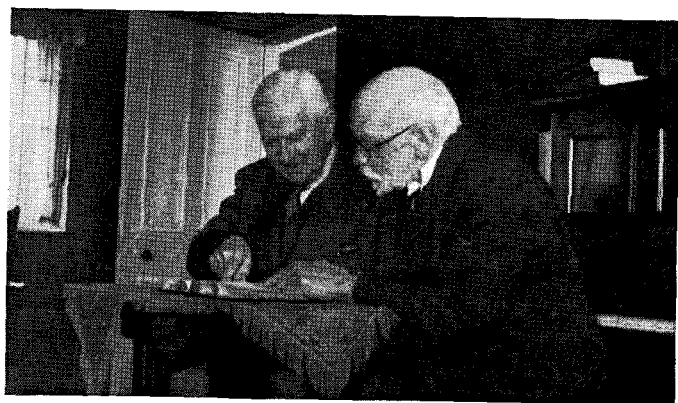




GOLDEN WEDDING



A HAPPY STUDY WITH MR. HAROLD ST. JOHN
IN THE LOUNGE AT PLAS MENAI

W. E. VINE
HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY

By
PERCY O. RUOFF



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FOREWORD

Along with many others, my fellow-Editors of *Echoes of Service* and I are very grateful to Mr. P. O. Ruoff for writing this Memoir of our beloved colleague, W. E. Vine. As one who worked daily with W.E.V. at 1, Widcombe Crescent, Bath, for over thirty years, with all the opportunities this afforded of getting to know his worth, it gives me much pleasure to write this Foreword.

I owe more than I can tell to his influence over those years and to the instruction I derived from one so well-taught in the Scriptures. He was particularly patient in pointing out any defects in composition and in correcting any mistake in exegesis, while, on his part, he was always ready to accept suggestions from his colleagues.

It is well that there should be placed on record the life history of one so versatile and so capable, and yet, all the while, so spiritually-minded and loyal to the Truth.

Many will be grateful that in Part II there has been preserved something of his valuable insight into the teaching of Scripture. This will be of lasting value to those who possess this Memoir.

W. R. LEWIS.

BATH, 1950.

PREFACE

William Edwy Vine was a man of exceptional qualities. His character, his lifework, and his writings, each in a special way, reveal the inmost secrets of a man who lived close to God. Much in this book has been contributed by his friends who desired that others should share their appreciation of God's gift to the Church in this man of spiritual wisdom and integrity.

With the materials available I have endeavoured to give a full-length portrait of him, as a missionary statesman of a rare order, a pastor with unique gifts, and a spiritual teacher who has made a definite contribution to theological literature.

It is known that he was associated in church fellowship with those spoken of as "Open Brethren"—but this is a title that he always repudiated.

Some chapters have been constructed so that missionaries, teachers, preachers and Christian workers may handle the treasures which Mr. Vine discovered in Holy Scripture and preserved in writing, and thereby enrich their ministry from his clear statements of Bible teaching.

The last chapter of Part II entitled "Fragrant Fragments" is designed to enrich the devotional hour.

A special word of thanks is due to Mr. F. F. Bruce, M.A., who has contributed the entire scholarly chapter on Mr. Vine's theological works; to Mr. E. Tipson who has compiled the index, and to a number of friends who have written "appreciations".

PERCY O. RUOFF.

WALTHAM CROSS.

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Part One

HIS LIFE

CHAPTER I

A Versatile Personality

WILLIAM EDWY VINE was born at Blandford, Dorset, in 1873, where his father had a boarding school. In 1875 the school was transferred to a suburb of Exeter, and became known as Mount Radford School. Through the teaching of his godly father and mother he was converted in early boyhood, and at the age of fourteen he was baptized, and received into fellowship in the assembly meeting in Fore Street in the city of Exeter.

At the age of seventeen, he became a teacher in his father's school for some years, during a part of which he went to the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth to prepare for his London University degree.

Early in 1896 he spent the Easter vacation at the home of the Baxendales who had been pupils in Exeter, and ultimately he became engaged to Miss Phoebe Baxendale who became his life-long partner and helper in all his work. The engagement lasted for three years, during which time Mr. Vine became well known to the assemblies in Lancashire where the Baxendales lived. The marriage took place in Manchester on August 10th, 1899, and the honeymoon was spent at Killarney, after which the young couple resided in St. Leonards Road, Exeter, near the school. There they lived for six years, during which time two daughters were born.

His marriage was singularly blessed of God through the constant and self-denying ministry of his wife. Few realised how great a source of strength and comfort she was to her husband. She proved to be an ideal companion for him, and her efficiency as a housewife was unsurpassed. When in his later years he was afflicted with a painful infirmity and heart weakness, she nursed him with a rare devotion, and indeed his journeys and ministry were made possible only by her skill and care. In the mercy of

God they lived to celebrate their golden wedding about three months before he passed away.

In addition to being associated with his father in the headmastership of the school, Mr. Vine was constantly engaged in the work of preaching the Gospel and teaching the Scriptures, and became recognized as an accredited minister of the Word.

On the death of his father in 1904, he and his brother were appointed joint headmasters of the school. In 1905 a son was born and in the following year Mr. Vine obtained his London University degree of M.A. in classics. About that time Mr. C. F. Hogg, who was ministering the Word of God among the assemblies in the British Isles, suggested that he and Mr. Vine should conduct a correspondence course of Bible study. This developed, and a large number of students took the course. The subject taken was 1 Thessalonians and this was followed by studies in Galatians. The notes were eventually published in two volumes. Mr. Vine also gave a course of instruction in New Testament Greek grammar, and in 1910 the Greek class presented him with a large wide-margin Bible, from which a page is reproduced in this book.

In Scripture the Spirit of God always writes the biographies of men in such a way as to magnify the grace of God and not to exalt man, and these records are given that we may recognize God's hand in the shaping of the character and in the ordering of events for His glory. There is no room for doubt that God sometimes guides His servants in a very direct way, and often by a series of small connected circumstances, all of which point to a particular path or sphere. This guidance (which is a perennial problem with Christians) nearly always finds its starting point in prayer and humbleness of mind. The ancient Scripture, written nearly 3,000 years ago, says, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. xxv. 9.). Dr. A. Cohen, a recent Jewish commentator, translates and comments in these words: "He teaches the humble His way. The humble are the opposite of the arrogant who follow their own inclinations wherever they lead them; whereas the former are desirous of making themselves subservient to God. They are anxious for His instruction, and He imparts it to them."

In seeking to know the will of God in our lives it should always be borne in mind that He is the Sovereign Disposer of all things, at all times, in all places, in every circumstance and in human lives. Some years ago, the late Col. Sir Robert Williams, M.P. used these words when presiding at a public meeting in the Grocers' Hall, London: "God sees so much farther than we do. He is always present all the time in all His greatness."

History shows, in a thousand ways, that God's microscopic providences are marvellous. Happenings, often insignificant in themselves, turn out to be pivotal. For example, who can doubt that the apparently casual record in Exod. ii. 6, "The babe wept", when it is regarded in the light of the sequence of events, such as affecting the royal princesses' affections and the training of Moses in the palace, became a turning point in history? (The paragraph in Heb. xi. vv. 23-29 is most illuminating.)

John Buchan in his remarkable *Rede* lecture entitled "The Causal and Casual in History" (1929), says:—"I venture to think, too, that our sense of the mystery and variousness of life is enlarged when we realize that the very great may spring from the very small." And, again, "History is full of these momentous trifles"; and after citing a number of unimportant things, Buchan gives the illustration of the death of the young King Alexander, the *protégé* of the Allies who died early in the autumn of 1920, the cause of whose death was blood poisoning due to the bite of a pet monkey in the Palace gardens. Buchan then adds Winston Churchill's remark: "A quarter of a million persons died of that monkey's bite."

In the year 1909 events occurred which changed the whole current of Mr. Vine's life, and in the narrative which follows the reader will perceive seven items which individually were not of special importance, but grouped together show a superintending providence of God and how He imparted guidance to all the parties concerned. It is given in some detail because it affords a striking instance of help from God which became the determining factor in the future course of a career which has influentially affected the lives of a host of God's servants in all parts of the world. These are the links in the chain of circumstances which the

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narrative makes clear. (1) Definite prayer; (2) An interview; (3) Scriptures almost simultaneously impressed on two minds; (4) A conclusion drawn from this; (5) A letter received producing a crisis; (6) A casual meeting; and (7) Financial provision making the new course possible.

It was in December, 1909, that Mr. Vine was asked by W. H. Bennet and R. E. Sparks, Editors of *Echoes of Service*, to join in the work at Bath in which they were engaged on behalf of missionary work at home and abroad in connection with assemblies of the Lord's people.

There are many references to *Echoes of Service* in the following pages and some explanation as to what is represented by this periodical seems called for.

Echoes of Service is the title of a monthly record of missionary effort on the part of labourers who have gone forth, commended by assemblies of God's people, in this and other lands, to preach Christ. Under its original title *Missionary Echo*, the magazine was first published in 1872, and it was in 1885 that the title *Echoes of Service* was adopted, a title chosen from 1 Thess. i. 8, where the Apostle speaks of the word of the Lord being *echoed forth* from the newly-formed assembly at Thessalonica. At the time of Mr. Vine's death his co-Editors were W. R. Lewis, R. B. Cooper and W. T. Stunt, and since Mr. Vine's Homecall, A. Pulleng has joined them.

The magazine gives tidings of service in various lands, to bring before its readers the needs of those lands and to create and deepen interest in the work of God, thus leading, as He may be pleased to use the publication, to prayer, to the giving of money and to the raising up of fresh labourers. The aim has never been to appeal for either workers or money for their support, of which there is no example in Scripture, but to spread information and to trust to God to use it.

The difference between the position of the Committee of a Missionary Society and that of the Editors and Treasurers of *Echoes of Service* is clear, as is, too, the consequent difference in the relationship which exists between those missionaries who are connected with a Society and those who are sent, independently of

a Committee, and who depend upon God, not only for food and clothing but also for guidance as to their path of service. This contrast is not drawn to disparage Societies or their workers or to extol those who are in a different position, but it is evident that the latter particularly need the prayers and practical fellowship of God's people at home, for if they do not support such workers there is no organisation behind them to support them.

A Society is formed for the purpose of sending out labourers. These may, indeed, be prepared and called and sent of God; nevertheless they are sent by the Society, and they are expected to be subject to the rules of and to be under the direction of the Society, and the Society is responsible for their care. Hence, the constant reminder from some Societies that unless funds increase they must refrain from sending out labourers, or must recall some. If the Editors of *Echoes of Service* sent out labourers and undertook the responsibility of meeting their need, they might be compelled to do the same, which would be contrary to their convictions.

While the Editors are always ready, if asked, to give counsel and information to the best of their ability, they assume no position which would relieve assemblies of the exercise of their responsibility towards the maintenance of such workers. According to the teaching of the New Testament, the grave responsibility of commending workers lies upon such assemblies. They are commended to the Lord, and not to the Editors, but when once the Editors are satisfied that the labourer has the confidence and due commendation of local assemblies, and they are satisfied also, that such assemblies have adequate knowledge of the special conditions of service on the field, and that there is the assurance of a welcome by responsible workers there, they gladly hold themselves in readiness to render any assistance within their power in the way of forwarding earmarked gifts for particular workers, and of allocating sums from monies sent them for distribution at their discretion. It is by means of the latter that the Editors are able to minister to those who are comparatively little known, possibly by reason of their having been abroad for many years, and thus outliving those who were interested in their first going forth; and possibly, also, on account of their not being facile with their pen.

The Editors aim at keeping every labourer with whom they correspond continually before them. Their service still maintains the simplicity of its original character. It is still mainly a channel of communication of news from the field, and of gifts to workers; and its mode of distribution secures that the circumstances of each worker are considered, and that at least five times in the year, week by week, the names of all of them are passed in review.

During the time Mr. Vine was associated with the work of *Echoes of Service*, its volume and complexity increased greatly. In 1909 the number of workers with whom the Editors corresponded was 600, at the end of 1949 they numbered 1,120; the gifts distributed through this channel in 1909 amounted to £24,147, whereas during 1949 they amounted to £99,265.

