffered*; and . . . he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Vers. 8, 9.) He will be your Saviour if you obey Him. Will He support you in a way of self-will? Nay, He will leave you, and you may go years and years and He will never draw near to you if you *will* go a way of self-will. He will support you in His own life: it says all them that OBEY Him.

(*Fifth.*) How He exercises the Priesthood. (Heb. viii. 1, 2.) Peter leaving the boat is the God-given illustration of the passage before us. (See Matt. xiv.) You can easily see in Peter's case that he did what the Son of God did. He walked on the water.

"I love" is the spring of obedience. He found the Lord to be eternal salvation because he obeyed Him. His life means that you love God, and He will support you there, but not in self-will. You are loved into obedience; to *try* to be obedient is legal.

Is it not sad that many a one can walk in self-will? If a man knows priesthood, he

says, I cannot go a step without Him. Do you know His support? In it you learn His interest in you, and your heart gets attached to Him.

Another way He comes to you is in the dark hour of bereavement. Your place is in death's shadow. I know what that is; but if the Lord died out of this world, what can you and I expect after that? When death came in in John xi. see what the blessed Lord could do. There are two ways of learning this. The Lord *taught* Martha, but He *sympathised* with Mary.

Some of us know what it is to have Christ walking with us; He is able to fill up every breach. It is worth learning what He can be at a moment like that. He is the "minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." How blessed it is to know His support, to be able to say, The Lord has been with me in all my path, and now I come to enjoy His support in the sanctuary.

I believe it is the Lord's will to give us a taste of the blessedness of being with Him in His own circumstances before we go home to Him. Let us seek it earnestly!

W. J.



He'll come Himself to take me
From everything below.

He paid the price so costly,
My ruined soul to save; ·
And for the love He bore me
His precious life He gave.

Surely this love must waken
A true response in me,
And cause a heart-felt longing
His blessed face to see.

And so I pray, "Lord, help me
Never in thought to stray,
But keep Thy glorious coming
Before me *every day*."

E. M. M.



OUR PLACE AND PORTION.

SUMMARY OF AN ADDRESS BY W. JOHNSON.

(EPH. I. 1-13.)

IT is good for us all, poorly as we understand it, to know what is in the purpose of God for us. It was purposed for us before the world was, before sin came in.

We do not read that the Ephesians were sinners at all until the blood of redemption is mentioned.

Now it can be put in a very simple way. If you think of the two epistles, Romans and Ephesians, the truth comes in from our

side in Romans. It is God's side of the cross, but still it is in regard to our necessity. Our responsibility and condition has been all divinely met, for God has introduced Himself as a God of grace and love. We must be established in the truth of Romans to fully appreciate what is in Ephesians.

In Ephesians you are on your face and God talks to you. Romans puts you on your face and in Ephesians God speaks to you. Romans proves the ruin, but the ruin is the dark background where God shines in His splendour. He overcomes the evil in us by setting forth the good in Himself. He does not overlook the evil, the cross is the proof of that; that is Romans. You might sum up Romans in three words—Ruin, Revelation, Response.

In our ruin

God revealed Himself,

God made Himself known in another Man—our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. The ruin was proved, and God was revealed in connection with it. This is the way in which He makes our life responsive to Himself.

It is good to think these things out, and it came to me very forcibly to-day: "*Give thyself to these things.*" I think sometimes we depend too much on ministry; we should *give* ourselves up. Ministry helps if we are

exercised. People sometimes say, "I never saw that before." The thing is to go in for "spiritual thinking," because you value the things which are presented to you. What do you think about when you wake in the morning? "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." That is a very serious thing!

The measure of your sanctification lies in the character of your thinking. Right actions are secured if the thinkings are right. May the Lord help us!

Now in Ephesians it is the way the truth is presented from God's side. Paul closes Romans with a doxology and begins Ephesians with a doxology. He says, "Blessed." The sense of the vastness and marvellous beauty of God's purpose fills his heart, and he bows and says "Blessed." What an outburst! *Spiritual* blessings, not *temporal*; *heavenly*, not *earthly*; *in Christ*, not *Adam*. Well, that is the way in which the apostle begins the doxology from God's side.

It is God's pleasure to surround Himself with beings who respond to Him. He dwells in light unapproachable; but if He is love, and He is, He will surround Himself with objects answering to what He is, for His own pleasure.

Grace reached us at the bottom, that is our history side; why was it? Because

love wanted us at the top.

Entertain the thought that love wanted you at the top. If you came to Christ, it was because Christ came to you. How glad-some it was to find some one who could settle everything, and how your heart awakened! Oh! how you ought to love Christ. He wants you to know how He met you on your side, because God wanted you. To put it simply, *God wants you.*

It is the *purpose* side here, that He will surround Himself with beings for His own pleasure. It could not be without Christ. The characteristic word is *in* in Romans, it is *for* in Colossians, it is *with* in Ephesians.

Now, if that purpose is to be carried out it involves two things. *First*, God must be *revealed*; *secondly*, a mighty *subjective* work must be wrought in the people answering to the revelation. The point here is purpose—that He will surround Himself with beings responsive to Him. There must be formation to secure this.

“At-homedness” with God, that is my way of explaining simply what I mean. The height of the blessing lies in the peculiar position in which we stand to God our Father. That is the future which lies beyond us. What a magnificent future! Are these things given to us as theories? What would be the result if they were held with power in our souls? If God gives us anything in

the future, it is that it should affect us in the present.

Do you not think an appreciation of it would make things of earth dwindle into insignificance? You must know heaven to leave earth. You belong to this vast scheme, blessed for His own pleasure.

If that be so, it necessitates the revelation of God, and formation in God's people answering to the revelation, if we are going to be before Him in love.

I am acquainted with human life, I speak as a man formed to live here. I am capable of enjoying human relationships, I am capable of understanding and enjoying human life, I understand nothing of heaven. I speak not as a *Christian*, but as a *man*. But the humiliating thing is that I must die. How great the anguish is—I must die! To gain life I must die. No matter what the human joy is, it comes to an end.

But now, as a Christian, I have ability to understand heaven. I am formed, have a constitution for it, which belongs to heaven, so that I can distinguish between what is natural and what is spiritual.

I must not discard what is natural, but I can only behave properly in it as I understand what is spiritual. What is natural fades away, but what is spiritual does not fade away. What a magnificent thing!

In Romans the one word which conveys the greatest thought is *glory*. Glory is there, which means what God is. He does what He does because He is what He is, and all that God is in nature and character came to light in the lowest parts of the earth. It shone there ; Christ displayed it there. Glory is the greatest word in Ephesians also.

We sometimes think of glory as something we can see. But God's glory is what He is in His nature and character, and we are to reflect His glory in what we are. "Like Jesus in that place," I shall never think of myself. It will be gone.

You are truly happy when you forget yourself entirely. God proposes to present Himself in such a way that we shall

forget ourselves entirely.

Never throughout that blessed eternity, when this will be fulfilled, will you once think of yourself. It is only natural to think of ourselves. That proves our degradation.

The first fallen creature became occupied with his beauty and fell. He forgot he was only a creature, and fell. He wanted to be as God, self-sufficient, and he fell. He *will* fall, and will be the most degraded creature in a lost eternity.

Thank God that we are Christians, that we are delivered from that horrid principle. A Christian has Christ, he has turned to

God, and what will He do? He will hold him to Himself, both now and for ever. How I treasure these verses! I look at them, I repeat them, and say, all my blessing lies there. This is the *generation of purpose*.

Do you weigh over these things and live in the power of them? If I am wanted *where Jesus is*, I shall be taken care of *where Jesus was*.

When you come to verse 11 you have the inheritance. The mystery of His will is that God will head up all things in Christ. It is a great thing to know that you are coming into *sonship* and *heirship*. It is ours now to enjoy. Here it is in the future and the fulness of it, "in whom also we have obtained an inheritance," &c. I will put it practically. Do you think if any one held this he would be making a fortune? It is a most degrading thing to be here making a fortune. I am simply

left here to be educated

for my destiny. I have to work with my hands and earn my living, but I am talking about people who have making a fortune as their aim. It is most humiliating.

If we were in the light of our heavenly calling we should act differently. The question of our calling has been raised of recent date, but to apply it to one thing and miss

the application to all things shews a lack of integrity. If I belong to heaven it should separate me from all that is here.

God would have us upright; we need to see the application of these things to ourselves. How far we are in the light of our heavenly calling would produce a testimony which is often lacking.

A young Christian may say, How am I to know that I belong to this vast system? I am only a little atom, and I think of a vast scheme where I see the glory of God in these proposals. I say, how am I to know that I am a little stone in this "mosaic work"? (I speak figuratively.)

I was in Italy, and once saw millions of little stones put together by the skill of man. That is an illustration. How lovely the scripture is!

The apostle says, "*Ye have trusted Christ.*" He comes right down from purpose to soul history. I must know that I am one of the little stones in it. "*Ye trusted Christ.*" What can be more simple and useful than the way in which a Christian is spoken of?

The youngest child

can say, "I trusted Christ." What made us trust Christ? The word of truth, His grace, His mercy. All truth is presented in Christ, and you were led to trust Him.

The poor woman who came to Jesus put out her hand and touched the hem of His garment. That touch said, "Lord, I need Thee." The garment had no seam; she little knew what she was in for. All the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily.

Now look—after you trusted you were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise. *She touched Him by faith, and He touched her by the Spirit.* I am leading you to Mark v., where He said, "Daughter." She said in her touch, *I need Thee.* He said, *I need you.*

You were sealed: you touched Him by faith, and He touched you by the Spirit; and now you are one of the little stones in this vast structure of blessing. It is the generation of purpose. May the Lord expand our hearts in the sense that we belong to this vast scheme. I was once having a meeting, and there was a sister whose husband was a great painter. She was at the reading, and the effect of it was that she said to her husband, "I have seen a picture in Ephesians, and your pictures are as nothing to be compared with this one." This is the generation for the pleasure of God. May the Lord in His goodness, by the consideration of it, enable us to truly enter into our portion.

W. J.



A NEW GENERATION.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY W. JOHNSON.

(JOHN XX. 11-18; ACTS VIII. 30-33, IX. 5;
PHIL. II. 12-16.)

WITH regard to the Lord Himself, we read that He was cut off and had nothing. It says in Isaiah liii., "Who shall declare his generation?" The Lord had no inheritance; He had title to all, but He was cut off, and had nothing. And not only so, but He had no generation. I am referring to an aspect of His death which the scriptures present, not the atoning aspect. The scriptures speak of the Lord in His true and perfect and holy humanity. He had title to everything, and He was cut off and had nothing. He had no generation; He felt it, He had the positive grief of it. "He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days. I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days." (Psa. cii.) He was cut off in the midst of His days. Would to God that we entered more into His side of things! He was cut off out of the land of the living!

Now that introduces my subject, which is *His generation*, and how the Lord declares His own generation.

My first point is to shew the generation in

privilege ; secondly, in suffering ; thirdly, in testimony.

He declares His own generation, He declares it in resurrection. In the prophetic scriptures that speak of Christ and of His sufferings there is always the thought of generation. The generation is the fruit of the travail of His soul. "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." While He was cut off, and had no generation, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." "He shall see his seed."

In Psalm xxii. you have the seed, the generation coming to light, and it is a generation for the praise of God ; that is to say, the great thought of Psalm. xxii. is a worshipping generation. In Psalm lxi., another great sorrow psalm, which you get in the second book, it says His seed shall inherit ; it is the reigning side. In the third book of Psalms you have a seed answering to Him morally, which I shall be able to shew presently from the New Testament, but in Psalm cii. His seed shall abide for ever, He puts the stamp of abidingness on His generation.

His generation is declared in each gospel. He declares His generation in His pathway here ; in John He declares it in resurrec-

tion, in the other gospels the declaration of His generation precedes, or is connected with, the sowing of the seed. He declares His generation in Matthew xii. 46-50. He indicates as His generation those who shall do the will of His Father which is in heaven. He declares it morally, He stretches out His hand toward His disciples. He says, These are My generation, who shall do the will of My Father.

Turn now to Mark iii. 31-35. Here is the call of His mother to Him, and He says, Those who sit around are My brethren, those who do the will of God. God could only be pleased with what is morally suitable to Himself, and the Lord Jesus came down here to procure a people who should be morally suitable to Him.

You came to Christ in your great need, and so you got introduced to Christ; but I ask you, do you find pleasure in the thought that the reason why you came to Christ, and He received you, was that you should answer to what He is morally? If you do not find pleasure in it there is something morally wrong in your soul. Do you take pleasure in the thought that He came down here to find a generation for God, who shall delight in His will?

If you are a Christian you have come to Him. What a beautiful thing it is that He

says, These are My brethren! Immediately after you have the parable of the sower; He sows the word in order to produce the generation.

Now in Luke's gospel the order is reversed. It is after the parable of the sower that you get the Lord saying, "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." (Chap. viii. 19-21.) "*Do it.*" In all these three gospels you have the Lord indicating His generation. They do the will of His Father which is in heaven; they do the will of God; they hear the word of God, and do it. The sowing of the word is to produce a generation after this kind.

Having said that much I come now to John's gospel, which is entirely different. The poor woman here is in the garden, and she has great affection for Christ; she has no home where Christ is not. I do not know whether we have reached that. These disciples saw and believed, and went home, but this beloved woman lingered at the door of the sepulchre. She was a most unintelligent woman, but one who had great affection for Christ, one who apprehended there could be no home where He was not. You might have said to her, Go home. Peter and John have gone home. No, she would have said, I will never rest till I find Him. What entrancing affection!