To return to the narrative. In December, 1909, it seemed impossible for Mr. Vine to accept the invitation made to him, but it became a matter of very definite prayer. When first informed of this call, Mr. Vine's brother thought that if a separation in the oversight of the school took place, he himself might leave for Australia, but just at that time two rather significant incidents took place. Mr. Vine had an appointment at Cardiff, and on the Saturday morning whilst engaging in prayer before rising, with the Bible open before him at the portion in Deut. 31, to which he had come in his daily consecutive reading, he was confronted with the words in verse 7: "Thou must go with this people." Though no guidance had been given which would make the change possible, he was so struck with these words that he underlined them in his Bible. A similar and deeply significant occurrence took place at that time in the experience of his brother, who was preaching at Crediton on the Sunday. After being shown into his room, his mind much occupied with the question of his brother's removal to Bath, he decided to kneel in prayer about the matter before going downstairs. After rising from his knees, his eyes fell on this unusual combination of texts on the wall: "I was left . . . With good will doing service as unto the Lord." (Isa. xlix. 21; Eph. vi. 7).

When Mr. Vine went to the school at Exeter on the morning after his return home, his brother greeted him with the remark

"I'm afraid you are going to leave me." On being asked why, he told him about the texts he had seen on the wall. Mr. Vine then remarked how extraordinary it was that such texts should have confronted his brother, inasmuch as he himself had been given the text the same day, "Thou must go with this people." They decided however to wait for further guidance.

It was suggested to Mr. Bennet and Mr. Sparks that Mr. Vine should co-operate in the work at Bath for three days in the week, leaving Theodore Vine in charge of the school at Exeter during this period. The brothers decided to accept this proposal if the Lord made it perfectly clear that they were to do so by providing an extra assistant master to join the staff. They decided not to advertise, but to wait and see if God made such provision. It became immediately manifest what was the will of God. The same morning in which the decision was made Mr. Vine had occasion to go into the city. In the centre of the city he met a young man who some years before had been a pupil in the school. Mr. Vine asked him quite casually what he was doing. He replied that he was working in an accountant's office, but did not wish to continue that occupation, and thought of applying for a post as an assistant master; and he asked, "You have not got a post vacant for me, have you?" Nothing definite was said in the street, but at an interview with the brothers in the evening he accepted the post, and became assistant master at the beginning of the ensuing term.

In the middle of January 1910, Mr. Vine began his new duties at Bath and the two brothers were persuaded that the call had come from God, and that the texts from Scripture which had been given to them so remarkably were being fulfilled. His life now became full of increased activity, and ultimately he decided to hand over the school entirely to his brother, he himself drawing no emoluments from it. He had never taken anything but a small yearly sum from the school as his wife and he together possessed sufficient means to render them financially independent.

For a year he left Exeter early each Monday morning so as to be able to be at the office of *Echoes of Service* by 9.30, but by the beginning of 1911 it had become clear to him and his wife that preparations should be made for them to live in Bath in view of

the extending work of *Echoes of Service*, and in view of the very exacting character of the double occupation in the two localities. In September that year, 1911, they took up their residence at 9, Widcombe Crescent, Bath.

About the year 1912, the Missionary Study Class movement which began in Lancashire developed somewhat widely. Assemblies in Lancashire had for many years exercised a keen missionary interest, the annual conferences being held consecutively in Bolton, Blackburn and Southport. Mr. Vine attended these conferences by invitation, and from time to time took an active part in furthering the Missionary Study Class cause. At first there was considerable doubt about the movement, but under the guidance and favour of God it prospered. A magazine entitled *Links of Help* was produced as the organ of M.S.C. work, and for a time Mr. Vine was its Editor.

In 1920 a M.S.C. Holiday Home was commenced at "Plas Menai," Llanfairfechan. This became the happy venue of a special series of meetings for Bible Study lasting a week or a fortnight for the help of evangelists in the British Isles at one time of the year, and at another, for the help of missionaries on furlough from abroad. Almost from the beginning Mr. Vine was asked to give Bible teaching on each occasion at these gatherings. He greatly valued the co-operation of Mr. Harold St. John and Mr. A. H. Boulton.

"In 1912 he rendered another service," writes Prof. A. Rendle Short, "which had far-reaching consequences. In August of that year, in spite of great difficulties and uncertainties, the first Missionary Study Class Holiday Conference was held at Weston-super-Mare. There were a good many grey heads shaking apprehensively at the enterprise that was being shown by a number of younger people all over the country in organizing these Study Classes. But W.E.V. had the insight to realise that there were possibilities for good, and he decided to throw in his influence quite vigorously on behalf of the new classes. He accepted an invitation to speak at the first Weston conference, a gesture which gave confidence to many others. It was an outstanding success, and set a precedent for scores of conferences on similar lines all over

England, and in Scotland and Wales, with one in Ireland. He was at his best on these occasions, not so much on the platform as a speaker at informal talks and question meetings. Here he rendered very valuable service by his wide knowledge of the Bible and of Christian doctrine, and his carefully thought-out practical counsels. His musical gifts, too, were a real asset. He was largely responsible for bringing out an excellent Missionary Hymnal especially designed for these classes and conferences, and for missionary meetings generally. Many have found this little book both heart-searching and instructive, and it has been very widely used. He collected a number of outstanding good tunes to accompany the hymnal, and it has greatly added to the effectiveness of many a conference. He took advantage of these occasions to give very useful, and indeed necessary, accounts of the way in which the Editors of *Echoes of Service* fulfilled their stewardship of distributing missionary money. His best addresses in my hearing have been when he took up special subjects, such as the menace of Spiritism or the Divine call to missionary work."

About the year 1921, Mr. and Mrs. Marsom were asked to establish at 6, Widcombe Crescent a Training Home for young women who had felt led to prepare to go to the mission field and had been recognised by the elder brethren of their assemblies as giving evidence of being called of God. This became for some years a useful means of preparation. Bible Study lectures were given by Mr. Marsom and Mr. Vine, and on two days in the week medical lectures and training were given at the Twerton Gospel Hall by Dr. T. Wilson-Smith assisted by qualified sisters. There was a similar work for young men in Bristol, under the guidance of Dr. A. Rendle Short.

After the falling asleep of Mr. Sparks in 1918 and Mr. Bennet in 1920, Mrs. Sparks remained at 1, Widcombe Crescent, and continued there her gracious ministry of hospitality with all her quiet dignity and spiritual qualifications, until she too was called Home at the ripe age of 94 in 1936. It then became necessary for Mr. and Mrs. Vine and their household to take up residence at No. 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Vine had five children, all of whom are living. The eldest, Helen, has been for years jointly responsible with Mrs.

Vine in providing that generous hospitality in the home which is such a beautiful memory in the lives of hundreds of missionaries and other visitors from all over the world. The second daughter, Christine, qualified as a doctor and has been serving the Lord in India since 1930, first in the Godaveri Delta area until she married Gordon Fountain of New Zealand, when she joined him in his work in Travancore. Their only son, Edwin, obtained his F.R.C.S. and is practising in Malaya. He received the Order of the British Empire during the war years. The third daughter, Winifred, is a State Registered Nurse, and in her nursing career has served in many parts of the world. The youngest, Jeannette, was for some time her father's secretary and was largely responsible for copying the manuscripts of some of his largest works. In May, 1947, she married John Williamson, who was Mr. Vine's secretary from June, 1946, until the time of his death.

Mr. Vine was a kind and loving father with a great fondness for children. Whilst his five children were still young rarely a day passed without his finding some time to spend amusing them. Usually in the evenings he would play the piano to them or sing songs suitable to their age in his mellow tenor voice. On other occasions he would enter into their games no matter how child-like or simple these might be. Regularly at least once a year he would take his family away for a holiday, but for him these occasions were not true holidays, for he was so constant and industrious a worker that he would always take work away with him. A secretary would accompany him, and day after day he would spend many hours in his labours sometimes in a secluded part of the sea-shore or fields. Nor on these "holidays" did he discontinue his regular preaching of the Gospel. It was one of his remarkable characteristics that from early rising in the morning till late retirement at night he would fill every moment of his day with many varied activities. It is probable that the so-called holiday but little diminished the amount of his daily work, and yet at these times he would contrive to take his children for countryside walks, go rowing or sailing on rivers or on the sea, read day by day an interesting and instructive story to his family, or perhaps spend several hours in fishing or searching for the rarer sea shells. To this was added the

daily or twice-daily bathe. He was a powerful swimmer, and on one occasion rescued his son and two other boys from drowning in a very choppy sea.

He had a sound knowledge of countryside lore and he never failed to interest his children when on country walks by pointing out the wonders of God's creation. At such times he was wont to point to the spiritual lesson. So too, in insisting on rules of health, open air life, bodily exercise, he would make it clear that these were followed in order that we might serve the Master the more efficiently.

In routine family life he could be stern at times, but never harsh. His innate sense of discipline was always tempered by kindness and paternal love.

Though of short stature he had, until 1927, great physical fitness and was strong for his size. In that year he complained of attacks of dizziness. Two of his children were studying medicine, and on their advice he was seen by a famous heart specialist. The latter detected the early signs of an incurable disorder of the heart and gave a grave prognosis. Thereafter the attacks of faintness and later of unconsciousness increased. In the succeeding twenty years he lived in the knowledge that at any time a heart attack might occur which would prove fatal, and it was under this stringent test that he showed his faith in God, his fortitude in danger and his enjoyment of God's salvation. He suffered many attacks of unconsciousness without warning of their approach. Never did he show any fear. He resented fuss or concern for his welfare, and when he recovered he would resume his work calmly from the point at which he had been forced to leave off. Against definite advice he persisted in going for walks either to the neighbouring country or to the city by himself. He knew with an unshakeable certainty that his times were in his Lord's hands.

His love of children manifested in the case of his own family was not confined to them. The trait of capturing young life, sedulously cultivated and developed, found expression in many ways. For instance it is not difficult to picture the unrestrained merriment of a host of youngsters, one Christmastide, when he was lowered by ropes from the gallery of Manvers Hall in the rôle of

Father Christmas, with his legs dangling in the air. His whimsical ways and witty words set the imagination of the young folk in a joyous whirl as he handed out presents to his entranced guests. The impressions created on such occasions linger in the memory through life. His shadow-pictures were very cleverly managed. This recalls a story that the writer heard from the lips of Dr. Campbell Morgan. A perplexed father came to the famous preacher one day complaining that he had lost all influence with his son—a boy not yet in his 'teens. "Do you play marbles with him?" asked Dr. Morgan. "No." "Ah! That is the reason you have lost your influence." *Verbum sat sapienti!*

How many persons would have imagined as they listened to the staid, solemn and burning messages of W.E.V., never quite free from a touch of the schoolmaster, as he spoke annually to the vast audiences at the Central Hall, Westminster Missionary meetings, that there was such a background to a man whose whole life was given up to the care of missionary work, pastoral care, constant preaching up and down the land, and the writing of many books, making a substantial and abiding contribution to theological literature.

An Intimate Portrait

IT was only by methodical planning that he was able to get through his work. He was always first in the office at 1, Widcombe Crescent, handling about 60 or 70 letters daily, which he would allocate to the staff. After united prayer with his fellow Editors he started by dictating letters from 9.30 to 10.30. Two or three times in the week he used to go into the city to attend to various matters. Much time was given to answering Bible questions sent in by correspondents who were never kept long for a reply. In this he was a model letter writer. After lunch he rested for a quarter of an hour, and at 2.15 would again return to dictate letters. Then very often he visited the sick during the afternoon. Years ago, before he was troubled with heart attacks, he used to walk a good deal, and play games and bathe. The evenings were devoted to entertainment.

In his walks near his home all the little children knew him. Often a group of youngsters from cottages near-by would group around him, and he would hold their little minds with his charming and vivacious talk. In his home, when his family were young, he frequently visited the nursery, rolled up the carpet, and played marbles—father against children. He had a large box of wooden bricks made for his young family, and many a time in the nursery he built a castle right up to the ceiling. At the seaside summer holiday he used to accompany his children on a shell hunt, or make sand castles with ingenious tunnelling, or take his little ones in turn on his back into the sea when bathing—out of their depth, but it was quite all right as long as father had hold of them. At Christmas time he was the life of any party and thoroughly enjoyed all the games. In the summer he sometimes organised picnics, and would invite friends to join the party—the bigger the crowd the

merrier the party he thought. He was wise enough not to forget the great benefits of physical exercise, so he made a tennis court, and many happy Saturday afternoons and evenings were spent there.