The two angels are there, but all they say in this gospel is, "Woman, why weepest thou?" The angels are sympathetic with her. No angels bear testimony in John, the Lord does it Himself.

In the three gospels I have quoted the resurrection answers to the transfiguration. It is very beautiful to see it. In Matthew there is a great stone rolled against the door of the sepulchre. Poor puny man! "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." They roll a great stone, but there was a great earthquake. We often think of the great power down here with man, but when we get into the presence of the power of God man disappears. The angel came and rolled the stone away and sat on it. How majestic! We are made to feel the powerlessness of man. If we were in touch with heaven we should have the sense there is no power like the power of God. It is all very majestic in Matthew.

Then he renders a testimony to those who come; it is the angel who speaks to those who are there in Matthew.

When we come to Mark we see a young man sitting there clothed in white. No one could bear witness apart from purity, therefore it says in the transfiguration, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as

snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them," because power and purity go together. If a testimony is to be rendered it must be by a man clothed in a white garment. How in keeping that is with Mark.

When you come to Luke, "Two men stood by them in shining garments," this is what is heavenly. In the transfiguration "His raiment was white and glistening." (Luke ix. 29.) But here in John no voice is heard, no angels could meet that poor heart that misses the Lord. To me it is surpassingly beautiful. "Woman, why weepest thou?" It only elicited this: "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." The transfiguration is not recorded in John for Jesus is presented in His glory all through.

The angels there are not attractive to her; no one is attractive to you when Christ is your Object: you will turn from anybody and everybody till you find Him. Oh! she says, if I could only find Him. She thought of a dead body, but it was Himself she wanted; I must have *Him*, that is the point. So she turns away from the angels, and turns from the gardener, as she supposes, and then His sweet voice is heard; no angel shall say it, He will say it Himself. What will He say? "Mary!" Who could say "Mary" like Jesus? "My sheep hear my

voice, and I know them, and they follow me." I know them; Mary! Mary!

I will try and illustrate it. No one could call my name as my mother could. If my mother were outside and called my name I should know it now: no one could put such affection into it as she could. No one could say "Mary" like the Lord.

There is beautiful recognition here. She answers back, "Rabboni": she is with Him.

Though the supper is not here, we have in John's gospel what is behind the supper. I understand the supper to be the appeal of love, and there is mutual recognition in the supper. He is saying "Mary," and we answer back "Rabboni"; we are with Him. The supper has been instituted in order that we might recognise His love, hear His sweet voice; and there might be a response in our hearts to Him in such a way that we find ourselves with Him. It is affection that finds itself with Him always.

What happens now? She springs forward, as it were; we infer that from the Lord saying, "Touch me not." She says, You have come back to be with me in my circumstances. No, says the Lord. What pleasure He had in saying it! What compensation for the travail of His soul! What an answer to His unutterable grief was the holy joy of that embrace—"Touch me not."

I am come to tell you, you must come with Me. I have made a way for you to come with Me; and He says, "Go to my brethren," words that are simple to read but in which He finds His joy. He embraces His brethren on the platform He had secured for them. He is on His own territory; He is outside the region of death and weeping. He says, Come to Me. "Go to my brethren." He embraces His brethren; then He unfolds what it is in words that are excessively simple but very profound, and in which is our everlasting happiness. "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Have you ever known anything like that?—I ask you all. I do not ask you if you have read the scriptures, but do you know this holy, unalloyed joy of association with Him the other side of death? That is where He declares His generation; He declares it morally in the passages I have spoken of; but here it is His generation associated with Him, all having with Him that wondrous privilege of knowing His Father to be their Father, and His God their God.

Now in regard to the supper, beloved brethren. If we do not miss Him during the week, we shall not find Him on Lord's day morning. It is the heart that misses

Him who finds Him. In the place where He was crucified, there was a garden, and a grave; that is what the Lord has found here. Have you the tender sensibilities of affection, that you go up and down this world and say, My Lord has only found a cross and a grave in this world of man's pleasure? Years go by before we get any sense of it, but those who miss Him find Him. We may get our moral sensibilities blunted by living in nature, and in things here, but we cannot step over it: those who miss Him find Him.

You have known bereavement as we all have, how the shadow of bereavement lies on your spirit, and even the sunshine is tantalising to you, because you think of the one who has departed. But, oh! beloved brethren, if we were in affection for the Lord, how we should miss Him! You would keep on saying, He has been here, but He has gone; and when He was here in this condition of things with which I am familiar—this human life—He found a cross and a grave, that is all. Do you think you would find your home in things here if you realised that? We have to do what is right and proper, but it is in our spirits we miss Him. Sweet it is to come week by week to answer to His appeal of love in the supper, and to find ourselves with Him and to feel

the joyful embrace, "My brethren." I cannot explain it to you, I am but a little child in these things, but I know what it is to taste it—the embrace. He says, I am glad to have you; you are compensation to Me in all My sorrow. My joy is greater in finding My brethren the other side of death; so the generation is declared on that side.

What is the privilege of it? His Father is our Father, and His God our God. He bears us up there in the sense of that blessed relationship in which He stands, and we may have, in measure, His own feelings in regard to His Father, who is our Father, and to His God, who is our God; to have the same kind of feelings in our hearts towards His God and Father as He has.

(To be continued.)



JOHN.

WITHOUT depreciating in any way whatever the ministry of any of the Lord's servants, it does seem that John was one who was entrusted with the inmost secrets of the Lord's desires. He speaks of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John xxi. 20); the one, too, who leaned on His bosom (chap. xiii. 23): seat of affection. One feels in that way he was

A NEW GENERATION.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY W. JOHNSON.

(JOHN XX. 5, 11-18; ACTS VIII. 30-33, IX. 5;
PHIL. II. 12-16.)

(Continued.)

I TELL you why He breathed into them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." He not only declared the name, but breathed His own risen life into them. Did you ever have the sense of that? Once you taste that, you never forget it and you will never be satisfied till you get this holy joy again: it is a joy that you will never lose.

I have known natural joy—I am not making little of that which is natural, it is of God, but the spiritual is infinitely greater—I have known in my greatest earthly joy that I must lose it; but when I have this joy of which I am speaking, my heart says, I shall never lose it, it is mine for ever.

This is what the Lord is proposing for you, and He declares His generation on the resurrection platform. He does not leave it to angels to say it, He renders it Himself.

Now I want to shew you that what produces such a generation is suffering down here. I turn you now to the Acts, where that is indicated. This is a very complete section. At the end of chapter

vii. there is a man full of the Holy Ghost, and he looks up stedfastly into heaven. He is the first witness and martyr. He sees "Jesus standing on the right hand of God." What is opened up now is a new metropolis: he sees Jesus where He is. It is all over with Jerusalem as a centre, but there is a new metropolis opened up for Stephen; and so, too, the Holy Ghost turns our thoughts to Jesus where He is. Did you realise that when we were singing the hymn?

"O Lord, Thy glory we behold,
Though not with mortal eyes."

These mortal eyes have never seen the glory. How can I see it? By the Spirit; so that I may become cognisant by the Spirit of Jesus where He is, and know very well that the spot that claims Jesus is the spot that claims me. I no more belong to this earth than Jesus did. So this beloved man lays down his life; he is persecuted, but he looks up to heaven and sees Jesus there. In his heart he had the peace of the place where Jesus is. We are conscious of storms here, but God is in undisturbed repose.

Stephen stands in that court house, and there is not a friendly face. Is there any

trepidation in his heart? Not a bit; the unruffled repose of the place where Jesus is is in the heart of that man in the place where Jesus was. They were gnashing with their teeth, and all the wild waves in the court house were saying, There is no help for him in God. Oh! he says, there is. There is not a flutter in his heart. Is that open to me as I pass through this world, that I may have the peace of the place where Jesus is in the place where Jesus was? Yes, it is.

The man in chapter viii. had been to Jerusalem, but he finds no rest in ordinances. Jerusalem will not satisfy him, he comes back with a weary heart. Who will satisfy him? Jesus. He was reading a roll; he was reading that wonderful chapter in Isaiah, but not the atoning part of it. It says there, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." But it was not that part he was reading. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter," etc. "He was cut off out of the land of the living"; he read that. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" said the Lord's messenger to him. The peculiarity of the passage is, that he was reading the part which speaks of His being cut off out of the land of the living. He says, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" It was Jesus. Was Jesus cut off? Yes,

and had nothing. Oh! says he, it is all over with me; so he was baptised; and his baptism meant this, he accepted the cutting off. If you accept the privilege you must accept the suffering. If His life is taken from the earth my life goes too.

Do you recognise the fact (how many of us do?) that Christianity is essentially a suffering thing: that we are not Jews? A young lady said to me, "I am greatly distressed and greatly tried. How is it the wicked prosper, and God's dear people have to pass through so many and such peculiar trials?" I said to her, "We are not Jews, we are Christians." A Jew expected favour from God on this earth; we are Christians. A great deal of prosperity here is the result of self-will and moral departure from the truth, and prosperity weakens us. There is such a thing as the curse of prosperity. Do not think so much of it. God may permit circumstances to be such so that you may prosper, only it is excessively dangerous: you need special grace for such circumstances. Christianity is essentially a suffering thing down here, but there is great compensation. So we have to accept the suffering side; the eunuch did in his baptism. "He was cut off, and had nothing," and the eunuch accepted the situation. Those who accept the situation in regard

to suffering will know what it is to be sustained by glory. All through, Christianity is a suffering thing; I beg your acceptance of that, it would save us from a thousand and one disappointments if we did. Christianity in its essence is nothing *here* and everything *there*. I am not asking you to do anything extravagant, I am asking you to face out the fact that the generation is not only a generation of privilege but a generation of suffering. If we have His place before the Father we have His place before the world.

One other word. The generation is down here to hold forth the word of life—that is, to be in testimony to God. What a blessed thing! The angels might envy us our position now. I am left down here to set forth God. That is the point where we come back to the gospels, doing the will of His Father, who is in heaven. It is the answer in our hearts to the sowing of the word. If I think of the sowing, the word is the revelation of God; if I think of the reception, it is an honest and good and upright heart; if I think of the realisation, it is joy. What I enjoy becomes light to other people. The word of God is the revelation of God to me, that I might receive it in uprightness. I receive it, not with joy but in my conscience; it goes down and produces self-judgment in me, but the happy result is that

it becomes life to me; and what becomes life to me is light to other people.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” I ask you to consider such a thing, that it is possible for us to be down here for the will and pleasure of God. It is an opportunity that is afforded us that will not be afforded us by and by, that in the midst of a generation where men are doing their own will, we are left here to set forth God. Therefore God works in you. How little we have thought of this passage. How many times have I said, If I could only get some one to tell me how it is He works in me, and what it is He works in me! Well, He works in me that which answers to what He is in Himself. He presents Himself to me in Christ so that I might know Him, and He works in me the answer to what is in Himself—divine love. If I think of God, He can say, I am, I will, I do. I am, and because I am, I will and I do. He wills that which is according to what He is, and He produces that which is according to what He is. I am, I will, I do.

Now let us look at the other side. I am, but not the same as God, that is what He works in me; it is the answer in me to what is in Christ. I could not be it without Him,

because the revelation is in Him. I am, I will, I do. What we need to be exercised about is our *being*; often we think of *doing*. There is the being, the willing, the doing. The doing is that He works in you efficaciously by the Spirit, the answer to Himself in love. The divine stature of every one of us lies in love. That is your true I; that is, you are identified with what God is. He is love, and that is your true I. If I think of light, it is the revelation of God to me that becomes life in me, and that is light to other people. "Holding forth the word of life," that people may learn what God is in us. Christ was God, there was the revelation of God in Him; but, beloved brethren, we are to hold forth the word of life.

People ask sometimes about conversions. I remember once going to see a man who confessed Christ in a gospel meeting. A man came up to me and said, "I have come to Christ through the preaching." I replied, "I will come and see you to-morrow morning." "Yes," he said, "I shall not be on duty." I went next morning, and in the course of conversation I said to him, "When did this begin with you?" "Oh," he said, "it was Charlie did it. Don't you know Charlie? He did it." He was a simple man. "Charlie was a man I worked

with, and he was converted three years ago and he lived so before me." He was holding forth the word of life; that is what we want, not fine preaching but fine living. How easy it was to stand up and speak to a man whose conscience had been reached by a man working beside him on the railway. That is what we want. I have often said that if I were a tradesman I would like to be an evangelical tradesman, and give good weight. I would not like to give the impression I was overreaching people; it is a horrid thing for a Christian to be like that. I would like to give the people I meet with every day the impression that I had to do with God, and that I knew God. You might have all the preachers in the world, but what affects people is *life*—"holding forth the word of life," morally presenting God to people. Such a generation becomes a testimony; it is setting forth what God is. A generation according to purpose.

W. J.



Yet art Thou Love! and love's compassions flow
 Down to our hearts, as through this world we go;
 Nor life, nor death, nor all dark powers combined
 Can stay Thy love, in Christ our Lord enshrined.

Wisdom and love! In these our hearts may rest,
 Till, all Thy mind fulfilled, at Thy behest
 The darkness of the night shall pass away,
 And resurrection's night bring forth the Day.

Glory and strength to Thee, our God, belong!
 Thy wisdom, love and power shall be our song,
 Till every whit throughout Thy temple* vast
 Shall utter forth Thy glory at the last!

P. S. P.

* The universe.



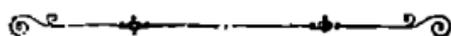
CORRECTION.

IN connection with sentence on page 66, line 13, read:

The characteristic preposition in Romans is *to*, in Colossians *with*, in Ephesians *in*; in saying this I have in my mind the position we are looked at as in these epistles. Living *to* God in Romans, associated with Christ, "buried *with* him," "raised *with* him," "quickened together *with* him" in Colossians, and in Ephesians the purpose side is "*in* the heavenlies *in* Christ," "chosen *in* him," "taken into favour *in* the Beloved," &c., as also in chapters ii. and iii., which gives us the subjective side, that is, His work to effect His purpose.

W. J.

And to Laodicea He appeals, even to the individual, to open the door, saying, "I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." His every activity, as He stands to feed His saints, is as full of dignity and moral greatness at the end as it was at the beginning. It will ever be marked by the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. That name to us is the Father's name, and may it ever be hallowed in our hearts as we remember His ceaseless care and tireless love. R. B.



THE PERFECT SERVANT.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS—REVISED.

BY W. JOHNSON.

(EXO. IV. 22, 23; MARK I. 1; XVI. 19, 20.)

MY object is to bring before you suggestively some of the marks of the true Servant. I suppose we all know that the Gospel of Mark presents the Lord in that aspect; He is the Prophet, the true Servant.

Some one has said, and I think it is right, that the disciples are looked at in Matthew as teaching, in Mark as preaching, in Luke as witnessing, and in John as sent by the Son, even as He was sent by the Father.

It is a very great comfort that we have

perfection in One. While we have Paul, a wonderful servant, brought before us, who came closer than any of us to the Lord, yet perfection was only found in Christ.

Paul and the testimony were one, as it were. He was not severed from the testimony in any way; he was *characterised* by the testimony; he was the answer in himself to it, a man of like passions with ourselves. Still, we have to feel the distance between him and the *perfect* Servant.

We have *perfection* only in the Lord, and how sweet it is to look at His perfections and enjoy them. However much we are made to feel how different we are in our imperfections, it is sweet to turn to Him, to look at Him and consider Him. I wish we did it more. If we looked at Him more we should become like Him morally.

The Psalmist says, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Christ fills out all things—He fills out the commandment. So we have in Mark the perfect Servant, and the perfect Servant is the Son of God. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the *Son* of God.

We are introduced to Him in rather an abrupt way. It says here, "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." So we are presented at once with this perfect Servant.

I want to shew you that the spring of all true service lies in conscious *sonship*; it is a very important thing to remember. It has been said that the first time you get a thought as to a thing in scripture you get an indication of what it means. I do not think you get any thought of service in Genesis, but the thought of it is in Exodus; we have here for the first time God's great thought as to service. He speaks of Israel as His *son*, His *firstborn*, and sends Moses with this message to Pharaoh, "Let my son go, that he may serve me." That was the great object of their deliverance, not relief, though that was involved in it, but that they should *serve* Him. It was because Israel was His *son*, His *firstborn*, "Let my son go, that he may serve me."

Then we know very well how Israel failed. It is very interesting, and very touching too, to see the way by which they got off the line of grace and came under law.

Things were entirely altered when they placed themselves under law. There could not be any service under the old covenant, no service that could be pleasing to God.

It is extremely touching, that immediately you have the giving of the old covenant, the first precept given to Israel was in regard of the Hebrew servant. God hastened to tell us in type and figure that He had a

Servant. The servant had a title to go out free, but he says, "I *love* my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free." He goes to the door-post, and his ear is bored through with an aul, that he may serve for ever.

It is as if God were saying: "I have got My Servant, and it is through Him I am going to have you to serve Me."

They put themselves under law; it was necessary in the ways of God that they should put themselves there, to learn what they were, as we have to learn what we are.

The word service covers a wide range. Service here is what is priestly; that is a very important principle. It was not active service in preaching, as we understand it, it was in connection with the sanctuary—a priestly service according to God's pleasure.

He speaks of the perfect Servant, and the spring of that service is, "I *love*." That is the spring of all true service; it involves the revelation of God, and He must give ability to answer to that revelation, so that every bit of service which is pleasing to God has for its spring, "I love."

Service and sonship go together. The way in which God recovers His people Israel is all through Christ, but it is very interesting when you come to Psalm cxvi., for the first time you get, "I love the Lord."

It is really Christ on resurrection ground, voicing Israel's feelings to Jehovah.

The apostle quotes it in 2 Corinthians iv., which throws light on it, and shews exactly what the psalm means—Christ in resurrection as Head for Israel voices their feelings towards Jehovah, "I love Jehovah." The subject matter of the psalms ends very soon after that. Psalm cxviii. closes it.

If God has got the affections of His people, He has gained His point; He has won their affections that they may serve Him, so that all the service which will be rendered by Israel by-and-by will have for its blessed spring, "I love."

It supposes that God has revealed Himself, and has given His people ability to answer to that revelation. He turns their flinty hearts into fountains of waters, and there shall be a constant outflow, the spring of which shall be, "I love."

The thought is extremely blessed that God shall not be disappointed in His purpose.

In Mark you come to the great Servant who is the Son of God. Believe me, that is what we want to understand more, the blessedness of *such a relationship* which gives character to Christianity. It gives character to the kingdom and to the house; it is the kingdom of the *Son of His love*, and He is *Son* over the house.

Sonship gives character to everything ; it is most important, so we have it here in this precious gospel. We are made to feel that the writer appreciates what he is writing about, because he is presenting the Lord in His perfection. Mark failed in his service, he turned back, but he was graciously restored, and God took up such a man to write about the true Servant.

I think you will find that his pen at times is tremulous, because he is speaking of the *perfect* One in the line in which he broke down himself. What I want to shew from this is that we are introduced to the Son of God.

What is so peculiar to Mark is the *way* in which He did things. The service of Mark is carried out in the communion of John.

Behind all the unceasing activity of Jesus was the unbroken communion in which He dwelt ; He was ever in the blessed place of sonship, and ever enjoyed blessed, unbroken communion with the Father.

Nothing could interrupt the outflow of good. You see not only that, but you see the *way* in which He did things. There are certain things here which are peculiar, it is the style of His service.

There is a certain delicacy of touch in His service which comes out here in a remarkable way. There was divine sympathy. If

He touched any one He made them feel *the sympathy* that went with it. I think what we lack is sympathy. We say things that are perfectly true, but we want the feeling that goes with it. There is such a thing as divine compassion, that God-like, deep compassion which flowed out from Him.

It is the *way* in which a man says a thing that affects me most; not only what he says, but the divine feeling that goes with it. So we are edified by *the spirit* of a man.

That is the way in which to judge of ministry, it is the divine feeling that goes with it, not natural feeling, but divine feeling: your spirit is impressed with that which is divine when it has been ministered.

"He sighed deeply," "He looked up to heaven." There was no hardness, no, none. It is very wonderful to look at Him in that way; He felt for man. I wish we had more of this feeling.

I think where we lack is, that we are too doctrinal. We may discuss things clearly, but it is the feeling that goes with it that shews whether God is there. We want to seek it and cultivate it, and pray about it. May God grant us grace that we may do so.

W. J.

(To be continued.)

there is the disposition to wrestle with God. But God's great desire is for our blessing; it was so with Jacob, and "he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint."

How often the saints have to be crippled before they can be blessed; but God delights to bless us and exalt us: He delights to change our name from "Jacob" to "Israel."

Who but our blessed God could change a man from a plotter to a prince? But He did with Jacob, and has done far more for us; and as we look back over the exercise, perhaps illness and sickness, perhaps bereavement and loss, can we call the name of the place "Peniel," saying, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Happy is it if we can; but may it be given unto us to say also, "Jehovah-nissi, the Lord is my banner!"

R. B.



THE PERFECT SERVANT.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS—REVISED.

BY W. JOHNSON.

(EXO. IV. 22, 23; MARK I. 1; XVI. 19, 20.)

(Continued.)

THERE is another point: in His manhood He was morally *with God*; as a *Servant*. He was so. How very wonderful it is!

The very first sphere of His service was in that synagogue where the scriptures were read every sabbath day; the *letter* that kills was there, and the man with the unclean spirit passed muster every sabbath day. The Son of God came where he was, and there was exposure. He brought such power with Him, that the man who passed muster with the people, who had the letter, was so exposed that he cried out, "What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?"

What we want to cultivate is to be with God. The beloved apostle of whom we have spoken presents it very beautifully at Philippi. He was very grand there. He finds only a few women going to pray: he had discernment to see where God was, with "the excellent of the earth." "By the river side, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down and spake to the women." All true service is carried out in *patience*, and patience is the proof of power. He knew where God was and where Satan was. He refused Satanic influence, and he went with the praying women because *God was with them*.

How we lack in this, and it proves our condition: we ought to be exercised about it. You must answer to the testimony morally yourself, it must be so. It is diffi-

cult to speak of it, because one feels how faulty one is oneself; still one speaks of it with the desire that there may be with us such personal, close, secret exercise, that we are answering ourselves to what we say.

The spring of His service lay in conscious sonship in communion with His Father. He was never fevered in His service. How wonderful to see Him there! He went out and prayed all night. Peter was a feverish man; he loved the Lord, and his blessed Lord was sought after. It gratified his heart that his Master was sought after. "All men seek for thee." "Why are You out here in this solitude when all seek Thee?" The blessed Lord said, "Let us go into the next towns." He was not elated by success, nor depressed by non-success. How perfect He was in it all!

Some one has said that the blessed Lord was never flattered into a wrong judgment, and never slighted into a wrong judgment. He was superior to flattery and superior to slight: He was absolutely with God. How often we are flattered into a wrong judgment or slighted into a wrong judgment. He never was, He was absolutely perfect. His service was perfect because it was the result of the communion in which He dwelt.

Then another thing, He looked up to

heaven. The gospel closes for us with our headquarters. The true servant's headquarters are in heaven, and the gate of heaven is found in the assembly; that is very important.

The heavens were opened to Him in a way they could not be opened to us; the heavens *are* open to us, and He is our Object in heaven. That is realised in the assembly; keep that in mind. There is such a thing as personal communion and personal direction, but to know the mind of the Lord you must come into the assembly. You will get your subjects and your direction when you are with the saints, as you will not get them in your closet

Pardon me if I speak of myself. I once went to a place, I felt I ought to go, and I did not know the line I was to take there. I thought, I will go and break bread there, and I will look to the Lord to indicate the line I am to take during the visit. The whole line was mapped out for me in the morning meeting.

I had got half way through it when an aged brother came to me and said, "Some of us had private prayer before you came, that you should take the line you have taken." I only refer to that because I feel the deep importance of it.

∴ We cannot be independent in such a thing

as this. A man who goes on his own line independent of the assembly will come to grief. We are to be subject to each other. If a man is called to a certain line of service, he must keep in mind that he belongs to the assembly, and he is amenable to the discipline of the assembly.

My third point, then, is that heaven is our headquarters, and the gate of heaven is found in the assembly, as is shewn in Acts xiii. The Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." That is a happy principle there.

We are in days of ruin, but we have to keep to these things. If we want to be in the leading of the Spirit we must acknowledge these principles. Barnabas and Saul were sent out from the assembly.

I believe in the laying on of hands. I do not believe in a man getting up and disregarding his brethren; not that he is to be *guided* by his brethren, but he has to be confirmed, and confirmation is given in the assembly.

Then there is another thing: we must have private victories. The Lord was with Satan and the wild beasts at the beginning of this gospel. All public triumphs follow private victories. When David came out he knew the strength of Jehovah with the lion

and the bear. Here is your drill ground, here you go through your discipline. We have to go through things with God in secret history before we can be distinguished publicly.

I think there would be unfolding of gift in the assembly, as the candlestick teaches us. The branch is dependence, the knop is distinctness, and the flower unfolding. There must be dependence on Him, and then there is distinctness.

We are all servants, the sisters too. It says, Phœbe was a servant of the assembly at Cenchrea, and there are others spoken of as helpers with the apostle. We are all called to be servants; some may have a special line. There would be distinctness, some taking one line and others another.

We think too much of preaching. I would like to see brethren so exercised in the assembly that they may take lines of service which would commend themselves to the brethren. And let us wait on what we are called to do, and there will be the unfolding of it.

God orders our circumstances; He knows when we are born, and He knows what He has for us to do. Sometimes we get irritated by everyday life, and want to work it off, but you may depend upon it, it is your drill ground.

Peter was fishing and John was mending. The Lord said to Peter, You come from your fishing, and to John, You come from your mending. They had to leave father, and brethren, and boats.

It indicates the line of service the Lord was going to bring them into. John always mends the net; his ministry helps to keep up your communion.

God ordered the way of the Apostle Paul. He says, "Who separated me from my mother's womb," and God is over all your circumstances too. God has His eye upon us for a certain purpose, and it is a very great thing to be exercised with regard to it, and to find it out

May the Lord in His great goodness be pleased to bless these remarks, and may we not forget the first principle, from which everything takes its character, that every bit of true service is rendered in conscious sonship, and has its blessed spring in these words, "I love." Amen. W. J.

"Be Thou the Object bright and fair
To fill and satisfy the heart;
Our hope to meet Thee in the air,
And nevermore from Thee to part:
That we may undistracted be
To follow, serve, and wait for Thee."



An eye for perfection.

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."—PHIL. iii. 15.

IT is said that an Italian artist one day took his pupils into his picture gallery, bidding them each select a picture to copy.