Every now and again he would arrange musical evenings. What he perhaps enjoyed most was for someone to play the piano, someone else to play the organ and he would accompany them with the violin. He delighted in the violin concerto by César Franck, but he could make his instrument serve other purposes. When he handled it for the amusement of young folk, he would cause it to send forth such a volume of queer and wizard noises that his juvenile admirers would just explode! It was the same when he played on the black notes of the piano, and performed "the nigger boys' song" which by his skilful manipulation became "noisier and noisier, and furiouser and furiouser." His young audiences could not contain themselves: it was too much for them!

During the first world war he frequently entertained parties of wounded soldiers, and after reading to them a story of Jan Stewer's, "The Vootball Match," at which they rocked with laughter, he would skilfully handle his audience and say to them: "I have read you this funny story, now I am going to give you another story, from the Bible," and they listened intently as he read and explained.

He adopted the same method when he used to visit (year by year) Miss Smith's Mission to the Cripples and Afflicted of Bath. He would entertain them so naturally and wholesomely that very often he was asked to fill up the whole programme for the evening. Mrs. Sparks, who arranged Christmas parties at 1, Widcombe Crescent many years ago, also found that the way to secure the best results was to leave the whole of the details to Mr. Vine. With much skill he found out what each could do, and he drew up his plans accordingly.

In the midst of heavy work on hand, he knew when to relax, and from a well-developed sense of humour he would draw upon a fund of anecdotes.

A number of correspondents, including several missionaries, have written vivid sketches of Mr. Vine, all of them describing his

naturalness and love of fun. One speaks of him as the best "all-rounder" he had ever known. At one time he might be seen cutting grass with a scythe, at another arm-in-arm with a missionary, helping him with some difficult problem, in a sympathetic and understanding way, and giving wise counsel. "If he wrote to others as he wrote to us," says one, "then he must have had a marvellous grip of the work of God in all parts of the world." A missionary tells how one Lord's Day morning at a Breaking of Bread in Spain, Mr. Vine, with his excellent knowledge of Latin, rose and slowly but correctly gave thanks in Spanish, although he had only been in Spain for a little more than a week. Another missionary writes: "We came to know and appreciate his personal fellowship and friendship, revealing his close up-to-date acquaintance with the difficulties and problems in our respective fields of labour. In our walks together we heard of his experience of the Lord's guidance and over-ruling in his early days."

From many sources the story is uniform—telling of his accurate, up-to-date acquaintance with many missionary fields, and his prayerful sympathy and advice.

"The first personal contact that I remember," says Prof. A. Rendle Short, "was when Mr. Vine very kindly consented to write a foreword to a book of mine. I was too inexperienced to realise that men of established reputation often do not care to accept such requests from novices. It was the more kind of him." And he recalls another episode:—

"Once many years ago, at a M.S.C. Conference, he and I shared a room, and though nothing was said about it, I noticed that he read his evening portion from a Greek N.T., without any aids. It stirred me to resolve that I would not be content till I could do the same. I do not suppose he ever knew this."

Dr. Andrew Bonar used to tell, with great solemnity, what was said to him at the beginning of his ministry by an old friend and minister: "Remember, it is a remark of old and experienced men that very few men and very few *ministers* keep up to the end, the edge that was on their spirit at the first."*

Now it can be recorded without a shadow of doubt that right up

* Andrew A. Bonar, *Diary and Letters*, p. 349.

to the time of the last public address he gave, Mr. Vine's burning enthusiasm and keenness never perhaps reached a higher level. An observer writes of the last occasion (a luncheon given to about a 100 missionaries at the Westminster Conference, London), that when called upon to speak "he sprang to his feet like a young man in his thirties." He spoke with great vigour, and almost startled the assembled company with his whimsical opening sentence. He said, "I am glad to be privileged to be among the deaf and blind." (He had been sitting between Mrs. Vine who is very deaf and someone else who is blind.) After a short pause he continued "You will want a Scripture on which I base my statement. You will find the Scripture in Isa. xlii. 19. "Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?" Mr. Vine, having lifted the veil of mystery by this quotation, then reverted to the scene in the garden of Eden and gave the illustration of Eve, who was neither blind nor deaf. Then the line of thought was developed by reference to the Lord's temptation in the wilderness, where He was blind and deaf, leaving us an example; and after commenting on 1 John ii. 15-17, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," he finally underlined the importance of God's servants being blind and deaf in this present evil world.

It was a memorable final address which will cling to the memories of the hearers. And on the last night of the great Conference, packed with eager listeners, he led the congregation in a prayer which made those present conscious that he was pouring out his very soul on behalf of others in the audience of the living God. The fervent "amens" from all over the building indicated that the hearts of many were deeply touched. This will ever remain as a climax to a fragrant memory of his gracious ministry stretching over many years, during which many were stirred to consider whether they were called to give themselves wholly to the Lord for missionary service; and hundreds, in whose conscience arrows of truth found their mark, yielded themselves afresh for a deeper devotion to the Lord.

The story of W.E.V.'s daily life as it has been described already is a record without variation, as regards hard work, incessant

labours on behalf of others. Even to the very last day of his life he showed the same diligence and zeal, as the following record will show.

November 2nd was his last day on earth. As early as 4 a.m. he had a bad heart attack and he was advised to have breakfast in bed. The 8 o'clock post was brought to him as usual. He attended to the letters, and, according to his usual custom, he distributed them to the staff. After breakfast he dressed and went to his study for prayer. Then he dictated letters, and went downstairs to the office. Although it was an extremely cold day, he transacted certain business in the city and returned home. He had his lunch downstairs, and in the afternoon he seemed not quite up to the mark and rested on his bed. But he was able to dictate more letters, and that evening he completed the last article he ever wrote. It was the leading article of *Echoes of Service* entitled "Ideal living," with which this chapter ends. He also had in hand the preparation of a book on the Epistle of James. It was at 4 p.m. that his temperature was very low and he felt very cold, and asked his daughter Jeanette if it was a dangerous condition. He had his tea in his bedroom, and at 7 o'clock went to bed. He also had his supper in bed about 9 o'clock, and as usual, he finished his reading from his Hebrew Bible. He spoke very little on this last evening, then he lay down in bed. Mrs. Vine, who had been with him, left the room for a few minutes, and returning a little later found him resting on the edge of the pillow, but he was now "at Home" in the presence of the Lord. Up to the very last he was talking about his engagement to speak at Bloomsbury Chapel, London, on the following Saturday evening, and although his daughter Helen told him she did not think he would be able to go, he said he would do his best to be present. The title of his address was to have been "Christ magnified."

A pathetic interest attaches to his final piece of writing. It certainly represents his teaching at its best and is given in full, together with a hymn of his own composition.

IDEAL LIVING

When the Apostle Paul said, in Phil. i. 21, "To me to live is Christ," he did not mean that Christ was the source of his life,

or that the power to live was derived from Christ, though each of these was true; his statement signifies that living itself, the whole state and condition of his life, was such that Christ summed up all his experiences, his thoughts and his doings. This is more than the fact of the indwelling of Christ, it is the effect of His indwelling. Paul's statement in Gal. ii. 20, "Christ liveth in me," approximates to it but does not comprehend all that it means. There the Apostle was contrasting his new life with that which he lived under the Law, and was declaring the fact of the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ. Now he says, "to me, living is Christ" (the verb is really equivalent to a noun, 'life itself'), that is to say, Christ was the personal expression of all that his life meant to him. This ideal shines out the more gloriously because of the dark background of his circumstances. His trials and natural disappointments were many. These was he, a prisoner, restricted from his wonted missionary activities, and the subject of the animosity and bitterness of rival preachers, who aimed at increasing affliction for him in his bonds. It was doubtless a set purpose on their part to annoy him by gaining success in their evangelistic efforts as a set-off against his restricted condition. His engrossment in the Person of Christ, his pre-occupation with His glory, filled him with triumphant joy, in the realisation that his very adversities were making for the accomplishment of his one great ambition, that Christ might be "magnified in my body, whether by life or death." That is, that through his instrumentality Christ might be made great in the estimation whether of those who had never heard of Him or of those who had but a poor conception of His glories, so that through him the effects of the knowledge of Christ, His salvation, His power, His work, might be made good in the lives of others. The glory of Christ was the ruling passion with Paul. It shed a lustre upon all his hardships and enhanced his trials and difficulties.

The body is the necessary instrument of the soul and the spirit; their activities find their expression in and through it; it thus governs and directs our influence over others. Therefore, if to us living is Christ, He is "magnified in our body." To have the Lord Jesus as the ambition of our heart and mind puts each detail of our life in its divinely-appointed place. If our dominating ambition is

to gain Christ and be found in Him, it will adjust all our affairs to the one object.

The extent to which the Apostle enjoyed the realisation of this ideal of living did not make him independent of the prayers of fellow-believers. It was a real comfort to him that all that he was experiencing would turn to his salvation through their supplication (verse 19, R.V. : the word *deesis* denotes "supplication"; it stresses the sense of need). But this supplication would only be effectual through "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ," that is, by the operation of the Holy Spirit in ministering Christ.

All this was a definite factor in this ideal : the very statement "to me to live is Christ" begins with the explanatory word "for," which thereby connects the statement with what precedes it. And what precedes it is, as he says, "according to (that is, in accordance with the assurance of the supplication of the saints and the supply of the Spirit of Christ) my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." These were the very reasons why to him living was Christ.

For a believer who desires so to live, this absorbing preoccupation with Christ will be inevitably characterised by that meekness and lowliness of heart that characterised Him. It is the very negation of a feeling of self-satisfaction or spiritual superiority. The spirit that breathes through this Epistle, and indeed through the Apostle's life from his conversion onwards, gives evidence of the reality of his testimony so succinctly given in his statement, "to me to live is Christ."

To live this life is not beyond the reach of any believer whose ambition is that Christ may be magnified in his (or her) body. Such is the mind of God for us all in our daily walk and occupation. While we cannot but confess how much we fail to realise the ideal, yet may we seek to attain to it in increased devotion to our Lord.

Saviour, now constrained
By Thy love to me,
I, my life presenting,
Yield myself to Thee.

Whereso'er directed,
Be it my delight,
Lovingly to serve Thee,
Walking in Thy sight.

When the world seductive
Would my heart ensnare,
May Thy love attract me
From its dazzling glare.

When the hosts of darkness
Would my soul assail,
By Thy strength empower me;
Mine can only fail.

W.E.V.

These words recently copied from Robert Murray McCheyne's tombstone at St. Peter's, Dundee, may aptly be applied to W.E.V. :—

“Walking closely with God
An example of the believers
In word, in conversation, in charity,
In spirit, in faith, in purity.
He ceased not day and night
He laboured and watched for souls,
And was honoured by his Lord
To draw many wanderers out
Of darkness into the path of Life.”

A Missionary Leader

A MISSIONARY leader, in addition to possessing leadership and skill, should be a person marked by at least four qualities. He should be one who has :

- (1) A spiritual understanding of God's purpose in the propagation of the Gospel,
- (2) A clear perception of the qualifications of those called to carry out that purpose;
- (3) A broad outlook on the world-field based on current knowledge of conditions; and
- (4) An apprehension of how the work can be furthered, based on constant contact with workers on the fields.

In these four qualities Mr. Vine was a God-given leader.

I

GOD'S PURPOSE IN THE GOSPEL

W.E.V. always kept steadily in view the supreme design of all missionary work, the Spirit of God's "one and only code" as he called it, the all-sufficient and permanent guide for the fulfilment of the Divine will; and there was always present to his mind the fear of any departure from the New Testament pattern, and thus lessening the power and effectiveness of Christ's servants. This is what he says on these points :—

"In the mind of God the grand ultimate object of missionary activity is the planting of churches, that is to say, the formation of corporate companies of those who by means of the Gospel are brought into vital and permanent union with Christ.