One of the pupils, after wandering up and down, seated himself before a perfect masterpiece, saying with a sigh, "If I copy any it shall be this one."

Presently the artist came to see how his pupils were getting on. When he came to this one, the pupil ejaculated, "Oh, is not *that* splendid! Look at *that*, not at my daub."

The master replied, "You are the man for me, you have an eye for perfection."

The eye for perfection is, "As many as be perfect." My "daub" is, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." The man with an eye for perfection sees that Christ and Christ alone will do for God, and he sees that God has called him to be like that Man and with Him for ever.

W. J.

"That blessed hope."

DO you ever think how Christ is keeping the bodies of the dead? Do you never say, "Oh, what a heart He has! How tenderly He is caring for them! How He knows that the dust of Stephen is there, and the dust of Paul here, and how He has His eye on every bit of it! And He is ready to bring it all forth when the moment comes."

What a part of the hope is this to one who has had to battle with death—to one who has had to part with loved ones, and to lay them in the grave!

goes down for his overcoat, and wonders what is the matter.

The prayer-meeting is the thermometer of the Assembly. Believe that, and test it, and act accordingly. A company of saints from which the fire has gone out has never made me say, "Lord, let me live amongst them!"

The scenes of icebergs and iceflows are the scenes of storms and, strangely enough, of volcanoes. I do not suppose there is an Assembly in the world more quarrelsome than the iceberg Assembly; for when people have got frozen through sheer inactivity, they must have something to do; so they raise their grievances, and quarrel at their list. How strange it is that some people are never at peace unless they are at war! As soon as one grievance is done, they would fain have another. What a fearful advantage the devil has of us if we get ice-bound!

"Satan triumphs when he sees
The strongest saint begin to freeze."

Anon.



The Pillow of Rest.



WHEN Jesus left this world He left His pillow behind Him—the *Father's bosom!* (Jno. i. 18). Often we find we have got our heads on hard pillows of our own making. The Lord says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest":—I will teach you that you are loved as I am loved, and therefore My pillow is yours! "The love wherewith the Father loves *Me* is the love with which He loves *you*."

Loved as He is loved! that is rest!

W. J.

The Morning.

"In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up."—PSA. v. 3.

THE morning is the gate of the day, and should be well guarded with prayer. It is one end of the thread on which the day's actions are strung, and should be well knotted with devotion. If we felt more the majesty of life we should be more careful of its moorings. He who rushes from his bed to his business and waiteth not to worship is as foolish as though he had not put on his clothes, or cleansed his face, and as unwise as though he dashed into battle without arms or armour. Be it ours to bathe in the softly flowing river of communion with God, before the heat of the wilderness and the burden of the way begin to oppress us. S.

Much Fruit.

"Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit."—JOHN xv. 8.

WHAT a possibility, what an inspiration, that we can enhance the glory of the Father! Our hearts leap at the thought.

How can this be done? By bearing "leaves"—a *profession* of love for Him? No. By bearing *some* fruit? No. "That ye bear *much* fruit." In the abundance of the yield is the joy, the glory of the husbandman. We should, therefore, aim to be "hundred-fold" Christians, satisfied with none but the largest yield. How is it to be brought about? There is only one way, only one—abiding in Christ.

W. J.

Love Realised.

† SAY to you, I love my mother, I revere her memory. That love I had for her never started with me, it started with her. Let God love you into loving Him back again. Let the Cross be the lesson book from which you learn it. "The love of God shed abroad in our hearts," that is love *realised*. Our hearts are made responsive. Do not look into your heart, you will not see it there.

A man once said to me, "I am waiting for the blessing."

I said, "What is the blessing you are waiting for?"

"I am waiting for the love of God to be shed abroad in my heart," he replied.

I asked him for the passage, but he did not know. I took my Bible and showed him Rom. v. 5. He stopped reading at the end of the verse. I said, "Read on." "For when we were yet without strength God commendeth *His love toward us*." "That," said I, "is where you see it, not in yourself." When God speaks of His love, He points to Christ where the love can be seen, that it may be realised in us. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us" (1 John iv. 9). Look there and see it. If we are exhorted to love one another, we are shown where the love was manifested, that there may be a realization of it, and then there will be the exhibition of it.

That is as simple as daylight. Love was manifested *toward* us in order that it might be realised *in* us. And realised in us to be exhibited *by* us. We love up to God, and out to the brethren. We love the begotten ones, because we love Him Who begat them.

W. J.

"RUBBING IT OUT BIT BY BIT."

IT was a lovely and secluded spot, the village of B——; and as I walked round its churchyard, one bright summer day, it seemed too lovely for death to be there. Nevertheless, on every hand there were the unmistakeable signs of it—the freshly-inscribed tombstone, as well as those of two or three centuries, which time had well-nigh effaced, making it extremely difficult to decipher the long-forgotten name. How brief is man's day! His history summed up by the wise man, "Come," "Gone," "Forgotten," soon forgotten by man, and yet not forgotten by God, each name, each history, and all to come up again in the hour that is nearing apace. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice." How blessed to have heard His word, His voice, in the hour that "*now is.*" To such it will be a resurrection of life. To those who have never heard His voice in that hour, it will be a resurrection of judgment.

Musing thus, I stood under the shade of a tall chestnut tree, whose branches reached out over the churchyard gate, and well-nigh across the road. Under the tree by the roadside was a huge stone. On it I observed sitting an old man, whose grey locks betokened many summers and winters. He seemed to be enjoying the rest and shade; and as there was room for another, I went and sat with him.

I said, "Father, you seem to be getting on in years."

"Yes, sir, I am well-nigh eighty-two."

“I suppose you have spent most of your time in this village?”

“I was born, brought up, and have lived most all my life here. I don't think I have been a fortnight out of it.”

I said, “You have seen many changes in your lifetime. Most of the people you knew in youthful days are gone.”

“Ah, yes!” he said, shaking his head and looking towards the churchyard gate.

I said, “They will soon be taking you in there.”

“Yes; I can't expect to be here much longer.”

“Have you any hope beyond?” I said.

He replied, “I think I have.”

“What about your sins? They must be got rid of. It is written, ‘There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.’”

He replied, “I am getting on, sir—saying my prayers, reading my Bible. I think I am getting on, sir; rubbing them out bit by bit.”

“Oh,” I said, “you will never get rid of your sins that way! All your prayer saying, your Scripture reading, would never blot out a single sin-stain. No, father [pointing up], there is One blessed Man, the Son of God, who, when He had by Himself made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of God, of whom God declares in His word, that His blood, and His blood alone, can cleanse away our sins; and you, as you sit here, looking up and trusting Him, may know, on the authority of God's word, at this very moment, that all your sins are gone, and gone for ever.”

“It is not thy tears of repentance or prayers,

But the blood that atones for the soul.”

Reader, hast thou known its cleansing virtue? It cleanseth *now*; it cleanseth from *all* sin. What an awful delusion, "Rubbing them out bit by bit." And yet how many there are who, if not using the simple language of this countryman, are seeking some other way than God's way of cleansing.

Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."
W. J.

A VERY NARROW ESCAPE.

WHEN in Exeter the other day I saw the dismal black ruins of the theatre there, recently destroyed by fire, where some hundred and fifty persons were suffocated or burnt to death out of about eight hundred who were present when the fire signal was heard.

The heart-rending sorrow and distress occasioned by this dreadful calamity, which cast such a sad gloom over that city, was in nearly everybody's mouth, and well it might be; for God does not permit such occurrences for naught.

This is a day when man, on all sides, is forgetting God; and now and then, in various ways, God causes His warning and awakening voice to be specially heard. Well indeed it is when souls take warning and wake up; for God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Just before leaving Exeter by train that night, I met a young man on the platform who told me he was in that theatre when the fire broke out. This young man said to

for which he is righteously condemned to die. One who loves him takes his place and dies for him. Now what would that do for him? "Why of course it would set him free," you say. Exactly so. And so we read in the gospel, "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.) Believest thou this? Then thank God for His unspeakable gift.

G. R.

"BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT."

SOME years since I stood in a picture-gallery before a masterpiece, which made a deep impression on me, and which serves as an illustration of the above passage of scripture. The title of the picture was, "The Dismal Swamp." In the foreground was a negro, a runaway slave, panting for breath, and entangled by the reeds; pursuing, and close behind him, were the fierce bloodhounds, with terrible fangs and frothy mouths. It was evident he could feel the hot breath of those terrible creatures close at his heels; for in his eyes there was depicted such a look of hopeless despair as I have never forgotten. I have seen such a look once in my life since, at a scene more real and terrible. I was standing by the death-bed of a man who had rejected the gospel of the grace of God. I had been repeating that beautiful scripture, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He seemed unconscious as I kept repeating it close to his dying ear, when, gathering up his strength, he rose up in the bed

with just such a look of dark despair, he wailed so hopelessly, "The Lord Jesus will have nothing to do with me now, and I can have nothing to do with Him. To-night, to-night my soul will be in hell," and that night he died. Oh, my reader, may you never know such a death-bed as that! Rouse, I beseech you, ere the "evil day" come upon you, the day you gladly forget, the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, when the silver cord shall be loosed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, when the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it! And it may come in one fell moment, and then, oh, then, you will pass into eternity to await the resurrection, when, like the negro in the picture, discovered and overtaken, in that terrible judgment-day you will find out the truth of the scripture, "Be sure your sin will find you out;" and yet another scripture, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they *follow after*." Yes, my reader, those secret sins, hidden and unknown to your fellow-men, but known to God, are on your track, and will face you there if not here. How blessed to be discovered now! "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

Mark the words "I acknowledged" and "Thou forgavest." Yes, there is forgiveness *now* for thee, dear reader; but how? through that blessed Man in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was once on the tree, the sinless One who said, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon Me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs

of mine head ;” of whom the Scripture says concerning all who trust Him, “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures.

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

W. J.

A GREAT GIFT.

W— HALL is a large and beautiful mansion situate in a pleasant part of the North of England. It is surrounded by a well-wooded park, beautiful gardens, and everything calculated to please the eye. The owner, for some reason or other, has not resided in the hall for several years past, and about two years ago offered it and the grounds as a gift to the corporation of N—. After considerable hesitation the offer was accepted.

The writer was one day passing the place, when a young man said, “What a strange thing it is that the people of N— won’t accept such a noble and generous gift as — is offering them. I wish I had such a chance.”

I said, “It does seem strange. But there is a greater and more valuable gift that is offered you ; that is, ‘the gift of God, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’” (Rom. vi. 23.)

The young man carelessly replied, “Oh, that’s just what you say !” and passed on.

TIDINGS OF LIFE AND PEACE.

THE SQUIRE'S WAY TO HEAVEN.

DUSTY and tired, after walking across a remote country district, I had reached the beautiful village of C—, from whence I purposed going by rail to the neighbouring town of A— to preach that night. Being a stranger, and not knowing the way, I was looking about for someone to direct me, when I observed a tall, stately-looking old gentleman sauntering along the road. Overtaking him, I asked if he would kindly show me the way to the station. He politely said, "I am going in that direction, and if you accompany me I will direct you." So we walked and chatted together, when at length he said, "I will show you something near the station here that you will not see every day in this kingdom—a place where five roads meet."

"Indeed," I said. "Some people tell us there are many roads to heaven. May I ask, sir, what would be your way to heaven?"

He stopped, drew himself up very proudly, and looking me straight in the face, said, "*My way to heaven, sir, is to do my duty.*"

I said, "Listen! 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy strength, and with *all* thy mind; and thy neighbour *as thyself.*' Have you done this?"

After a pause, with his eyes fixed on the ground, he replied, "Well, I cannot say I have."

"No," I said, "you have broken down on that road; but there is a blessed Man up there in heaven, Jesus, the Son of God, who loved God with *all* His heart, and who, when here, looking upon the sons of men, said, 'I know you, that *ye* have not the love of God in you;' and of Himself could say, 'I do always those things that please Him,' who went to the cross and laid down His pure and spotless life for such wretched neighbours as you and I. Ah! He loved His neighbours better than Himself, and died to bring us to God, and to give us a title to glory. So He could say, 'I am the door: *by Me* if any man enter in, he shall be saved;' 'I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.'"

Now, dear reader, I would ask *you* the same question, Which is your way to heaven? It would be an awful thing to make a mistake, as many are doing, alas! who are building their hopes on a path of rectitude, or, in the words of the squire, upon doing their duty. There is a way that *seemeth* to be right unto men, but the end of that way is death. Listen to God's word: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight;" "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in *all* things which are written in the book of the law to do them." "The *law* tells me what I ought to be, and curses me if I am not it. The *gospel* tells me what God is, and blesses me if I believe it. The law *demand*s love—"Thou shalt love." The gospel *produces* it—"We love Him, *because* He first loved us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that

He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

May you, my reader, be able to say, I have known and believed the love that God hath towards me.

W. J.

"I DON'T KNOW HOW TO."

"I WANT to believe, but I don't know how to," were the words of one anxious about her soul's salvation, to whom I lately spoke. She had been in this state for some time, and was longing to be told how she was to believe. With a real sense of need, and the desire to be saved, she was making a saviour of her faith; trying hard to believe, as if it were a matter of attainment. Is not this a common mistake? And yet we would not treat a friend in this way. If one we knew well told us something, we would not say, "I don't know how to believe you." It would be rather, "I don't know how to doubt you. I can't but believe it, since you have told me." Let us then treat God with the same simple confidence, since He has spoken, and His word cannot fail.

Not having much time to speak to my young friend referred to, I said, "God does not tell you *how* you are to believe, but *what* you are to believe, and *whom* you are to believe in." I then wrote down on a piece of paper as follows:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.)

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy i. 15.)

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

THE GOSPEL IN THE PSALMS.

IT is no uncommon thing, especially in the country districts, to see some aged inmate of a cottage sitting with the Bible open at the Psalms. Often has the writer's heart been cheered by such a sight. Poring over the sacred page, the aged reader has doubtless found there what could be found nowhere else. Yet, alas! what ignorance there often is, even with such, touching the gospel of the grace of God, unfolded in its fulness and blessedness in the New Testament.

Now, though the gospel is not the subject of the Psalms, we do find in the Psalms what constitutes the gospel, for we find Christ there—the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

It is with the thought of presenting Christ that we now take up certain Psalms in a gospel way.

Let us suppose the reader to open the book of Psalms for the first time, and begin with Psalm i., "Blessed is the man." How sweetly the first word falls on the ear—"Blessed." It is what God pronounces him to be who answers to the description given in this Psalm. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor

sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." What a beautiful life this is, on both its negative and its positive sides.

Can you, my reader, claim blessing from God on the ground of answering to the description here?

Have you *never* walked "in the counsel of the ungodly"? Have you *never* sat "in the seat of the scornful"? Have you *always* delighted in the law of the Lord, and meditated in His law *day and night*? Let such questions be asked in the presence of God, and we shall each have to answer, No; my life has been far otherwise.

One Man, and one alone, could claim blessing from God on the ground of what He was. It is *Jesus* who fully answers to the picture—that unique, that perfect Man over whom God could open the heavens and say, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Surely *He* was as that "tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever He doeth shall prosper." *It is Jesus* who was all that a man should be. His beautiful life should convince us of sin. What a contrast He is to all others! Like lost sheep, we have all gone astray; He, never. *We* have found pleasure in doing our own wills, while He could say, "I always do the things that please My Father."

But let us look now at Psalm xiv. 2: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God." What did He see? "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no

not one." How emphatic, how sweeping are the words in this verse—"all," "altogether," "none." No exception among all the children of men. Can you bow your heart here and say, "O God, I own that Thou hast in this scripture given me my own moral photograph"? This is repentance. God would convince thee of sin in order that thou mayest take the place of self-judgment, and we know that He will never condemn those who condemn themselves.

In Psalm i., then, it is Jesus, not I. In Psalm xiv. it is I, not Jesus.

Now we come to Psalm xxii.: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring? O My God, I cry in the day-time, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent." Well do we know who it is that was thus abandoned of God. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour *Jesus* cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The forsaken Man of Psalm xxii. is the blessed perfect Man of Psalm i., Jesus the Son of God.

The Psalmist could say in Psalm xxxvii. 25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken."

But it was seen at Calvary.

Dear reader, ponder these words—"why," "Thou," "forsaken," "Me."

"WHY?" And when no answer came (for God was silent to Him), then from out that awful solitude and from that heart, that broken heart, which was a shrine for God's glory, came

the answer which vindicated God in that forsaking, "*But Thou art holy.*"

"THOU." God is true to what He is. In 2 Corinthians v. 21 we read: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us." "*Made Him to be sin*" is the answer to "forsaken Me."

"FORSAKEN." A holy God forsakes Him because He was made sin. But this same scripture declares "He knew no sin." He was the perfectly righteous Man of Psalm i.

But here in Psalm xxii. He takes, as Substitute, the place of the filthy man of Psalm xiv.; and none may know what it cost Him, for who could fathom that ocean of sorrow? There are other sorrows in this wonderful Psalm, sorrows resulting from man's hatred; for poor wretched man was there incited by Satan. "Dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet." They can even gamble for His garments (v. 18).

But the sorrows of verses 1, 2 are atoning sorrows; it was what He endured at the hand of God, as Isaiah liii. 10, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him." He hath put Him to grief. Oh, wondrous love, to give His Son! Oh, infinite holiness, to put Him to grief when made sin!

If we could measure the ineffable and uninterrupted communion which was ever His in all His perfect way here, perhaps we could then understand what it was for Him to be forsaken.

Dear reader, let us learn, here, the wondrous love of God that gave Him; the infinite holiness and righteousness of the God who forsook Him; the matchless love of Christ who thus endured sin's judgment.

But that bitter night of weeping is over (*v.* 21), for He was heard and taken from the lowest point of death—"the horns of the unicorns." After having met all the righteous claims of God, and exhausting the judgment we deserved, He gave up the life in which He bore it.

All, all was met there, and now peace and joy come. "Joy cometh in the morning"—the resurrection morning.

"That glorious resurrection morn
Bids doubts for ever cease,
For far and wide the news is borne
Of perfect peace"

How fitting the title of this Psalm—"The hind of the morning"—and how beautifully it ends. Mark the closing sentence: "*He hath done this.*" Let your faith put two other words, "*for me,*" or write your name in full at the bottom of that Psalm, "*For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast died.*"

Yes, for the one whose condition is described in Psalm xiv.

Now turn to Psalm xxxii. Again are we greeted by that precious word "*blessed.*" "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."

Now this is true for thee, dear reader, if thou hast written thy name at the foot of Psalm xxii. Thou art without doubt the blessed man of Psalm xxxii. The God who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, in whom you believe, accounts thee righteous (Rom. iv. 24, 25; x. 10).

It is not what we think, feel, or realise, but what God says (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

So the *sinless Man* of Psalm i. dies in Psalm xxii.

for the sinful man of Psalm xiv., in order that the *sinful man* of Psalm xiv. may enjoy the portion of the blessed man of Psalm xxxii.

It is interesting to note also that this is the first Psalm entitled "Maschil," which means "Giving instruction." It is the first instruction God gives to man. May you, my reader, be thus instructed and blessed.

Another word. The man who is thus instructed and blessed can now go back to Psalm i. and seek to walk in His footsteps. "He hath left us an example, that we should walk in His steps" (1 Peter ii. 21).

There are three sentences in 1 John iii. 5 full of beauty and moral import.

"And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins."

"And in Him is no sin."

"Whatsoever abideth in Him sinneth not." To abide in Him is to walk even as He walked.

May it be our joy and blessing thus to walk "till travelling days are done." W. J.

WARNING—A KINDNESS.

ON a Bank Holiday, some years ago, some young men went from Manchester to Birmingham to spend the day. Returning at night, they had taken their seats in a railway carriage, when one, knowing the train was timed to start in five minutes, ran across to the refreshment-room.

On his return to the platform, he found a train just moving off. Without hesitation he opened the nearest door and jumped in, thinking himself fortunate to have caught his train.

“ALL CLEAR FROM THERE TO HERE.”

IT was our privilege some years ago to pitch a gospel tent in the village of E——. Many came to hear, and, thank God, some for blessing.

Among others was an old man, T. N——, who had been a marine in Her Majesty's service, now retired on his pension, to spend the remainder of his days in his native village. God was pleased to reach him at one of the earliest meetings. The sharp, barbed arrow of conviction entered his soul; those long years of sin rose up before him with all their consequences. He faced his past with God, and it troubled him sore.

We visited him at his cottage many a time, and presented the blessed gospel to him. Still no peace. Often at the close of our interviews would he say with his deep voice, “But God is just, sir—God is just.” He had yet to learn that if God be just, He is “the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus.”

Weeks rolled by, and others were brought into blessing, but T. N——'s trouble deepened. The last Sunday came, and on Monday morning the canvas was coming down. It was a solemn time this last preaching. The subject was: “When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us,” etc. (Luke xiii. 25). T. N—— sat just inside the tent door, with a look which seemed to say, “If I do not get the blessing to-night, whenever shall I get it?”

At the close of the meeting we invited the people to stay for prayer. To our surprise

T. N—— was the first to leave. He went home to have the after-meeting with God.

On Monday morning, walking down the village, I met him. As he drew near, his face told the tale of this after-meeting. Holding up his hand, with a look of peace and joy on his face, he said, "It is all right with me now." "Tell me," I said, "how it happened." He said, "Last night I went home to my cottage, fell on the floor, and cried for mercy. I said, as the sweat poured off me, 'O God, have mercy on a poor old sinner like me.' At last I saw the Lord Jesus on the cross for a poor old sinner like me; then I saw Him in the glory, and it is all clear from there"—pointing upwards—"to here," smiting on his breast. *All clear from there to here.* It was peace.

How is it with you, dear reader? Have you acknowledged the claims of the throne? Do you know the One who has met those claims? How blessed to know that the God to whom we are responsible, and who alone could rightly estimate the extent of our responsibility, has come in from His own side to meet it! *His love provided what His holiness demanded*; His own blessed Son was that provision. A Divine Person was competent to give divine satisfaction.

"Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. . . . Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x. 5, 7). *He has done it.* "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of God" (v. 12).

He is where He is because He did what He did where He was; and He did what He did where He was because of who He is—THE SON OF GOD.

God the Holy Ghost has now come down to bear witness to us of what is in the mind of God for us. He is a *competent* witness. Listen, then, to His witness: "Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." *No more!* NO MORE! NO MORE! It is like the olive leaf which the dove brought to Noah. The dove brought the witness that *the judgment was past*, and it plainly said, No more! no more!

The Son of God has gone up the shining way to the throne of God, and the Spirit of God has come down to let us know "it is all clear from there to here."

W. J.

FACTS NOT AFFECTED BY UNBELIEF.

AN omnibus stopped at the corner of one of the London streets to pick up passengers. As the writer got in, a lady inquired of the conductor the way to a certain quarter of the Metropolis. He civilly gave her directions in reply, adding that his omnibus would take her there. She shook her head unbelievably, in spite of his repeated assurance that it was so, and remained where she was, still waiting at the corner of the street.

The omnibus moved on, when the conductor, rather vexed, observed to the writer, "They won't believe what we say."

"Just like man with the Scriptures, the Word of God," was the reply to him. God speaks plainly in His word, and gives full directions as to the way to heaven, and moreover, has provided the means to take us there. But man will not believe God nor trust in His provision, which is in Christ.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.

“VANITY OF VANITIES.”

“**V**ANITY of vanities,” saith the Preacher at the beginning and end of a book (Eccles.) which has been well described as the wail of a dissatisfied heart. “All under the sun” has been tried and found wanting, and what a cloud of witnesses history gives only repeating the cry of the Preacher,—

“Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

The incident of Cardinal Mazarin’s farewell to his pictures is told in the memoirs of Louis Henri Comte de Brienne, who says, “I was walking some days after in the new apartments of his palace. I recognised the approach of the Cardinal (Mazarin) by the sound of his slippers, which he dragged one after the other, as a man enfeebled by a mortal malady. I concealed myself behind the tapestry, and I heard him say, ‘Il faut quitter tout cela’ (I must leave all that). He stopped at every step, for he was very feeble, and casting his eye on each object that attracted him, he sighed forth as from the bottom of his heart, ‘I must leave all’; ‘What pains I have taken to acquire all these things’; ‘Can I leave them without regret?’ ‘I shall never see them more where I am about to go.’”

“Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

Lord Chesterfield, the man of letters and leader
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of the fashionable world, a short time before his death, wrote a letter in which he says, "I have run the silly round of business and pleasure, and have done with them all; I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value (which, in truth, is very low), whereas those who have not experienced always overrate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with the glare; but I have seen behind the scenes. I have seen all—the coarse pulleys and dirty ropes which exhibit and move the gaudy machine. I have seen and smelled the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration, to the astonishment and admiration of an ignorant audience. When I reflect back on what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done, I can hardly persuade myself that all that frivolous hurry and bustle and pleasure of the world had any reality; but I look on all that is passed as one of the romantic dreams that opium commonly occasions, and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream."

"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

Lord Byron, the brilliant poet (who said, "I woke up one morning to find myself famous"), joins in the strain when he says—

"Count all the joys thy hours have seen,
Count all thy days from anguish free,
Then know whatever thou hast been
'Twere something better not to be."

And the verses which are said to be the last which came from his pen tell their own tale of a misspent life, and the terrible awakening to

a want so long ago described: “And when he had spent all he began to be in want”:—

“My days are in the yellow leaf,
 The flowers, the fruits of love are gone ;
 The worm, the canker, and the grief
 Are mine alone.
 The fire that on my bosom preys
 Is lone as some volcanic isle ;
 No torch is lighted at its blaze—
 A funeral pile.”

“Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” The politician, philosopher, poet, and ten thousands more, join in the “Preacher’s” cry. It must be so, for we are all heirs to two great necessities.—a *guilty conscience* and a *dissatisfied heart*. Sad fruits of departure from God. But God proposes in the gospel to meet both. The work of Christ for the conscience and the gift of Christ for the heart.

Listen to words which fell from His lips upon the ears of a poor weary Samaritan woman at Sychar’s well. “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John iv. 13, 14).

Again, “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John vii. 37, 38).

What a wonderful proposal! Surely the blessed Son of God would not tantalise us with magnificent impossibilities.

Dear reader, have you come to Christ, the Christ who died to meet your need in connection with your sins, and who lives to give you this marvellous gift which shall put you in touch with Him who is outside the reach of death *above the sun*?

It was in the sense of this that Paul, when before King Agrippa, could say, "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts xxvi. 29). What a contrast to poor Byron's "'Twere something better not to be"!

True happiness lies in the knowledge of God, for He alone is great enough for our hearts, and in the gospel, by His blessed Son, God is saying, "I want you to know Me in order that you may love Me and live to Me.