"The Head of the Church who gave His instructions to His Apostles, and through their instrumentality left them on record for us in the New Testament Scriptures, gave therein a body of truth and principles adapted to every age, generation and condition.

The pattern is complete, and exhibits the divine wisdom in every part. Human tampering has only marred it in its working.

"The preaching of the Gospel has not merely in view the deliverance of souls from perdition, nor even the winning of souls into the Kingdom; its aim is to bring them into a life of conformity to the will of God in devotion to Christ, and to the prospect not only of seeing Him as He is when He comes to receive us, but of serving Him in His eternal Kingdom when the 'hope of the Gospel' receives its fulfilment.

"The Spirit not only came Himself to operate, but in the Holy Scriptures, penned under His own infallible superintendence, He has presented the Church with its one and only code, an all-sufficient and permanent guide for the fulfilment of the Divine will throughout this era. We say all-sufficient and permanent, for the Scriptures constitute 'the faith once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3. R.V.).

"It is incumbent upon all who profess the Christian faith to respect the plainly revealed intentions of the Head of the Church, instead of burdening it with doctrines and regulations of human fabrication, after the traditions of men."

In one of his books, he adds fresh emphasis to the point, thus :—

"The salvation wrought by means of the Gospel brings a soul into life in Christ, a life under His Lordship, a life of victory over sin and everything that is opposed to the will of God, a life by which the individual who has become a subject of the saving grace of God becomes himself a means of using the Gospel in the salvation of others." And, in another place, when he is showing the importance of the messenger being filled with the Spirit for this all-important work, he says :—

"The Gospel message is the Holy Spirit's own instrument. One who handles it therefore needs to be filled with the Spirit if he is to handle it effectively. Being a channel through whom the Word of life is to flow, he needs to be free from everything that would clog the flow or mar the purity of the living stream. It is essential, too, that the Word of Christ should dwell in him richly. Constant meditation in the Scriptures in their entirety is a *sine qua non* for the soul-saving, heart-instructing ministry of the blessed Evangel."

The following syllabus of a lecture he gave us is full of teaching on Missionary work.

THE GOSPEL WHICH WE PREACH

We preach Christ crucified, the Living One, who makes Himself real to us, and we are to make Him real to others. Christ's Kingdom has been set up and men are invited to enter it. God has given His Spirit to those who do enter it (1 Thess. iv. 8; v. 19). The Spirit is not to be quenched. In consequence of this the life must be pure (iv. 1-8), useful (vers. 10 and 11), and watchful (v. 4-8). The wrath of God is to be revealed against Gentiles for impurity (iv. 6), and against Jews for their rejection of Christ and the Gospel (ii. 15, 16). Judgment is coming suddenly and unexpectedly (v. 2, 3).

Acts xx. 17-38: Paul's words to Ephesus are much along the same lines. *Missionary methods*—house to house in villages and town (ver. 20). He shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God (ver. 27). In ver. 28 "feed" should be "tend". *Missionary Work*: Scattering of the seed of the Kingdom; planting of churches. Not only evangelistic tours, but wherever they went hearers had to choose something and act upon the choice. Paul refused to stay and teach persistent rejectors. He expected some spiritual and moral response. His aim was to gather believers into assembly life. John (chs. xiii-xvii) gives nine features in which the Lord Jesus revealed Himself to prospective missionaries. *His training school*. They had been with Him in public and he is now going to reveal secret things of Himself. (1) He is the High Priest at the beginning and at the end. He washed their feet not only for cleansing, but to give them to know their fitness to have fellowship with Christ (xiii. 1-12). Doing the work of the brazen laver (Exod. xxx.). Ch. xvii: The Lord's Prayer, prayer of a Great High Priest. (2) He is a Teacher giving instruction (xiii. 13, 34, 35). (3) He is the Lord, inspiring reverence and trust (xiii. 13). (4) The Revealer of truth in its present application and future fulfilment (xiv. 1-3, 16-21). (5) The Son revealing the Father (xiv. 7-11). (6) The Sustainer of a fruitful life (xv. 1-16): The vine lifted, *airo* Greek to lift (ver. 2) (not cut)

from the ground in order to bear fruit; appointed (not ordained) to go (ver. 16). (7) A Bridegroom winning love: Characteristics of this: (a) love (vv. 9, 10); (b) bridegroom's great delight in his bride (ver. 11); (c) a relationship established—"I set you in Me" (ver. 16); (d) bridegroom chooses his bride (ver. 16); (e) communion (ver. 15: see Rom. vii. and Eph. v.): love, joy, choice, relationship, communion. (8) He is the Transmitter of treasures, of truth (xvii. 8-14). (9) He is the Director of a Mission (xvii. 18).

What is the power that stirs us to serve in the Mission Field? God's love. He speaks seven times in the Upper Room about God's love for Him, and seven times about His love for His own. *Agapao*, to love and *agape*, love, are characteristic words of Christianity. The Holy Spirit has used this word *agapao* to express ideas unknown before.

(1) It is the essential attribute of God: "God is love". (2) The attitude of God towards the world—because that is the attitude of God towards His Son. "He so loved, He gave His Son." (3) The attitude of God in a special way to believers. (4) It is His Will for His children one towards another and toward all men (1. Thess. iii. 12; 1. Cor. xvi. 14; 2. Pet. i. 7, 8). "Love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18). It anticipates the revelation of Divine love and our love as God wanted it revealed in New Testament. Love can be known only from the action it prompts. God's gift of His Son represents a love not drawn out by any excellency in its objects (Rom. v. 8). There is a Divine will in making a deliberate choice, made without any assignable cause except that it is in the very nature of God Himself. Deut. vii. 7, 8 assigns a cause for His love.

Agapao, to love, does not merely express a mere impulse from feelings, spending itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. It seeks the welfare of all. This love we *must* manifest in all our work (Gal. vi. 10). *Agapao* signifies practical love. As used of God, it expresses deep and constant love of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a reverential love in them towards Him, and producing a practical love towards those who partake of His love and a desire to help others to seek the Giver. *Phileo* expresses a tender

affection. It is used of the Father to the Son (John vi. 20); to the believer (xvi. 27), the only place in the Upper Room where God's love for us is so expressed. *Phileo*, when used of one's own life, meets with His rebuke. We are not to love our own life but go out on God's work, 1. Pet. iii. 10. "He that loveth (*phileo*) his life shall lose it."

The name of the Father occurs 12 times in this discourse. There are three indications as to the significance of the Name, whether of the Father or Son: (1) The Name expresses His *attributes* and *character* as revealed in His ways (xvii. 6). The Lord manifested to the disciples His nature and His character, and the effect of this revelation was that they kept His Word. Everything we learn in the Word of God about the Name of God as concerning His nature and dealings is not merely for reverent interest but for adherence to His Word. (2) The *Name* signifies representation when it is connected with the sending of a person. An ambassador who is sent is expected to represent in all his ways the one who has sent him. Ch. xiv. 26 shows how the Holy Spirit acts in representing the Father to us. He was sent in the name of the Lord Jesus. Having come at Pentecost to indwell every believer, He seeks to make known in our lives who the Lord Jesus is. (3) Ch. xv. 21 gives our part as His representatives; the more faithful we are the keener will be the opposition. He sends us out into the world. Antagonism will be proportionate to fidelity. We have One acting for us above and One dwelling within us whose purpose it is to make us live and act worthily of His Being and character, and the effect of that will be, as has always been, "We are more than Conquerors". We need never fear effects of fidelity. Let us be ready to lay down our lives for His sake, and when this world has gone, the Lord will show the eternal effects of acting and living in His Name.

II

MISSIONARY QUALIFICATIONS

It was after very many years of experience of missionary work in five continents, that Mr. Vine issued a small penny booklet

entitled "Approved of God—Qualifications for Service at Home and Abroad". Its value is out of all proportion to its size. It condenses the experience and wisdom of a lifetime. The writer bases his observation on the words "Approved of God to be intrusted with the Gospel". (1. Thess. ii. 4. R.V.). I have endeavoured to summarise it, without missing any point. He says : "Approved" is the word. Its significance is far more comprehensive than that of being allowed. Not permission but approval, as the result of being proved.

Tested men, men approved as having stood the test, this is the missionary type in the New Testament. This provides the standard. Let us not lower it. Loyalty to the Word of God demands that we maintain it.

"Approved of God" : the application of this to the men whom God called to go to other lands with the Gospel is confirmed by the Scripture narratives about them.

He then refers to the records concerning Paul, Barnabas, Silas and Timothy, and goes on to remark : Nor must we fail to observe the significance of the word "intrusted". It implies a proved trustworthiness. Every one of them had been engaged in local gospel service, and had been proved and approved therein before being sent forth by the Holy Spirit to regions beyond. They did not become missionaries either when, or because, they went from their assemblies to other lands. Going to another country in the work of the gospel does not make a servant of the Lord a missionary.

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest!" We shall not err in fulfilling that injunction. Stirring appeals for more workers are likely to play on the imagination, to give young men and women the impression of a call without the reality, and so lead to the going forth of the unqualified, with consequent waste of the Lord's money, and of the time both of the unsent and of the sent whom they seek to join in the work.

Another fact which stands out conspicuously in New Testament instruction on the subject is, that the local church is the divinely appointed training ground for service, first in the immediate vicinity, and then further afield if the Lord so leads. A period of

collaboration with a senior worker in gospel work in the home country is valuable.

It would be a great advantage, too, if the elders invited a young man who had gained their confidence regarding his working in regions beyond, to attend their periodic deliberations concerning the affairs of the church under their care. The experience gained thereby should serve him well in the similar responsibilities he will most probably have to shoulder early after arrival. Grave mistakes in judgment are, alas, made at times through the lack of such experience.

He then proceeds to mention eight important qualifications :—

(1) Has the prospective worker evinced the tactful civility, the politeness, the Christian courtesy, which indeed are requisite in the home country, and still more when face to face with the pride and prejudice of people in foreign lands?

(2) Has he a good report in the calling he has been following? Has he shown capability and diligence therein?

(3) Is he known as one whose disposition will make him a true yoke-fellow with those who have been labouring in the country before him? Incompatibility of temperament will but mar the work, scandalise the Gospel, and undo much of what has been accomplished.

(4) Is he free from that self-assurance which will make him a critic of his senior workers and lead him to seek almost at once to introduce methods which he himself regards as superior to theirs? Meekness and a readiness to be subject under trying and disadvantageous conditions are all-important qualifications in co-operating with others.

(5) Is there evidence of freedom from mixed motives, such as the desire to avoid the arduous character of a somewhat unremunerative occupation in the home country, or the desire to arrange a marriage earlier than could be the case at home?

It is not a very infrequent occurrence to-day that two who express exercise of heart about work abroad desire to become married even before setting out, indicating ignorance of the ill effects upon a woman of assuming the double occupation of household duties and missionary work, while unacclimatized and among

strange people (often with a language to be learnt), with whose ways and manners and prejudices a worker needs to become familiar if effective work is to be done.

If souls are to be won for Christ, the new worker should surely devote his time undistractedly to becoming thoroughly familiar with the character and ways, the prejudices and susceptibilities of the people, and to the efficient acquisition of their language.

(6) Has he such knowledge of the Scriptures as has already made him known as one capable of handling them rightly and preaching the gospel effectively? If a man is inefficient in making known the Gospel scripturally and intelligently in his native land, how can he be called of God to preach it elsewhere? If he has not been proved as one who is capable of "handling aright the Word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15, R.V.) how can he be commended to go and minister it amidst the still more difficult and exacting conditions abroad? How can he use it aright when confronted by the sceptic, the propagandist of error, the genuine enquirer?

(7) Is he possessed of ability to learn a language, where such is necessary? Attempts to speak it before sufficiently acquiring it will produce ridicule from the unconverted and harass the feelings of native believers. He will do well to seek still further to improve his education during such time as is available to him before going abroad.

(8) Is he known to be possessed of that godliness and moral fibre which will strengthen him against succumbing to the grossly immoral influences which exist among peoples abroad? Any evidence of laxity or carelessness in regard to the other sex is sufficient to disqualify for service for God.