This is what Christ proposes in the gift of living water, to "shed abroad the love of God in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."

Oh! how blessed to know that "nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What a contrast to poor Cardinal Mazarin's "I must leave all that," "I shall never see them more where I am about to go"!

My reader, allow me to put a question to you at the close. *What do you possess outside the reach of death?*

W. J.

Know thyself.—"Two several lovers built two several cities: the love of GOD a 'New Jerusalem'; the love of the WORLD a 'Babylon.' Let every man inquire of himself *what* he loveth, and he shall soon resolve himself of *whence* he is a citizen."

AUGUSTINE.

Jesus and how He had been the substitute for His people.

Again, "Mercy and truth shall go before Thy face" (Ps. LXXXIX. 14). This refers to the kingdom being manifestly set up, and gives the principles of Messiah's reign.

Thus everything necessary for mercy and truth to be finally established on the earth has been accomplished, and believers of this dispensation are now getting the spiritual good of both mercy and truth, while Israel will come into it when the veil of unbelief is taken away.

A further connexion of mercy and truth was made by Solomon, the son of David, when he was king. Perhaps his admonition was immediately given to his son Rehoboam. "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (Prov. III. 3). Rehoboam did not heed this counsel, and lost the largest part of his kingdom. So in the present time, if believers do not heed these things, they lose the largest part of present enjoyment of their spiritual blessings. Rehoboam was king, but over a very small part of the kingdom left to him. So believers have large and various spiritual blessings, but the enjoyment of them depends on holding fast mercy and truth.

G. W. GY.

God glorified.—"God does what He does because He is what He is; and in doing what He does He displays what He is; and in displaying what He is He glorifies Himself." W. J.

TIDINGS OF LIGHT AND PEACE.



THE SWORD AND THE SACRIFICE.

1 CHRON. XXI. 1-30.

DAVID had to choose between three things: either three years' famine, or for three months to fall before his enemies, or three days to have the sword of the Lord and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. David said: "Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hands of man." He knew God better than he knew man after all. It is a great thing to fall into the hands of God.

Then there came an angel with a drawn sword. The question has been raised by infidels, Where were the people in all this? But the people had departed as well as the king. Depend upon it, not only had the king departed from God, but the people had largely departed too. They never really gave up idolatry; they held to it secretly, even in the days of David and Solomon. It is natural to people to be idolaters; we are in the presence of it now, of Babylonish idolatry. Roman Catholicism is Babylonish idolatry pure and simple, worshipping the creature more than the Creator, a piece of bread or the most blessed among women. No doubt these people were suffering for their own sins as well as David's sin.

There was the *sword*. Listen: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." There it is, like a sword you cannot get away from. What Satan seeks to do is to divert you from that. Young woman, Satan has succeeded in diverting you from thinking of the judgment of God by something of far less consequence; you would rather have a feather in your hat, or some companionship here, than the Saviour. Judgment is hanging over your head. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Here was a farmer threshing wheat. He lifted up his eyes, and when once he had done that, it was all over with the threshing. If you have never had your eyes open to see the sword of the Lord, I pray God you may see to-night. Suppose you were bound to your bed to-night, and right over it a glittering sword was hanging by just a single thread. Would it fascinate you? Would you sleep? No, no! When God opens the eyes of a sinner to see the judgment, it is all over with business and pleasure. Satan seeks to divert people from it, but the sword is there. Ornan and his four sons hid themselves.

David is a type in one way of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, there he is, and he stands for himself, a poor sinful man, but the Spirit of God took him up to pen some of the most beautiful psalms—psalms that speak of Jesus bearing the judgment of His people. Psalm XXII. was written by David, where you get what Jesus felt on the cross far more than you do in the gospels. David was the man used of God to bring forth that side of things. In Psalm XXII. it could not possibly be David speaking of himself, he is speaking of

the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

In our chapter we have him as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, though all types fail. What we find here is, he stands in the breach. In one of the prophets there is a verse that runs like this: "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none." Some one must stand in the breach, and the blessed Lord Jesus Christ is the one to do it, David's son, and David's Lord because He is the Son of God. In our chapter here, David says to God: "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed: but as for these sheep, what have they done? *Let Thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me.*"

Think of Jesus. He came down here and ever lived for the pleasure of God, traced His beautiful way under the eye of God, and established His title to live. There was no stain of sin there, infinitely holy and absolutely perfect; and yet when He came to the cross there was the sword of judgment, there was the judgment we deserved. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Jesus stood in the breach; God found a man to keep out the plague—it was His own blessed Son. On yonder cross He said: "*Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, O Lord My God, be on Me.*" It is said in the Psalms that He took His people's sins and called them His own. He was perfectly sinless or He could not have done it. Heavy was the hand of God on Jesus when He was on

yonder cross. Come here and learn what sin is by the sorrows of Jesus; see the holiness of God by the terribly bitter cry that came from His lips: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Was there ever a cry like that, ever anguish like that? "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? Why art Thou so far from helping Me, and from the words of My roaring?" There is no answer. "O My God, I cry in the day-time, but Thou hearest not: and in the night-season, and there is no rest for me." No answer. Oh, was there ever sorrow like that?

Can you measure the ineffable communion in which He dwelt here for thirty-three years, living in the sunshine and favour of God? He never relieved a man yet but He felt it in His spirit, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." He could look up to heaven and sigh deeply; it was not an act of divine power simply, but He felt it all. On He went, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"; He could say, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." We see Him weeping over Jerusalem—poor Jerusalem!—sleeping that sleep of guilty indifference. There, across that valley, behold the blessed Lord Jesus weeping in agony and praying more earnestly. How hard man's heart is! There were the people sleeping on! They had witnessed all His mighty acts, seen all the goodness of God in that blessed Person, and He had wept over Jerusalem, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes."

Now in the cold midnight hour He weeps before the Father's face, "and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The cup was there, though He did not drink it there. Satan was crossing His path and saying, "If You go this way, You will feel my power." He brushes Satan's suggestion aside, and sees the Father's power and the Father's hand. The flaming sword was there—the sword of judgment. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It was not possible; there was no other way of sheathing the sword. He must go on to Calvary's cross, and there on Calvary's cross be numbered with the transgressors.

Oh, that blessed Lord Jesus! Did you ever trace Him? What holy ground is this! He was nailed to Calvary's cross. We are told in history, when prisoners were nailed in this way, how they writhed and cursed their tormentors. *This* blessed One never cursed His tormentors. The soldiers must have been awe-stricken, and may well have whispered, "Who is this?" "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

They nailed His hands to the cross, His blessed hands. Think of your hands, man! God knows what they have done. Think of what His hands had done: they had never been outstretched for Himself. Take His feet; they will never walk here again; they were nailed to the cross. Think of where your feet have carried you! Think of His hands, His feet! There they are uplifted. Then His lips move: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He is with the Father still. Is that Jesus? Yes, that

is Jesus. "Father, forgive them." Perhaps they were touched for a moment, but now in cold-hearted selfishness they gamble over His clothes. "They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots." They were gambling over His garments in the presence of the sufferings of Jesus! Poor, wretched man!

The bulls of Bashan come round and begin to taunt Him: they have got the Scriptures on their phylacteries. "He trusted on Jehovah that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him." Oh, that blessed Saviour! He trusted God through all the agony of the cross, through the forsaking, through death; yes, He trusted Him all through.

"If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him." He will stay there. His disciples forsake Him, and then darkness comes, thick darkness. "Let Thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be upon me," said David. The hand of God was upon Jesus in that bitter hour. Oh, David, if the hand of God comes upon you it will crush you; but it came on Jesus. Twice over in Psalm xxii. He says, "Be not far from me." Then He has to say at last, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Oh, beloved friends, I know why; He took my place, He bore my judgment, bless His holy name! Do I love Him—love Jesus? Why, of course I do. He took my place. The judgment I deserved fell on Him, overwhelmed Him in that bitter hour. By that act He won my heart. I have found people to love me here, and who would do *anything* for me; but He has done for me as no one else could. We have to say to Him, "O, Jesus Lord, who loved me like to Thee?"

He was the Altar and the Sacrifice. David comes to Ornan, he had hid himself. How can you go on threshing your wheat when the sword of judgment is over you? May God open your eyes to see it. When David drew near he came out of his hiding-place, and bowed at his feet. Bow down at the blessed feet of Jesus the Lord to-night, Who has been to the cross as the sacrifice, and Who has sheathed the sword for ever. It all speaks of Christ.

David said to Ornan, "Grant me the place of this threshing-floor," etc.; and Ornan said unto David, "Take it to thee. . . . I give it all." "No," says David, "I will pay the full price for it," and he paid six hundred shekels of gold; on the threshing-floor he put the sacrifice. Christ is both the Sacrifice and the Altar. It was near the very spot where the ram was caught by its horns in the thicket. That marks the beauty of Scripture. "God will provide Himself a lamb." On that very spot this altar was built and the sacrifice was there: God accepted the sacrifice. If God accepts the sacrifice the sword is sheathed for ever. The *accepted sacrifice* and the *sheathed sword* is the story of this chapter.

How does that apply to me? I am going to tell you the best part of it now. You cannot get resurrection in the type. How do I know the sword is sheathed? How do I know the sacrifice is accepted? Because God has raised the One Who was the sacrifice and He is in the presence of God, a risen Christ. The sword is sheathed for ever. It is in the presence of God Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, and in the presence of Jesus Who was raised, that you know the sword is sheathed for ever. It is not

at the foot of the cross that your burden rolls away, but at the feet of the Saviour Who was on the cross. The sword is sheathed for ever, and it is *peace*, PEACE, PEACE!

That glorious resurrection morn
 Bids doubts for ever cease,
 For far and wide the news is borne
 Of perfect peace.

The sacrifice has been accepted because the Person Who was the sacrifice has been raised. Beloved friends, there is no other God but the God Who raised Him; and no other Christ to trust but the Christ Who has been raised. You need to get into the presence of God Who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. He has accepted the sacrifice; the sword is sheathed.

W. J.

JOHN BERRIDGE'S MISTAKE.

“MY desire and intention in this letter is to inform you what the Lord has lately done for my soul. In order to do this it may be needful to give a little previous information of my manner of life from my youth up to the present time.

“When I was about the age of fourteen, God was pleased to show me that I was a sinner, and that I must be ‘born again’ before I could enter into His kingdom. Accordingly I betook myself to reading, praying, and watching, and was enabled thereby to make some progress, as I flattered myself, in religion. In this manner I went on, though not always with the same diligence, till about a year ago. I thought myself on the right way to heaven, though as yet

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Luke xvii. 11-21 ; Luke xviii. 9-24.

I DESIRE, by the help of the Lord, to bring before you a very important subject—an elementary subject, but an important one, “*The Kingdom of God.*” I am desirous to show you the practical import of the subject.

The expression “the kingdom of God” is found several times in the passages we have read. Indeed, in this gospel you find the expression frequently. It is also found in other parts of scripture—in Paul’s writings, and in the Acts of the Apostles. Let me put this question to you : when you read a passage which speaks of the kingdom of God, or as your minds are now directed to the expression, “What does it convey to you ?” Give some account of it; not merely a theological account, or something you have read in pamphlets, but a spiritual account, as one who has tested what is involved in the expression.

In the first chapter of Acts the Lord spoke of these things during His forty days sojourn on the earth, He spoke of the kingdom of God. And at the close of the Acts, where you find the apostle Paul a prisoner at Rome, he preached to them the kingdom of God. I desire to show you, beloved friends, from the history of the leper in Luke xvii., how the kingdom of God is discovered. It is, I think, the mind of the Spirit in this well known incident, to present to you, in figure, how the

kingdom of God is discovered, and the result of the discovery. I divide the subject into three parts :

1. The discovery of the kingdom of God, and its results.

2. What the hindrances are to our entering into God's kingdom.

3. The elements which compose it.

In the passage referred to, there are ten men who are lepers. Leprosy is a type of that awful moral disease with which men are afflicted, "the disease of sin." These lepers are sensible to their condition, and they cry for mercy. Jesus is there, and they cry to him, "Jesus have mercy on us." He is always ready to hear a cry. That is very comforting. He is always ready to answer a cry, and always does. Now mark the passage, "Go show yourselves to the priests." Go show yourselves was the command, and off they go, and as they went they were healed. *Not when they got there.* One man was on the eve of a grand discovery. One man out of ten stops—he is arrested—he is about to discover the kingdom of God. They were on the way to a system represented by the priests, a system marked by demand, but which never revealed God. Now, this one man having stopped can say, as it were, "What is the good of going to the priests?" he would the rather go into a system marked by that sweet and precious word, "grace." He goes back to the Deliverer—to the Healer, and falls at His feet. Dear Christians, the Lord "does what He does, and gives what He

gives, in order that we may know what He is."

The influence produced upon this man sets forth very beautifully the results of entering God's kingdom. He glorifies God, he falls at the Lord's feet, and he gives thanks. In God's kingdom God is glorified, man is effaced, and your heart is thankful. The leper has discovered the kingdom of God. Immediately the Spirit of God tells us (and all is put together in moral order) that the Pharisees ask the question, "When shall the kingdom of God come?" The Lord replies, "The kingdom of God does not come with outward show." And He also says, "The kingdom of God is in your midst." Where was it? In His blessed Person. Although God had come out in Christ in this wonderful way, yet they were unacquainted with Him.