Without the knowledge that the prospective labourer possesses the above qualities, let elder brethren faithfully refrain from the commendation he seeks. Only so will they be able to communicate, with a confidence and joy imparted by the Spirit of God, with brethren who are already working in the district which the new worker has before him, before he prepares to set out.

Mr. Vine was constantly addressing conferences, missionary meetings and gatherings of missionary candidates, and he left behind a large number of papers and notes of addresses. A specimen

of his notes is appended, headed "Qualifications for missionary work". Some of the points have already been referred to but many other fresh matters are added, and this page from his papers is given to show how thoroughly he explored this matter.

(a) SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS :

- (1) Conversion and baptism and a realisation of its meaning.
- (2) A knowledge of Scripture so as to deal with errors and sceptics (2 Tim. i. 13; ii. 15; iii. 14; Mark iii. 14).
- (3) The practice of soul-winning.
- (4) Instruction in church fellowship and the Lord's Supper.
- (5) A Christlike character, so as to win confidence.
- (6) A good report from without, from employers, as to application to work—capability. What will not do for man's business will not do for God's.
- (7) Humility and a willingness to take advice. (A testimony as to this by elder brethren.)
- (8) Chastity. Marriage not necessary for this.

A yielded life is characterised by :—

- (a) Communion.
- (b) Delight in God.
- (c) Trust amid difficulties.

These are God's means of spiritual development. A lack of trust is the root of much evil—timidity, undue haste, scheming. The use of trust means increase in power, a good conscience and persistent loyalty to the Lord.

- (d) Tact. Jas. i. 5; iii. 17. Pure (not contaminated with anything). Peaceable (freedom from strife, avoid tendency to contradict and say the opposite). Gentle (freedom from harshness), compliant (easy to be won); merciful (not refusing to render help); fruitful (not stanching life); impartial (not double-minded); without hypocrisy (not posing); speaking the truth in love.
- (e) Adaptability to work with others, 1 Thess. ii. 7-12; 1 Cor. ix. 23.
- (f) Steadfastness in discouragement, not despondent amid poor results, sticking to it however discouraging,

strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, wearing out if needs be. "Consider Him that endured," Heb. xii. 3.

(b) PRACTICAL QUALIFICATIONS :

- (1) Ability to learn a language.
- (2) A knowledge of medicine, dispensing, first aid.
- (3) Carpentry, gardening, mending, brick making, etc.
- (4) Ability to work with others. Phil. ii. 22.
- (5) As to sleep. Not up late talking except on the Lord's business. Long and pleasant converse means less quiet time in the morning.

(6) Food. Try and learn to like what you don't like, to eat what you would not choose: eat enough to keep you strong. Eating with natives opens their hearts.

(7) Clothes should be tidy; not governed by fashion, but not eccentric.

(8) Comfort. Cut out things unnecessary; not seeking comfort for its own sake.

(9) Speech. Avoid arguing. Cultivate silence, never break confidence. If any misunderstanding arises, go direct, be frank, humble, straighten things out.

(10) "Beware of the lust of finishing" (R. Chapman).

(11) Social life. Do not be a slave to it. Avoid craving for the amenities of home life. Win the confidence of natives.

To complete this section some valuable sentences found among other notes are added :

The supreme motive for missionary work is the love of Christ and response to His claims.

A missionary must train so as to be free from anxiety, unrest and internal friction (1 Thess. v. 23), the whole being preserved, involving :

- (a) Concentrated purpose.
- (b) Self-discipline;
- (c) Strenuous practice; avoiding all that detracts from speed, strength and skill. For lack of this, 95 per cent. of nervous breakdowns occur.

As a husbandman he must be the first to partake of fruits: he

must be up early and late, and often ploughing a lonely furrow.

God will give you what you ask in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Sharing His mind determines the character of our asking.

No one should become a missionary if he can help it; be sure of your calling.

A young man who remonstrates that he "came to preach, not to sweep floors" is not only an objectionable type, but has mistaken his calling and would be better back in the country from which he came, and occupied in earning his living there.

A missionary went to an Administrator's Office and said "*Bon Jour!* do you speak English?" This caused annoyance. A missionary who wants a favour should ask it in the language of the person addressed or have an interpreter. It is not prudent to think that to be a servant of God is a sufficient credential. There is often the need to be welcomed by existing missionaries. Respect and friendliness must be shown to those who belong to Evangelical Societies. Also, respect must be shown to authorities, political and religious.

C. F. Hogg advocated that more vigorous tests should be applied to all who seek to go forth along the lines laid down in the New Testament. He says: "Possibly there would be fewer workers, but probably compensation in power, and those who are called and fitted would be better furnished."

Missionaries should be of such a definitely Christlike character and disposition that their attitude should be living and sympathetic towards natives, so as to win their confidence, avoiding such thing as an air or conduct of superiority.

Let one who is exercised about the Lord's work abroad test at home his or her ability in language learning. Even if the ability is possessed, time may well be spent in any further education.

III

IN TOUCH WITH THE FIELDS

Mr. Vine was characterised by thoroughness. He was far too wise to take things for granted. For instance, he never failed to present a realistic picture of missionary work. These are the terms in which he spoke to prospective missionaries: "If we are to

present our message in a way that will be understood, we need to know the circumstances of people. Paul introduced the Gospel by talking about navigation, Acts xxvii. He mentioned their health, physical needs, and then God. We further need to know the laws of people to whom we are going, how their lives are regulated by them. "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman unashamed, rightly handling (not dividing) the Word of Truth." The word *orthotomeo*, used here only in the New Testament, and twice in the Old Testament, denotes "to cut a straight course, pursuing a straight path through it."

Mr. Vine was in constant touch with missionaries all over the world associated with *Echoes of Service*, and also was well-informed about the activities of the Evangelical Societies in the Mission Fields. The *Echoes of Service* office was like a busy telephonic centre at which there constantly arrived messages from the fields of the world calling for help, counsel and experience—problems, difficulties, delicate situations—all these made severe calls on his time and strength. It was only by orderly planning and concentrated attention that these ever-recurring matters were dealt with. In April, 1946, he writes to a correspondent: "I am writing under very great pressure in these times, as in addition to helping to correspond with 1,000 missionaries every few weeks and writing for some half-dozen magazines and replying to a very large number of questions of all sorts on matters doctrinal and missionary, and in connection with Assemblies, I have a large number of meetings to take and pastoral work in connection with an assembly of over 250 believers."

He always had in view the spiritual welfare of those in the field, knowing how years of toil amid heathen conditions produces weariness and often a jaded spirit. He was continually writing letters to uplift and strengthen the workers. Upon him devolved the writing of the circular letter which accompanied each remittance. In the last circular he wrote, which was despatched in December, 1949, he embodied many helpful thoughts.

"There is," he wrote, "scarcely a more beautiful passage in Scripture describing the future glory and blessedness of Israel than the 54th chapter of Isaiah. The description increases in grandeur

as the passage draws to its close. The last part (verses 11 to 17) continues in still fuller measure the joyous assurances of the earlier part.

"There is again a brief reference to the circumstances of the great Tribulation, the afflicted and tempest-tossed condition, under the final fury of the Gentile nations acting under the Antichrist (v. 11). Then follows a series of blessings in a suggestive order: first the natural glory of the foundation pinnacles (R.V.), gates and border; next the spiritual instruction of the children; then the moral establishment of the nation, with freedom from oppression and fear (v. 14); then the revelation of the fact that all their adversaries who had wasted them had been under the absolute control of Him who created them and used them to carry out His purposes (vv. 15, 16); finally their complete justification by the Lord Himself (v. 17).

"All this glory shines out with greater lustre by reason of the dark background of their period of woe. So it often is with us: 'I found trouble and sorrow . . . I was brought low,'—but it does not continue indefinitely; we prove the truth of the next words 'and He helped (saved) me'—'and' not 'but'; all was the fulfilment of His counsels towards us. So it will be.

'Light after darkness, gain after loss,
Strength after weakness, crown after cross.
After long agony, rapture of bliss,
Right was the pathway leading to this.'

"Forces of evil seem to increase in their activity and power. Let us bear in mind that God has 'created the smith that bloweth the coals of fire' and has 'created the waster to destroy.' Let us glorify God by our unshaken trust in Him amidst it all and by the joy that knows the blessedness of the light of His countenance and the power of His arm."

The wholeheartedness with which he gave himself to the work, varied and exacting, to which God had called him, showed itself in another important direction. Somehow, he found time daily for persistent intercession. Who can measure what this can accomplish? John Flavel, the puritan, writes: "The Devil is aware that one hour of close fellowship, hearty converse with God in prayer, is

able to pull down what he hath been contriving and building many a year."

Always watchful for opportunities at meetings for corporate prayer he would bring news fresh from the mission fields calling for intercession on behalf of workers and the problems they faced. In Manvers Hall, Bath, prayer meetings were conducted in a helpful manner, the 3rd Friday in each month concentrating upon Missionary work. Letters were read and reports and extracts from letters were brought before the gathering on these occasions. A scroll was exhibited on which were the names of missionaries who had gone out from the local assembly, or who had been more or less associated with it, and the countries to which they had gone. These matters were brought before the meeting with many other subjects for prayer, such as the "Homes for Missionaries' Children" at Bury St. Edmunds.

IV

THE ABIDING PRINCIPLES

In the matter of furthering the work abroad, in the course of the years, Mr. Vine had no occasion to alter the principles which he had committed to writing, and which he often referred to in his public addresses. He was a thorough and convinced believer in the Apostolic methods recorded in Holy Scripture. On one occasion, he used these striking words concerning the "training school" of the missionary:—

"And He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach" (Mark iii. 14). *With Him!* What a Doctor of Divinity! What a training school for missionary work! The Great Example ever before them, and they sitting at His feet and learning of Him, catching something of His look, His manner, His spirit, knowing Him, not by an occasional visit but by years of closest intimacy and daily and hourly intercourse! They were trained not in isolation from fellow-men, in colleges and seminaries, but, as doctors are trained in actual contact with disease, so they witnessed His treatment of the good and sinful, the wise and foolish, the haughty Pharisee and the hated publican, the scornful scribe and the outcast sinner, the frivolous

and the sad. Yet, though called, commissioned, authorised and ordained by the Lord Himself, with all these advantages and qualifications, their training motive, method, and authority were nothing without the power of the Holy Spirit. Everything depended upon their being full of the Spirit of God."

With particular care he noted the early Apostolic beginnings of "speaking" and "dialoguing" and the house-to-house labours. "How Paul puts us to shame!" He then writes some very solemn words about meeting with the Lord's disfavour and disapproval at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and proceeds:—

"Mark how the work began. In the capital of an important Roman province, a busy centre . . . there arrives a band of fugitives, all of them earnest promulgators of the most glorious tidings ever given to man.

"They simply 'spake' to people. The word is suggestive not of congregational ministry, but of individual dealing, doubtless of house-to-house visitation, as well as of conversations in public places; and in this most casual and unostentatious way the work began to grow. The growth was rapid. A very large community of disciples—Christians, the townsfolk called them—came into existence.

"Here, then, at the very outset of missionary activity, we learn that the work carried on was independent of human authority. No Council at Jerusalem controlled the service. No organised Society directed it. The Lord Himself exercised His authority and the Holy Spirit manifested His power.

"In the Synagogue at Thessalonica Paul reasoned (literally 'dialogued') with the Jews (Acts xvii. 2). So again in Corinth (xviii. 4). In Ephesus for three months he spoke boldly, 'reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the Kingdom of God,' and subsequently in the same city for two whole years in the School of Tyrannus he reasoned daily with the Jews and Gentiles (xix. 8-10).

"Self-determined arrangements, ecclesiastical accretions or modifications, the establishment of church authority apart from that which is laid down in the New Testament, could only dishonour God, mar the testimony, stultify the Divinely appointed position, and meet the Lord's disfavour and disapproval at the

Judgment Seat—all of which is borne out by His judicial pronouncement in favour of the church in Philadelphia, 'Thou didst keep My word, and didst not deny My name' (Rev. iii. 8.)."

Then, citing the Apostolic methods and the pattern recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, he claims that these made for the greatest efficiency and most rapid spread of the Gospel, because of fellowship with the Holy Spirit. And he continues :—

"Contrary to what might have been expected, the extensive and important missionary service now to be initiated was to be carried on altogether apart from the authority and supervision of the Apostles. The work was to be developed under the immediate guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit.

"We trace, therefore, the narratives of the Acts in relation to missionary work, not merely as so many incidents in an enterprise, but as a revelation of the mind of the Lord as to the principles upon which it is to be carried on. The history provides guidance which, if followed in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, makes for the greatest possible efficiency and for the most rapid and successful spread of the Gospel in the world.

"Let us not fail to observe this clear intimation, that where a church is in a prosperous spiritual state, seeking devotedly to learn the mind of the Lord and carry out His will, the Spirit of God is ready to act, where otherwise His power would be withheld. Moreover, the Spirit gives spiritual discernment in identifying those called to the work. The Spirit of God is able to give to those who have the spiritual care over a church, powers of discretion to discern what He is doing in the case of one whom He is preparing for missionary service. It is incumbent upon them ever to be on the look out for indications that the Lord is raising up such gift, just as in the case where there is evidence of the development of pastoral gift. It may be that fasting and prayer are called for : they gave themselves to fasting and prayer, an example which we need to take to heart when such occasions arise in the circumstances of assemblies to-day."

After showing the New Testament high fellowship—"God's fellow workers" and the labour entailed in fulfilling such a calling, he urges practical support of these as a responsibility :—

"The Apostle Paul says, we are 'God's fellow workers' (1 Cor. iii. 9.). Not 'labourers together with God' (as in the A.V.), as if they were working in common with Him, but fellow-labourers who belong to Him and are associated together in doing His work. 'God's fellow-workers!'—the thought is suggestive of fellowship in the same cause, and in the realisation that each belongs to the same Lord. There is no room here for the spirit which says, 'This is my work, and that is yours; you must leave me to mine and I will leave you to yours.' This labouring in the Word indicates something more than the *ex tempore* exercise of oral ministry. It involves constant and prayerful meditation in the Scriptures, as definite preparation for the edification of the saints. Strenuous work this, a veritable labouring!

"As our faith in God is such that we enter into His counsels concerning the perishing (for whom Christ died as much as for us), if we have the mind of Christ concerning the work of His servants and their labours in the gospel, we shall so further them by our practical support as to enable them to reach the hitherto unreached. This practical support has present and eternal rewards.

"'I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account' (Phil. iv. 17). That lifts the giving for the work of the Gospel above even the matter of fellowship; it at once presents the Lord's view, it is something in which He finds pleasure, and in which the Holy Spirit operates for the present blessing of those who give. Moreover, the phrase carries us from the present to the future. The Lord puts down our gifts 'to our account,' which points to the coming time of reward for whatever has been done for Him."

A final note (inscribed on two square inches of paper in very small writing) contains words of encouragement:—

"There may be deliverance from fear of the future, anxiety for the morrow, bitterness towards anyone, cowardice in face of danger, laziness in face of work, failure before opportunity, weakness when Thy power is at hand. Fill me with love that knows no barrier, courage that cannot be shaken, faith strong enough for the darkness, strength sufficient for my tasks, loyalty to Thy Kingdom's goal, wisdom to meet life's perplexities, power to lift men to Thee."

What an efficient and thorough missionary leader he was.

A Spiritual Pastor

AS a local pastor (with others) in the assembly at Manvers Hall, Bath, W.E.V. was recognised by all who knew his untiring labours as one who for nearly 40 years diligently and faithfully cared for the spiritual and temporal interests of the assembly there. He was, *par excellence*, "a shepherd of souls," spiritually caring for, protecting and guiding the flock.

It was said of Dr. W. M. Macgregor, of St. Andrew's United Free Church, Edinburgh, that he was never known to forget a face or a name, even after a quite casual meeting—he had such a prodigious memory. An instance is recorded by Prof. A. J. Gossip, in the following terms: "Well John, so you have come up." Thus he greeted a student on the day of his arrival. "And how is your sister Margaret? She must be nineteen by now." "Yes, sir." "And James? He'll be seventeen?" "Yes, sir, but how do you know?" "Why lad, I spent a night in your father's manse when I was Moderator!" That, added Gossip, was fifteen years before, and at a time when he was visiting numerous manses and parishes every week. Yet each child was remembered down the years with exactness, and as an individual apart . . . What a pastor he must have been! After long years of absence, as people moved through the streets, Macgregor recognized them afar off, and recalled all about them with startling accuracy—the son who went to Canada so many years ago, the daughter who married and settled in Australia, remembered each by name and in detail.

Our friend whom we now honour in this memoir likewise had a vigorous and tenacious memory, greeting people by name and keeping in recollection the special personal circumstances and family matters of each. It was this that formed such a vital and affectionate bond with all with whom he was brought into contact.

Is it any wonder that a person showing such detailed sympathy and understanding wielded unusual influence? But behind the scenes, unknown, was the patient intercessor, who, in the early morning from 6 till 7 o'clock bore up in the presence of God the names and circumstances of all those in the assembly. This gracious and precious ministry is surely a rebuke to many who exercise the office of a New Testament elder. To some extent it also partly explains his extensive influence with men and women.

There is plenty of evidence that he was an ideal pastor and elder. For one thing, in spite of his years, he was generally the first to arrive at Manvers Hall on Sunday morning. He greeted each member of the fellowship with gracious words accompanied by a sunny smile.

He would take his place as a humble worshipper with the assembly, who, in fulfilment of the New Testament practice, met together on the first day of the week to "break bread" (Acts xx. 7). Whenever he led the assembled company in thanksgiving and worship, it was recognized by all that he was speaking with God, his reverent tones and demeanour adding solemnity to all he said.

What did he think about the Lord's Supper? The way he presents the subject shows how important a place it fills in the Christian Church. There is a small penny booklet coming from W.E.V.'s pen entitled "The Lord's Supper."* It is *multum in parvo*. Many a big volume does not hold such clear instruction and cogent argument. It deserves a wide circulation amongst all who value a clear statement of the truth, because, in addition to its Scriptural teaching about the Supper, it rebuts, convincingly, current sacerdotal teachings. After making an important distinction between the Table of the Lord and the Lord's Supper, Mr. Vine writes:—"We are always at the Table, whereas we are not always partaking of the Supper . . . 1 Cor. chap. x, treats of the subject more from the external point of view, while chapter xi views it internally. What is conveyed by 'the Table of the Lord,' while referring immediately to the cup and the bread of which we partake at the Lord's Supper, points especially to our responsibilities and

* Published by Pickering & Inglis.

privileges all the week, and the provision to enable us to fulfil and enjoy them. This is borne out by the immediately ensuing context, where the Apostle points out the necessity of so ordering our life, that we shall abstain from anything inconsistent with the Table of the Lord. We cannot partake of that and then go and compromise our relationship. We are to remember that we have a fellowship to maintain, and we are to seek not our own, but one another's good, avoiding everything that would cause our brother to stumble . . . To partake of it means that we accept the death of Christ as our own death, the destruction of the body of sin, the death by which we are crucified to the world, and the world to us . . . We call Him to mind as the Living One, who was dead, and we proclaim the efficacy and the purpose of His death. The contrast in chapter xi is not between the Table of the Lord and the table of demons, but between the Lord's Supper and our own supper. It can only be the Lord's Supper when we acknowledge Him as Lord thereat and, fulfilling His commands as He instituted it, enter into the significance of that of which we are partaking . . . His followers were to partake of the Supper in remembrance, not of His death, but of Himself (1 Cor. xi. 25). They were indeed to enter into the significance of His death, as set forth in the bread and the cup, and were to proclaim His death in the act of partaking. 'Proclaim', be it noted, not 'show' or 'show forth'. The word *katangelo* is used of proclaiming a message, as in this very Epistle, in ii. 1. and ix. 16, in the latter verse of preaching the gospel. Not representation, but proclamation is intended; not, as has been wrongly interpreted, a showing to God, but a witness to men.

"Again the Lord's words are 'in remembrance of Me' (Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25)—not in memory of an absent person, nor as a memorial of an act, but in vivid realization of the Lord Himself, living and present, according to His promise; yet ever on the ground of the fact, the purpose and the effect of His vicarious sacrifice at Calvary . . . The design . . . is to bring to the hearts of the partakers the realization of what Christ is to them as Lord and Saviour, and what they are to Him through His redeeming blood. He appointed the Supper, not simply 'lest we forget', but in order that He might Himself, as the outcome of His finished work on the

Cross, communicate to us a fresh impulse of His grace and love."

At the Sunday morning gatherings Mr. Vine's ministry was always appropriate and edifying, and it was noticed by many in the Assembly how mellow and gracious he had become in the closing years of his ministry. Often, when it was manifest to all that he was being led by the Spirit of God, it could be discerned that he was "thinking on his feet." So humble was this man of God in his maturity that he said to one of the Elders of the Assembly "Do you think I have gone beyond my ministry?"

Another pleasing feature in his ministry, one which is neglected by many, was his thought for the young folk whom he always kept in his mind. Every now and then on Sunday mornings he spoke with great simplicity to the children after the "breaking of bread." He made them feel they were in the place God would have them be. On one occasion he told them the story of a little boy sent up a chimney to sweep it. The little chap was afraid. So his mother told him to repeat a hymn whilst he was sweeping. It was Dr. Watts' hymn :—

My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.

He was especially comforted by verses 2 and 3, and all his fears left him.

In darkest shades if Thou appear,
My dawning is begun :
He is my soul's sweet morning star,
And He's my rising sun.

The opening heavens around me shine,
With beams of sacred bliss,
While Jesus shows His heart is mine,
And whispers, *I am His*.

Then Mr. Vine would say very impressively to the children :
"Never be afraid, because the Lord is so near to every one of you."

It happened sometimes that parents brought their babies to the

assembly seeking the prayers of God's people on their behalf. His prayers for such will be long remembered: so will his subsequent action. After the meeting closed, he was always the first to go to the mother, and take the baby affectionately into his arms. In fact, his tenderness towards babies was almost proverbial. If a baby cried in a meeting, he would tell the mother not to take it out, as its little cry was music. It didn't trouble the Lord.

How much better was this gracious method than that of a speaker becoming irritated and showing annoyance and lack of patience, which would have the effect in many cases of cancelling out a message, as the hearers might adjudge the ministering servant as lacking grace for his holy work!

An important part of an assembly's activities is the Prayer Meeting. Anyone taking pains to weigh the words spoken by the Lord, "For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20, will perceive what a very *extraordinary* meeting such a gathering for prayer really is.

Bengel remarks: "The name of Jesus gives power to prayer (see Eccles. iv. 12 and the preceding verses). Three is a number which can be procured even in a barren age of the Church . . . where many sincere professors are together, how great will be the power of their prayers." In spite of this "exceeding great and precious" fact, the Prayer Meeting often attracts only a few persons. What is the reason? Why do not large numbers take advantage of so precious a gift which is available even for so few?

A picturesque and telling episode bearing on this subject has been supplied by the veteran, Mr. H. P. Barker. It took place at one of the former Bath conferences. He writes: "The time came for questions to be asked and answered, and I was one of three (with Mr. Vine), to reply. The question was asked 'Why are our Prayer meetings often so *dull* and *dead*?' Mr. Vine bowed his head, and looked at me over the top of his spectacles. My answer was: 'They are often too formal. Would it not be better to give up having prayer meetings, and having *meetings for prayer* instead?' Mr. Vine's face instantly changed its shape. He beamed, and

brought his hand down on his leg with a thump, and said 'That's it! That's it!'

Not long since, a four-page leaflet entitled "Leading in Prayer" came from Mr. Vine's pen, showing how powerful spiritual prayers are, and at the same time driving right home (like a nail buried immovably in wood) grave lessons from five types of prayer sometimes heard in prayer meetings. Here is a summary of his argument in his own words:—

"It is a solemn and responsible thing to lead God's people in prayer. Only by the leading and help of the Holy Spirit can we do so acceptably to the Lord . . . How happily the assembled saints will recognise a prayer which is indicted by the Spirit of God, the prayer which is prayed 'in the Holy Spirit' (Jude 20. cp. 1. Cor. xiv. 15), and thus unite with fervent out-pouring of the heart to the Lord! And how much is wrought by the power of God in response thereto!"