The Lord is showing what the leper has discovered. The leper was cleansed to discover the kingdom of God. Oh! the self-righteous people of that day! they missed it. They did not get low enough to find it. It is when we are subjects of sovereign mercy and grace, that we come to the kingdom of God. If you are to be a happy Christian you must know the kingdom of God. There are very few happy Christians. Christians have a right to be happy, but it is a rare thing to find one. You cannot sing yourself into happiness. Scripture tells us to sing when we are happy. I want you to get rid of what I call "evangelical sentiment." I love to sing, but scripture says, "If any be merry, let him sing." Not "let him sing to be merry."

God's way for you and me to be happy is found in His kingdom.

I will now give you a definition of the kingdom of God : "It is the moral apprehension which you have by the Spirit of what is suitable to God known in grace which governs you ;" being governed by what is suitable to God, you are a happy Christian. Do you know what mars our lives? It is *self-consciousness*. Do you know what will brighten your lives? It is *God-consciousness*. Do you know what would deliver us from the influence of what people think of us?—from sensitiveness. It is what God thinks of us.

"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." That is God's kingdom. The whole subject is gone into in detail in the epistle to the Romans. Let me try to give you an idea of Romans in three sentences: "I am a justified man, set up in the power of the Spirit to walk in God-consciousness." "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." I would greatly desire for every young Christian to walk in God-consciousness. That will save you from being merely religious. You love to hear the gospel, because it assures you all is right. You love to sing about Jesus on Sundays, but what about the rest of the week? No touch with God? No touch with Him in your business? No touch with Him when you are walking on the street, in your goings out and your coming in. I am speaking now of what is individual, of the

elementary part of Christianity. What is the result of God-consciousness? You disappear, you cease to be big. You are blotted out practically.

“O keep us, love divine, near Thee,
That we our nothingness may know,
And ever to Thy glory be
Walking in faith while here below.”

This sets forth the kingdom of God.

Now we come to the hindrances. From verse 22 of chapter xvii. to verse 9 of chapter xviii. is a dispensational parenthesis. The Lord returns to the subject in verse 9 of chapter xviii. The Pharisee says, “*God, I thank Thee.*” That sounds like the leper, when he gave God thanks. Now, continue: “*God I thank Thee that I.*” That is self-consciousness. That “*I*” sticks to us like pitch. The self-righteous have no place in God’s kingdom. Now look at the narrative. Children are brought to Jesus. The disciples are too big for children. The Lord says, “Bring them to Me and I will teach you. Unless you become like a little child you can in no wise enter the kingdom.” In natural things you must understand to believe; in divine things you must believe to understand. The mental *I* has no place in God’s kingdom. You must become as a little child. A simple child! there is nothing more charming! Mentally we have no place in God’s kingdom. The self-righteous *I*, the mental *I*, are excluded.

We now come to the next incident. Here we have the wealthy *I*—the *I* of acquisition, and this, also, has no place in God’s kingdom. “How

hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." Man loves riches because it gives him a place, but riches are a positive hindrance to entering the kingdom. It is quite possible, however, for a man to have a large amount of money and to be quite clear of its influence—to walk in the Spirit, and others may have only a small sum and think a lot of that. It is the I of acquisition, it is the principle, the disease—the desire to acquire, which is the hindrance. "I speak as to wise men." Does it touch you? The mental I, the wealthy I, the self-righteous I are the three great hindrances.

Now we come to the elements which go to compose the kingdom of God. There are five great elements. The first is *relief*, then *revelation*, *resurrection*, *realization*, and lastly, *relationship*. There must be relief first. Relief and revelation are seen in the death of Christ. That which relieves me, reveals God. I ask, "Has the Lord Jesus Christ relieved you? What is the nature of the relief? My sins and iniquities are remembered no more." There could not have been relief had not Christ died. But the relief is not merely that my sins are gone. It is *myself*. I know what it is to be justified, but the next question is far more terrible, the discovery of the "Me." Mark it well! There must be an experimental journey to appropriate the second point in relief. "The 'Me' is gone." Let me refer to Psalm cxxxix., "Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me." I cherish that verse. The place where I was searched out; the

place where I was *exposed*, is the place where I was *disposed* of. The death of Christ is God's own absolute answer to the "Me." He has judged it. He has effaced it from the root up. Peter said, "Lord, look at the fig tree that Thou cursedst." But the Lord looked there yesterday ; He will never look that way again. God never looks that way. In the yesterday of the death of Christ He looked that way. The "Me" is withered, in the sight of God, from the root right up. Thank God ! That is your title to turn away from it all, and never to expect any good from it.

There are three ways in which you can learn your bad nature : (1) In the practice of sin. (2) In the effort to be good. (3) In the presence of goodness. There it is without a bit of anguish. The first way is the most superficial way. People have an idea that the man who has led a foul life has consequently a deeper sense of sin than others. I do not believe it. I do not think a man picked up out of the gutter has a deeper sense of sin than a child brought up in a godly household, for the child will have the deeper sense of sin in the effort to be good and in the discovery of the impossibility of being what it ought to be. The third point is that sin can be learned in the presence of Jesus without a bit of anguish. As our hearts take in His glory, His beauty, His moral excellency, we begin to learn that no other man would do for God. Now we begin to prove in a deeper way the death of Christ that has relieved us. We can sit and bask in the sunlight of His moral glories and

beauties, and that is the deepest way in which to learn our own badness. It is in the presence of perfect goodness. The death of Christ has revealed God in the place where I lost the "Me." I have found God.

Christ has lit up all that dark and distant spot with the brightness of the glory of God, and He has gone up on high. There He is, and there in His blessed face shines the glory of God. And gazing there we can say, "Thou art there"—*God is*. There is the revelation in His own blessed face of what He secured in death as the Mediator of the new covenant. What He secured in death He livingly presents. He has revealed Himself, and I am relieved of myself and my sins in the death of Christ. It is His own perfect answer to everything that would hinder my enjoyment of the revelation of Himself. The sun shines upon me now. When the apostle was writing to the early converts at Thessalonica, he sums up the effects of his preaching, "They turned to God from idols." He did not say they had their sins forgiven, which of course they had, he did not say they had peace with God, that is detail. He did not say "you are justified." No! What then does he say? "Ye turned to God from idols." In the gospel the apostle so presented God to them in the fullness of His grace and love that they turned to Him from idols. And what to do? "To serve the living and true God." That is God's kingdom. They were so living in God's kingdom and in the power of it that they looked out for its

public display. It was no sentimental thing with them. They were living in God's kingdom ; they were serving the living and true God, and looking for His Son from heaven. No one can be in the hope of the Lord's return if he is not in the kingdom of God. How could you be looking for the Lord if you are living a life of self-will ! You are not morally suitable.

A man once asked me this question : " Is it well with you ? " I said to myself, " Is it well with Christ ? " If it is well with Him it is well with me, because He is my Head. If it is well with the Head it is well with me. " That is *resurrection*." Remember this, " He took your place in death that you might have His place in life." You are on the same footing as Christ is, and you receive the Spirit that you may live of His life. The result of receiving the Spirit is that you are taught to love God. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. You are upon the resurrection platform. You have the power of the Spirit to enable you to enjoy the revelation. You are endowed with that marvelous capacity from Christ, your Head, having received the Spirit that you may live of His life, and bask in the sunshine of the revelation which He has made of God, and this becomes life to you. I know God and love Him.

We now come to *realization*. Love is in the Spirit. You have received the Spirit from Christ, and you love God. There is your happiness. I do not now desire gold. I know now my happiness, my heart is responding to His love. Let Him,

dear Christian, love you into loving Him

I pass on to the *relationship*. It is this : we are children with the Father, in God's kingdom. We are translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love. This is the climax, you are there, loved by the Father. You are loved as Christ is loved. It very closely touches the family, but yet we are children in the kingdom. As you walk down here with your heart responding to the love of God, you bear the character of Christ in this world. To be Christ-like is to love God. I often say, would to God we were more charmed by what is Christ-like than by doctrine merely. Not simply to be a lecturer, but to be a liver. If your heart is under the influence of the love of God, it will exclude the influences of evil, the very feelings, and this is holiness.

May God bless this subject to you, and may each of us desire a larger entry into the kingdom of God ! The reason people are unhappy is on account of the working of their own wills, but the only thing that can conquer our will is the love of God. I do not take so much account of what a man says ; it is the spirit of the man which shows what he is and where he is. "Lord, my heart is not haughty nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother. My soul is even as a child weaned " (Psalm cxxxi.).

That is God's kingdom, and the first great mark of a man being in that kingdom, is that he is broken in spirit.

heart we may cleave to the Lord and possess the blessed consciousness that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

J. B—d.

PSALM XVI.

I THINK we have in this Psalm what answers to the Meat Offering. If led by the Spirit in your meditations, you get the “frankincense” here, *this life was lived for God*. It is the *food of God* (Leviticus xxi. 17). All the frankincense was *for God*. *The FOOD OF GOD!* Now He says, I am ready for the altar. You go on to the burnt offering (Psalm xl.), and we all understand that the sin offering is Psalm xxii.

It is helpful to read the first three verses of Hebrews xii. in connection with this Psalm to get the sequel to it. The last of those verses takes in the 17th Psalm, the “contradiction of sinners against Himself.” Psalm xvi. is the *Path of Life*; Psalm xvii., the path of Righteousness. The last verse of each Psalm is characteristic, “Thou wilt show me the path of *life*” (Psalm xvi. 11). “As for me, I will behold Thy face in *righteousness*” (Psalm xvii. 15). We have the inner principle of His life here; the outside pressure is described in Psalm xvii. In the 11th chapter of Hebrews you have God’s picture gallery of men of faith. You go from side to side in God’s picture gallery till at last you come to the bottom and see a Master-

piece—*Jesus!* “*Looking off unto Jesus*”—not as a Saviour there, “as the author and finisher of faith,” the great exemplification of faith. We see the end of the pathway of faith in these verses, and it sets forth what we get in this Psalm.

Of course, you are on Jewish ground in the Psalms, but the principles of life are set before us, and they become illuminated if we bring the light of Christianity into them. “There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen; the lion’s whelps have not trodden it.” The moment you think of a “*path*” you think of a *way through* somewhere. There was no path for innocent man in Eden, he had just to remain where God put him, and there will be no path in heaven. But now there is a path through this world, *and that path was trodden by Jesus!* It is a path of faith alone. Oh, if we got hold of it, “*There is a path*” outside the human ken, no vulture’s eye hath seen it; outside the energy of nature, “the lion’s whelps have not trodden it.” If we are Christians, we are called to tread it; it is set before us in this Psalm. We should be charmed with it; the new man delights in it. It is a great thing to see that the Lord has trodden it. We see the end of the pathway of faith here, “Thou wilt show me the path of life, in Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy *right hand* there are pleasures forevermore.” We see in Hebrews xii. He has reached the “pleasures forevermore,” “is set down at the *right hand* of God,” and we are told to “look off unto Him.” There is a path

on which is shed heavenly joy and light, and if we have not that we are not pursuing this path. The "frankincense" is here—the *object* of this life is God—a *life lived to God*. God is the *centre* of this life. He never departed from His centre. It is the contrast to our life naturally, which has for its object *man*. The first note struck in this Psalm is so sweet. Oh, if we had hearts to rejoice in it! "Preserve me, O God." Oh, how sweet that is! If we look round on the children of men, I have got the same thing in me naturally; it is not in that—it would rather trust anything than God! What this must have been to God. "Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust." "In Thee," "In Thee." Do we start our day like that? That is how He started all His days. Not a bit of independence here. He is the *dependent Man*. This marked the life of Jesus—all that a man should be for God, while He was ever "Over all, God blessed forever." "In Thee do I put my trust." He is a *confiding Man*. The reason He is dependent, is He is confiding. He says, as it were, *There is no question in My heart as to your love*. There was never a question in His heart as to His Father's love. That is the secret of the Lord's sleeping in the storm. *At that time* Jesus answered and said, "I thank Thee, O Father." When the storm was raging, the darkest point in the Lord's pathway, in that way, John the Baptist doubting Him, the cities where most of His mighty works were done rejecting Him, what does He say? "I thank Thee, O Father. . . So it seemed

good in Thy sight." The pillow of Jesus is in Matthew xi. Which is best, to have the storm cease, or to sleep through it? We say, O Lord, just speak, make it to be a great calm, alter the circumstances. God cares for us. It is the finest thing that ever happened to a Christian to be *shut up to God*, where no creature can help you. You are going to have some spiritual promotion, going to see how *God* can *bring you out* of a strait, or *sustain you in one*.

When Jesus left this world He left His pillow behind Him—the *Father's bosom*! Often we find we have got our heads on hard pillows of our own making. The Lord says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." I think we must notice the standpoint from which this invitation is given. Where is the Lord at that moment? He is in the place of *infinite rest*! Oh, it is a place, too! He says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." I will teach you that *you are loved as I am loved*, and therefore *My pillow is yours*! There it is, in the blessed repose of the Father's affections, *unbounded confidence in boundless love*! He says, I am perfectly content with *your* appreciation, your knowledge of Me. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father," and I rest in your love, in your thought for me. He puts His head on the bosom of the Father. Then He says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." I'll teach you what is in My Father's heart. I'll tell you that the love wherewith the Father loves *Me* is the love with which He loves *you*. *Loved as He is loved*! that is rest! The

storm always *found* that blessed One at home. We are often *driven home by the storm*. I think as I read John's gospel I hear Him saying, "I can wish you nothing better than what I enjoyed when I was down there on earth. I leave you the best of legacies, *My peace*, what I enjoyed in the Father's bosom."