He proceeds to say that not all prayers prayed in public are of this character, and goes on to enumerate certain types, mentioning first the "innuendo prayer." Of this he said:—

"This takes place when a brother desires to give some kind of hint to one or another of those present concerning a matter to which he has felt inclined to take exception or draw attention. Addressing the Lord, he would at the same time seek to give a reminder that something needs rectifying in the assembly, or in the life of an individual. This mode of leading people in prayer is dishonouring to God. If there is something wrong, there is a divinely appointed mode of dealing with it, but to mention the matter, or give a hint about it in prayer for the company to hear, is underhand, and should be rigidly avoided. It may savour also of cowardice, there being a shrinking from dealing with the matter privately and faithfully in the spirit of grace and love. The hint may amount to a mere innuendo, but it must be exceedingly distasteful to the Lord. The one who adopts it evidently wants a fellow-believer to hear what he has to say, rather than the Lord."

There is also "the protracted prayer," which, by reason of its exhaustive character, wearies those who are seeking to follow.

Some prayers are protracted to such a length that if the feelings of those present were uttered it would be found that they had been really longing for the "amen."* This kind of prayer is contrary to the Lord's instructions for those who are gathered together. His command was: "After this manner therefore pray ye." Then follows what has been called "The Lord's Prayer," which is really the Disciples' prayer. It contains seven requests. In the original the whole prayer contains 67 words. The instruction "After this manner" shows not only that it was not intended to be uttered by way of constant repetition, but that united prayer in the gathering is to be characterised by suitable brevity. The record of the prayers in the New Testament confirms this desirability for shortness in public prayer.

To take up a number of subjects that come to one's mind in the course of a prayer is one thing; to supplicate concerning those matters with which the Spirit of God has burdened the heart, is another; and this latter makes all the difference. Moreover, when a number are assembled, long prayers tend to quench the Holy Spirit, in preventing others from taking part who might be led of the Lord to do so were there time. This tends to mar the power of a meeting for prayer.

There is also what may be termed "the expository prayer." This consists of incorporating into the prayer an exposition of Scripture, sometimes partly intended for the edification of the hearers. While a prayer should be Scriptural, and many helpful prayers contain brief quotations from the Word of God, helping us to address Him in the spirit of worship, as well as in supplication with thanksgiving, yet we should refrain from introducing a number of truths from Scripture as if we were unfolding portions thereof. Our oral prayers are not designed of God to impart expositions from the holy page to those whom we are leading.†

Again, there is what we may call "the colloquial prayer". Now,

* George Whitefield speaks of a prayer meeting in which someone "prayed him into a good frame of mind; and if he had stopped there, it would have been very well; but he prayed me out of it again by keeping on".

† "Prayer must not be transformed into an oblique sermon. It is little short of blasphemy to make devotion an occasion for display."—C. H. Spurgeon on *Public prayer*.

holy familiarity with God is a very blessed thing and a divine intimacy often characterises the prayer of one who is in the habit of holding much communion with God in private. It is quite another thing to lead saints in prayer in a manner which savours of an ordinary conversation carried on by one person with another. The tone of such prayers neither is reverent nor is it helpful to those who have a proper regard for the majesty and dignity of Him whom they are addressing. By all means avoid a kind of religious drawl or an ecclesiastical monotony of tone, but let us be on our guard also against the sort of utterance that gives the impression of carrying on a kind of chat or familiar colloquial discourse with Almighty God.

In this connection we would draw attention to the evil of the employment of certain endearing terms in addressing the Lord in the presence of fellow-believers. The use of such phrases as "dear Lord", "loving Father", is scarcely consistent with the relation existing between the Lord and ourselves. There is nothing to endorse it in Scripture. Such expressions do not tend to give the impress of spirituality; they often offend the ears of those who, while they love the Lord, are deeply and rightly imbued with a spirit of reverence.

There is also "the repetitive prayer". By this we refer to a tendency to repeat constantly, that is to say, in every two or three of the utterances, the mode of address with which the prayer may well begin, such as, "O God our Father", or "O God". It has been well said that God's name is not to be a stop-gap to make up for our want of words, as if we must carry on our utterances in one continuous flow, without pausing for a second or two. Why prepare for the next utterance by again addressing the Lord in the way in which we did only a sentence or two previously? This mode of repetition is not helpful to those who are following the prayer.

If this extended reference to prayer meetings may serve to eliminate the five undesirable elements, and restore the meeting for prayer to its original and august simplicity and power, the space devoted to its discussion will not have been in vain.

Let it be added that Mr. Vine favoured definiteness in prayer

and also orderliness. A correspondent writes: "The prayer meetings at Manvers Hall were conducted in an orderly way. After an opening hymn, Mr. Vine generally mentioned subjects for prayer, leaving plenty of scope for any to take part. He used to give kindly exhortations to suitable brevity, and often gave a short message of encouragement. He never failed to speak graciously but firmly to those who transgressed through their long prayers. On the first Friday of the month general subjects occupied the hour. During the war years, special intercession was for the troops, mentioning the names of those called up from the Assembly. The second Friday was taken up with "Young People's Work"—families, schools, orphanages, Müller's homes, etc. The third Friday was devoted to missionary work, and on the fourth Friday "local Gospel work" was the chief subject. This covered much ground, especially as spring and summer advanced with the special opportunities for children's and young people's summer camps, Crusader and Covenanters Camps, seaside work, etc. If there happened to be a fifth Friday, the special subject was for invalids, and the sick of the Assembly. Any who had visited them were expected to bring a report to the meeting. Whilst these were the general subjects on the various Fridays, there was, of course, freedom for any other matters.

A few words should be added about the pastoral work W.E.V. did in the way of visiting. Although heavily pressed with other work, and often with bodily infirmities, he was able to do much visiting, comforting the sick, admonishing the erring, and seeking out those in need of spiritual help. He appeared to be foremost amongst his brethren in this gracious pastoral work, which often is so rewarding. He knew how to "sustain with words him that is weary" (Isa. l. 4. R.V.M.). He was skilful in diagnosing a case, and handed out the healing medicine of the Word; and not only prayed for the sick at their bedside, but carried the news to the praying company for collective prayer in the Assembly.

Let it be emphasized again what a man of prayer he was! He kept a book with the names of those in the assembly, and prayed for them every day; not merely in a general way, but laid before the Lord special circumstances. He said to a lady in fellowship,

who was seeking a house: "I have prayed every day for a house for you." When this prayer was answered, he went as soon as possible to look at every part of the house, as he said it was such a definite answer to continued prayer.

No matter affecting the welfare of the saints was overlooked. When any had been on annual holiday, there was always a cordial greeting and welcome on their return.

When a church meeting was called, he always imparted to it a warm atmosphere, and spoke of it as a family gathering, and seemed to overlook nothing which might contribute to its helpfulness and smooth working.

The periodic lectures he gave on prophetic and other subjects were designed to guide, protect and help the assembly, and having in mind a wider ministry the townsfolk were invited to attend. Sometimes he would take as a subject some of the present-day heresies whose little coteries of supporters stalk around the cities and towns of our land seeking to gain adherents. He would expose Jehovah's witnesses (see p. 121), Christadelphians, with its denial of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ and teaching conditional immortality; Theosophists, with their doctrine of universal brotherhood and system of investigation into the mystic potentialities of life and matter; Christian science, representing that God is mind and not a person; Seventh Day Adventists—a religion of Cain, leading the mind away from Christ to a side issue. Having thrust at some of these giants, he would say: "Most modern errors can be summed up in this way: All religions exhibit expressions of the divine—salvation without a Saviour, education without the word of God; spirituality without the Holy Spirit, creeds without Divine authority (see 1 Pet. iii. 15 and Jude 3, 21). Craving for the mysterious increases as faith in the Divine revelation decreases."

A special lecture he gave was entitled "Spiritism unmasked". He says: "Spiritism is based on the assumption that the spirits of the departed can communicate with us, and accordingly it consists of efforts to enter into such communications. Spiritists claim to prove that life exists after death, and that the departed are able to render assistance to those still in the body. They also claim that

the teachings of Spiritism conduce to the present comfort, the highest elevation, and the permanent blessing of humanity."

He then showed from Holy Scripture the uniform denunciation of Spiritism from such passages as Lev. xix. 31; xx. 6, 27; Deut. xviii. 10-12; 1 Chron. x. 13; 2 Kings xxi. 6; Isa. viii. 19, 20, R.V.; Gal. v. 20, 21; Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 14, 15.

He went on to say :

"It remains yet with the spiritists to prove that the controls, and the other spirits from whom their messages are derived, are human beings, and not those who, possessed of a considerable amount of knowledge of human circumstances, impersonate the departed with intent to deceive. This is of the utmost importance in view of the fact that the Scriptures warn us of the existence of evil spirits, and of their seductive activities."

And again :

"Demons are capable not merely of dragging men into sensuality, but of persuading them to a life of asceticism, philanthropy, self-denial, and morality—all excellent things in themselves—deceiving them all the while as to the path they are really treading, and blinding them as to the true character of sin in God's sight, and the Divinely appointed remedy. It is deplorable that men and women of thought and influence are today being thus beguiled, under the impression that they are merely engaging in psychical research for the benefit of their fellow men."

And further :

"When, therefore, we hear one of the leading advocates of Spiritism proclaiming that the Sacrifice of Christ was not vicarious, that He 'came to place Himself before the tribunal of man's judgment', that 'He was simply a perfect medium', that He 'occasionally lost His temper', that there is no resurrection and no Hell, we have no difficulty in tracing such teachings to their Satanic source, and recognising in them the outcome of the activities of these seducing spirits."

Then he gave a final warning in these terms :

"Let Christians take heed against being drawn into tampering with Spiritism in any form. To play at planchette with the idea that it is an innocent toy, or to engage in thought-reading, table

turning, palmistry, and clairvoyance, is to throw oneself into the Devil's snare. Many a one has been allured into things of this sort at a social gathering, and has thereby entered on a course leading to results ruinous both to soul and to body. We should beware of counting trivial the character of that which we do not understand. Attempts to communicate with the other world through Spiritism are Satan's substitute for the work of the Holy Spirit, who leads us constantly into communion with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

In his Greek class Mr. Vine was always alert and sensitive to the wishes of others. A desire was expressed for a class for the study of N.T. Greek, and this began on July 31st, 1946. "There were eleven students," writes Miss E. M. L. Armstrong, "ranging from 20 to 60 years of age. After a few weeks, two left Bath on account of their work. This entailed lessons by correspondence, and when others from the Llanfairfechan Bible School were added to the number, it must have meant considerable work for Mr. Vine.

"It was a very mixed class, from the point of view of education. Three had already learnt Latin and French, others French only, while some had not received any previous instruction in foreign languages. Mr. Vine dealt with this difficulty in such a sympathetic way that we progressed happily. With patience and perseverance we were soon experiencing a new delight in the intelligent reading of the actual words by which 'men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. i. 21). As we grew in knowledge, our joy in God's word increased, and Mr. Vine was quick to point out each precious truth which the Greek translation brought out so clearly.

"For a time we were handicapped by lack of textbooks, due to wartime conditions. One enthusiastic student borrowed a book, and copied it out, much to Mr. Vine's astonishment and pleasure. His 'New Testament Greek Grammar' was being reprinted, and after many delays, one day in November, 1947, the new books arrived, to everyone's joy and profit.

"In Mr. Vine we had a splendid master who was never too tired or unwilling to explain any difficulty. His marvellous knowledge of Greek was a constant wonder to his struggling students.

"So often when we left him, after a hearty handshake, he would thank us warmly for the pleasure we had given him, in reading Greek with him. Did he realise how our hearts were throbbing with thankfulness to God?"

Another way in which W.E.V. showed his wide and wise outlook was in the matter of the study of the right technique for effective public speaking. It is evident from his notes that he explored the subject thoroughly. He gave a series of lectures in which he dealt with such matters as clarity, pauses, emphases, natural expression; and in one lecture he gave an array of Scriptures to illustrate the importance of taking care with the "s" sound when coming next to "o", as e.g. in Rom. iv. 7, *whose sins* (see Ps. xxiii. 3; John xix. 25; Luke i. 48; iii. 8, etc.).