If your will is silent *you* have unbounded confidence in boundless love. Then the Lord says, not only "Come unto Me," but *keep company with Me*. Where? In the Father's bosom. You take His yoke, keep close to Him, and learn His love. Now you'll bow. We'd be glad to take His yoke if we got His portion. What is His portion? *The Father's love*. "For in Thee do I put My trust." He is dependent because He is confiding. There is so much pretension to piety in these days. You say your prayers in the morning and you say your prayers in the evening—it is not that, it is the *constant sense of dependence*.

Now we come to the first part of the second verse, a very important thing. "O my soul, thou hast said unto Jehovah, Thou art *my Lord*." He is an *obedient Man*. He was here to obey. "Thou art my Lord." I am down here to do Thy will. "Who pleased not Himself." Absolute subjection and obedience. The way to be happy is to be subject. What makes me subject is *knowing His love*. I believe He will do the very best thing for me. The reason we are not happy is because we are not subject. Turn to the 8th Psalm, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the

earth." The Psalm begins and ends like that, and between those verses you get the millennium, and everybody is happy, because they are subject. The idea of the 8th Psalm is that everyone is happy because they are subject to Christ. This helps me to understand what a Christian household should be, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name" *in all my house*. You cannot have the millennium anywhere but in your house; you can have it in this way: our children should be subject to Christ. The husband is to be subject to Christ; the wife subject to the husband; the children subject to the parents; you cannot be happy unless you have this rule. Here is God's idea: the millennial earth all under the Lord, and because His name is excellent, everything is happy, even the fishes of the sea. "Thou art my Lord," *the One who was absolutely subject, is the One to whom everything shall be subject!* It is a very sweet thought.

Then the next clause you have His *lowliness*, He is a *lowly Man*, "My goodness extendeth not unto Thee." That is rather a difficult passage, because we never forget that He was a divine Person, but as Man He says, "My goodness extendeth not unto Thee," that was His perfection, to take that lowly place. Then He says to the saints, *All My pleasure is in you—IN YOU!* A very sweet thing to meditate on.

He says two things here, "My goodness extendeth not unto Thee." He also says, I find My pleasure where you find yours, "To the *saints* that

are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is *all My delight.*" This goes along with the lowliness. Lowliness is the mark of a spiritual person, as it says in Romans xii., "Condescend to men of low estate," or as it should read, "go along with the lowly." Jesus was a most lowly Person and always went along with the lowly. It is the perfection of His manhood here; but we never forget as we contemplate it, that *He is God. Truly a Man*, as ever a man was, yet *not ceasing to be God*, and *He abides a Man forever!* "The Son also Himself shall be *subject . . .* that God may be all in all," Father, Son, and Holy Ghost all in all; but *the Son is subject!* There is no room for the activity of the human mind there, we can only adore. The Son Himself shall be subject! Subject all through—it belongs to Him as Man.

Now we get a very important thing in the next verse, what I should call "*the salt*" of the meat offering. We must have the salt of the meat offering (Leviticus ii. 13). *We* are often lacking in salt. He was the *separate Man*; it is the salt of separation. There should be no honey in the offerings (Leviticus ii. 11). This is what flows as our *nice natural* friends, our *nice* "human nature," and we lose power. Here was One who says: No, I am separated to God. No salt lacking here. "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another God." If you want multiplication of sorrows, turn away from God and you will have it. There is much bitter sorrow, the fruit of turning away from God. "He is the true God and eternal

life. Children, *keep yourselves from idols.*" Anything that comes between our souls and God is in the New Testament treated as an idol. "Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor *take up their names into my lips.*" I won't touch it, I won't take up their names into my lips. I won't *think* of them. Let us look at this verse, let it judge us. *The measure of your separation is the measure of your blessing.* I believe that it is here that so many of us fail. We don't keep separate, we mix with people, and come down to their level, and we miss our joy. *You can't have communion if you are not separate.* It is intensely interesting; in the 6th of Numbers the Nazarite separates himself from everything here, he lets his hair grow long—he is subject. And what is appended to the law of the Nazarite? You could not read these verses without desiring to know something about it. "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, . . . On *this wise* ye shall *bless* the children of Israel, . . . the Lord *bless thee and keep thee.*" But you must not *begin* there; you must begin in the earlier part of the chapter, you cannot come in at the end if you do not. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel and I will bless them." "*And I will bless them,*" and "I will BLESS THEM." Why should these words come

just there? It is the way God arranges His word for our instruction.

As I read these verses I say to myself, Who is it that enjoys this blessing that Jehovah proposes here? The man who answers to the earlier part of the chapter. Take the first book of Psalms and you will find who enjoys this blessing. Psalm iv., "O, ye sons of men, how long will ye turn My glory into shame?" His glory was to be a *Nazarete*. They say, you have got nothing by being a Nazarete. "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself. . . There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, *lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us,*" that is it. "*Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased!*" "*Who will show us any good?*" How many are saying that. Wherever you go you find people asking that question. They *look* it if they don't ask it. Every unconverted person is saying it, and every carnally-minded Christian. Who can give the answer? The *separate man* can. Why? *He is in it*; you cannot if you are not in it. Here is one in this scripture. He says, You want good, do you? Here it is, in the light of Jehovah's countenance. There you are in the 6th of Numbers. They say, But you have no "corn," and "no wine." No, he says, but I have got something better. He has no corn, no wine,—no earthly prosperity, but he has the light of Jehovah's countenance, and he has "gladness more than in the time that their corn

and their wine increased." The 4th Psalm sets before us Christ, really, and He is the separate man of Psalm xvi. In the 16th Psalm He has got gladness in His heart. "Therefore My heart is glad" (verse 9). He is not a creature of circumstances. We are such creatures of circumstances. Here is One who is not; He is so in Jehovah's favour all the day long. Well, He is the separate Man, and the key to it all is, "Hear Me, . . . O God of My *righteousness*" (Psalm iv. 1). Psalm iii. is the secret of *rest*; Psalm iv. is the secret of *joy*. In the 3rd Psalm they say, "There is no help for Him in God." He says, Yes, there is, "But *Thou, O Lord, art a shield for Me, My glory, and the lifter up of My head. . . I laid Me down and slept, I awaked; for the Lord sustained Me.*" Here we are in the 16th Psalm again, "Preserve Me, O God, for in Thee do I put My trust." The first verse of Psalm xvi. answers to the 3rd Psalm, and the fourth verse of Psalm xvi. answers to the 4th Psalm, therefore the *separated* Man is the *satisfied* Man. He is satisfied, to put it in Christian language, with the light of His Father's countenance.

You may be converted and go to heaven, but that does not suffice for *satisfaction*. God proposes two things in the gospel, as far as my need is concerned. He proposes to make me happy in His presence—*suitable to Himself*, through the work of the Lamb—redemption, and He also proposes to make me happy *in Himself*—*suitable to Him, and happy in Him*. That is the 4th of John.

The Lord proposes to give the woman "a well of water." What a proposal! "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water"—*a capacity to know and enjoy God, the Father and the Son!* That is satisfaction, and mind you, you cannot worship without satisfaction. The next thing here is, He worships.

"I will bless the Lord." You can't worship unless you are clean, that is Hebrews x. As far as Hebrews x. goes, we have *boldness* to enter into the holiest; but that is not enough; there must be that. The blood makes me fit for His presence, but there is something more needed to make me worship—a *satisfied heart; an overflowing heart;* that is the 4th of John. You must have the 4th of John and the 10th of Hebrews together in order to get worship. Jehovah is the relationship in the Psalms, but we have the Father in Christianity. "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup." He is a satisfying portion. Very few of us know the secret of good. There are very few of us really *satisfied* Christians; it is evidenced by our worship meetings. I suppose most of us could say something about the Lord. You say, He has saved me, given me peace. Very good, but what more has He done? Has He *satisfied you?* In the 72nd Psalm we read, "The *prayers* of David, the son of Jesse, *are ended.*" That is it; he says, I can ask for nothing more; I am satisfied. It is all Christ there, and he says, I have reached it. He had the gratification of presenting the King after God's own heart. He says, God

is going to have a King like that ; that will do for me ; I cannot ask for another thing. "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse are ended." We sometimes touch that. Do not misunderstand me, there is never a time when we can do without prayer, but there are times when you are so deeply satisfied that all you have to do is to *praise*.

"I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel, my *reins* also *instruct me* in the *night seasons*." "His reins"—His *thinkings*. This is very important. What do you *think* about? I would say to young Christians, I will tell you why you get floored so often ; *you don't judge your thoughts*. I believe there is a great deal of sin committed *in thought*. If we were filled with Christ we should not have such foolish thoughts ; the mind must be filled with something. The measure of your practical sanctification is the measure in which you control yourself there. You never *did* a thing that you did not *think about* first. You say, I was overtaken. You had that in your mind first, and you should have *judged it there*. People are talking about holiness all over the country, and it is the most shallow sort of thing—*holiness begins inside*. They tell you you must abstain from this and that. That is not holiness—holiness begins inside. Here, the Lord says, My *thinkings instruct Me in the night season*. The night season should be a very profitable season.

In the 8th verse, He is a *Devoted Man*. "I have set *Jehovah ALWAYS before Me* ; because He is at My right hand I shall not be moved." That is

the 11th of John ; there you get the unmovedness of Jesus ; you get it all along through John. When He hears that Lazarus is sick He abides two days still in the same place. Quietness is always a sign of power. I don't mean natural quietness, but a quietness of spirit, you can wait. "He abode two days still in the same place," and when He did move, the disciples say, You will be stoned. "I have set the Lord always before Me, He is at My right hand, I shall not be moved." "If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not." His eye is single and His whole body is full of light, in that sense. "I have set *Jehovah* always before Me." He was the Object of His life. That is the "frankincense." Look at the last verses of John xvi.; that sets it before us ; verse 31, "Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to *his own*, and shall leave Me alone." *Every man to his own*. "And shall leave Me alone, and yet I am not alone, because *the Father is with Me*." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the *Son of God*." That is how I understand this. "We believe that Thou camest forth *from God*." He says, That won't do, that is quite true ; but I will show you the value of that belief, when trial comes you will go to *your own*. He says, you will leave Me alone, but I have got a circle of *My own*. *My Father is with Me*. He is an overcomer, because He sets the Father before Him.

The "right hand" is quite a study. In the

109th Psalm you read in the last verse, "He shall stand at the *right hand of the poor.*" In the 1st verse of the next Psalm Jehovah is saying to that poor Man, You come up to *My right hand.* "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." He is sitting there now, as the Author and Finisher of our faith, and we look there and see the end of the path. He has reached the "pleasures forevermore."

Then, verse 10, He goes right through, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell," in a disembodied state. As we know, He was raised up *from among the dead.* He trusted God right into death, and He says, I trust Thee for resurrection ; and resurrection is the vindication of the path of faith. Resurrection is what I call the *adjustment.* "Who by Him do believe in God, that *raised Him* up from the dead, and *gave Him glory* ; that *your faith and hope* might be *in God.*" "He will raise us up also by Jesus." The path of faith may lead us to the stake. Here is the Lord going into death. We do not get atonement here, we must go to other scriptures for that ; it is the same death by which atonement was made ; but here He is going through death trusting God to raise Him up and give Him glory as the vindication of the path of faith. We shall all have joy in going to heaven, but who ever had joy in going to heaven as Jesus had ! He has passed through all that sorrow and shame and gone into that place where He will *sorrow no more,* that *our faith and hope* might be *in God.* "If ye loved Me ye would rejoice, because

I go unto the Father." I go into "the south country" where there are no clouds! I am going to My Father; if you thought about *Me* you would rejoice. He will have joy there as none other will. I put a question to you: Are you *ready to go to heaven?* Would you *like to go?* I don't mean ready as washed in the blood, but ready *in heart* to go? What a test! You say, I am going to heaven when I die. Yes, because you can't help yourself! The Lord always had it before Him, and He was pressing on to it. Are you *going to heaven—pressing on to it?* W. J.

GIRDED.

John xiii.; Revelation i.; Luke xii. 37.

Now, before the hour of departure,
 As its shadows began to descend,
 "Having loved His own which were in the world,
 He loved them unto the end."

The Light in the midst of darkness
 To lighten the sons of men;
 One who came and who went as a Person divine,
 Was moving amongst them, then.

And He rose, in their midst, from the supper,
 And His garments He laid aside;
 And He girded Himself for a service of love
 With His chosen occupied.

For down in the depths of the waters
 Must the beams of His chambers be laid,
 On the love never quenched, nor by mighty floods
 drowned,
 Should the pillars of glory be stayed.

READING OF THE SCRIPTURES.

THE scriptures should be read in a prayerful, reverent spirit. This is becoming, for it is the written word of God and, like the living Word of whom it speaks, a revelation from and of God.

Proverbs xxii. 17, 18 sets forth the way in which we should read scripture.

“Bow down thine ear and hear the words of the wise.” Here we find the listening and submissive ear. And as the Lord said, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.”

“And apply thine heart unto knowledge.” This is application, and supposes the heart or affections engaged with the truth. And this will be the case if we read the scripture to find Christ there.

“It is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee.” This implies meditation. “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them.”

“They shall withal be fitted to thy lips.” “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” What comes from the *inward parts* to the lips is effectual ministry. Not from our heads, but from our whole moral being. We do well to remember this in these days of mental activity.

So the order is: Subjection, application, meditation and ministration. W. JOHNSON.