On another occasion, when discussing the delivery of the message, the use of the voice, breath control and other allied matters, he set down 23 excellent hints, which, if observed by all who speak in public, would undoubtedly improve the quality of the voice, which Canon Fleming calls "the most perfect instrument in the world", and would make addresses much more pleasant to hear and effective in their delivery. Here are the rules: (1) Freely expand the lungs and don't crouch or slouch. (2) Inhale gently and silently. (3) Breathe out slowly and evenly. (4) Take the maximum breath, use minimum exertion. (5) Inflate through the nose, exhale through the mouth. (6) Do not breathe out between words in a sentence, or you lose power and tone. (7) Do not let people know you are breathing. (8) Speak through the throat and mouth, and not through the nose. (9) Give freedom to the voice and change the pitch—avoid a monotonous tone, modulate it and avoid sameness. (10) Do not be unnatural; do not use one voice for conversation, and another for preaching. (11) Speak as if in earnest conversation. (12) Do not be too slow, or you miss the beauty of rhythm. (13) Do not be too fast: this makes the words overlap. (14) Don't begin a message in a soft voice. (15) Don't use soft tones which make your words indistinct. (16) Never speak with the mouth nearly closed. (17) Do not drop the final

* *The Art of Reading and Speaking* by Canon Fleming. Many think this is incomparably the best book on the subject. (Secondhand only.)

consonant of a word; consonants are the expression of words. (18) Be careful with "and".* (19) Make sure the remotest person in the building can hear. (20) Avoid the nervous use of "ah", "er", or "um". (21) Avoid rapidity, indistinctness, drawling, mouthing, whining, affectation. (22) Suit the voice to the matter. Don't be jubilant over a solemn subject. (23) Do not imitate other people's voices.

And then he adds: To strengthen the voice, practise speaking in the open air when you are alone, exercise your lungs. Clear the throat when you begin to speak; once is enough. If there is a lack of saliva in the mouth, use your tongue along the inside of the mouth; if there is too much, stop a second or two, and swallow.

Another lecture was divided into two parts. The first considered some things to avoid in speaking. These are the points. (1) Lack of vocal force leads a speaker to stand on tip-toe or give a sudden jerk. (2) There is a danger of "nerves". It is good to tremble. Realise the presence of the Lord with you. (3) Avoid pulling at a button or the lapel of your coat. (4) Don't lean forward too much. (5) Don't be motionless or greatly emotional. (6) Don't slouch. (7) Don't move your hands about; the ancients called this "the babbling of the hands". (8) Avoid violence or vociferation. (9) Don't shut your eyes or ears. (10) Don't turn your back or look up at the ceiling.

In part two, posture and other matters are dealt with. (1) Don't adopt an unnatural posture. Put the weight of the body on the left foot, and put the right foot forward. (2) Smite the desk very rarely! (3) Avoid perpetual motion. (4) Don't raise your shoulders. (5) Don't put your hands in your pockets. (6) Throw your shoulders well back. (7) Hold your Bible in your left hand.

Attention was also drawn to grammatical errors, of which he gave 28 examples, such as, "Each of us must make our own choice."†

He held that true reading is interpretation, true emphasis is

* "I can tell in two minutes whether he has cultivated himself in speaking, by the little word *and*."—Fleming.

† Two books of exceptional merit on the subject are (a) *The King's English*, Fowler, Oxford Univ. Press; (b) *Plain Words*, A guide to the use of English, Sir Ernest Gowers. H.M. Stationery Office, 2s.

exposition, and constantly urged preparation for public reading of the Scriptures, so that the meaning, proper punctuation, emphasis and parenthetic portions should be properly observed. There should always be intelligent and sympathetic reading, with a grasp of the meaning, because when this is perceived it will produce the best expression. "Utter your words," he said, "with distinctness, correctness, elegance and ease; articulate so as to give every syllable and letter due proportion of sound according to correct pronunciation—giving no unnecessary sound. There must be proper intonation especially in questions, for example, 'Is a candle to be put under a *bushel* or under a *bed*?' It is not an alternative : both are absurd."

Again, he urged simplicity of language, giving some examples. Say *thinking* instead of intellectual process, *duty* instead of moral obligation, etc., and then gave the instance of a traveller who said, "Extricate the quadruped from the vehicle as he has toiled strenuously ever since the orb of day appeared on the eastern horizon; extend to him a munificent supply of nutritious victuals". Which means : "Take this horse to the stable : he has been working hard all day : give him plenty to eat."

Mr. Vine had also some sage remarks to make about preparation. Prayer is the first thing. Get the subject from God. Don't have a heavy meal before speaking.* Carry a notebook and put down your ideas. Don't use all the matter you have collected. A well-prepared address is nine-tenths delivered. Make notes in preparation; don't read them when speaking. Use illustrations and picture language : be plain to the least intelligent.

How did he come to have such a precise and straightforward style of speech in his public utterance and private conversation? Had he taken pains as Johnson did, who wrote that he had laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion and in every company, to impart whatever he attempted in the most forcible language he could put it in; and that, by constant practice, and never suffering any careless expression to escape him, or attempting to deliver his thoughts without arranging them in the clearest manner, it became habitual to him? The impression

* Canon Fleming says : "The two best tonics for the voice are air and water."

often left on one's mind after conversation with Mr. Vine was that he concentrated all his thought upon the immediate topic in discussion. The cultivation of this habit would lead to great improvement in speech and effectiveness.

Principal Denney complained of his students that "not one man in a score of them can say just what he means, or put his meaning plainly down on paper." "Words," it has been said, "are living creatures having hands and feet, so that they can pursue and arrest. Large words, like other great beasts, have their uses, but they must not be allowed to career over homely pastures. . . You cannot really put an ox into a teacup; there is no room for him. . . Have you ever seen an old bone lying on the road? Watch and you will see every dog that comes along run to it, smell it, pick it up, chew it for a moment, and then drop it for the next comer. Well, that muddy, mumbled bone is your 'ready-made-phrase', your 'succulent bivalve'. 'Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?'"*

The testimony of two diverse and independent witnesses are here given, which show the character of this man of God. The first is a young airman who writes to say that just one month before Mr. Vine was called Home he got to know him. He was stationed just outside Bath, and on the only Sunday he was there, he says that "the love, hospitality and fellowship shown to him by Mr. and Mrs. Vine was most encouraging. One felt as though one had known him intimately for years. It was a joy to discuss with him Christian problems concerning work and service at meal-time and in his study. He told me several of his own personal experiences in the Christian life which served as a great encouragement, coming as they did from one so gifted, and so in the enjoyment of simple, yet practical truths. And what a joy it was to kneel with him in prayer in his own study! His words to me as I left that day to go back to the camp were, 'There's one house in Bath when you come again,' to which I replied in heartfelt gratitude, 'Yes, No. 1 Widcombe Crescent.' I had several letters from him after this—the last written three days before his Homecall. I met him again for a moment or so at the annual Missionary

* *On the writing of English*, G. T. Warner. Blackie & Son Ltd.

meetings in the Central Hall, London, in October. What always amazed me was his capacity (for one so ripe in years) of memorising and recollecting faces of people. I write this just to mention, as a young believer and one who hardly knew Mr. Vine, how he manifested those simple virtues of Christian love, hospitality, and fellowship to such a degree, showing that he must have been in living vital communication with his Lord. One felt completely at ease with him, talking together, showing just what the Lord Jesus can do with a life given up to Him."

The second writes :

"I was at Bath during the war years, 1940-42, and, after our house there had been bombed, Mr. and Mrs. Vine very kindly allowed us quarters in their house for a few months, during which I came to know Mr. Vine fairly well.

"After a lapse of some eight years, the impression that remains with me is that of a man wholly given to the study, ministry and spread of the Word of God, and to the building up of Assemblies on New Testament lines, both at home and abroad. This showed itself in many ways, including his ready encouragement of young believers and the way in which he took to heart Assembly difficulties. I think one could say that he sacrificed everything—time, mental and physical powers and many comforts for the work of the Lord."

Having surveyed W.E.V.'s life, and his ministry as a missionary leader and pastor in this short biographical sketch, we now come to consider the wider work with his pen as a theological and devotional writer.

In the next chapter a critical analysis of his writings is given by Mr. F. F. Bruce, Head of the Department of Biblical History and Literature in the University of Sheffield.

Part Two

HIS MINISTRY

CHAPTER I

W. E. Vine: The Theologian

1. GRAMMAR AND LEXICOGRAPHY

“**W**HAT is theology”, asked Martin Luther, “but grammar applied to the text?” If we bear that in mind, we shall not be surprised to find works on grammar and lexicography receiving pride of place in a review of theological writings. Luther’s rhetorical question may be somewhat characteristically rough-and-ready; but what he meant is plain and true. True theology rests upon sound exegesis of the text of Scripture, and sound exegesis demands accurate grammatical study. To be sure, grammar alone will not make a man a theologian (*pectus facit theologum**); but theology without grammar is like a house built on sand. Since this is so, there can be no question of W. E. Vine’s right to be enrolled among the theologians of our day. He made many contributions to theological literature, over a long period of years; but theology for him was always exegetical theology, based on the application of grammar to the Biblical text. His work was acclaimed by many competent judges outside the ecclesiastical circles in which he was best known, and it deserves to be more widely known than it is.

Mr. Vine was a well-equipped student in the ancient classics—the subject in which he received the degrees of B.A. with honours and subsequently M.A. from the University of London. His profession in earlier days was that of a schoolmaster—a profession in which habits of grammatical, textual and historical accuracy are specially fostered. And when he brought his classical equipment and his accurate habits of mind to bear upon the study of the Bible, the result was a long list of works to which many readers (the present writer among them) gladly acknowledge their indebtedness.

* “It is the heart that makes the theologian.”

His desire to introduce others to some at least of the advantages which a competent acquaintance with New Testament Greek confers upon the student of the apostolic writings found practical expression in his *New Testament Greek Grammar: A Course of Self-help*. This little handbook gathered together a series of magazine articles which had served as a sort of correspondence school in elementary New Testament Greek. There is no subject which more devastatingly illustrates Pope's words that "a little learning is a dangerous thing"; but under Mr. Vine's guidance the novice in New Testament Greek was not encouraged to fancy that he knew more than he actually did. Soon after the book appeared, it was noticed by *The Expository Times* (May 1931) in these terms:

An admirable introduction to the study of New Testament Greek . . . The course of lessons is well conceived and the directions are expressed in simple language. It is elementary but quite sufficient, and any intelligent person wishing to read the original with understanding could master the subject under this competent guide. There must be many Bible readers who would welcome such a book as this, and it can be unreservedly commended.

Two or three years ago a new and revised edition was produced by the same publishers (Pickering and Inglis), with an appreciative foreword by Professor Francis Davidson. The new edition has the advantage over the earlier one that the Greek words are provided with accents and therefore do not look so forlorn and unclothed as unaccented Greek words look in the eyes of some readers who care about such things!

But by far the greatest boon that Mr. Vine conferred upon the New Testament student who wishes to ascertain as far as possible the sense of the original writings was his *magnum opus*, published by Oliphants in four volumes between 1939 and 1941, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. This great work contained the quintessence of almost a lifetime's study of the language and text of the New Testament; and it is not too much to say that it goes far towards doing for the non-specialist what is being done for the specialist by Kittel's monumental and yet unfinished *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. Nor

is it only the non-specialist who would profit by the use of the *Expository Dictionary*. One who, in his less humble moments, fancies himself to be something of a specialist in this field, must bear witness that the reading of the greater part of the *Expository Dictionary* in typescript and in proof before publication was for him a real education in New Testament usage. The present writer's appreciation has already been expressed in detail in forewords to the last three volumes of the work, but once again the objective testimony of *The Expository Times* may be adduced. That periodical greeted Vol. I. as follows in May, 1939 :

It is obvious that much hard work has been expended, and the fruit is worthy. Mr. Vine's plan is to take a word occurring in the A.V. or R.V., indicate what is the Greek word so translated, and what a variety of Greek words may be involved, and give a careful explanation. The work may, therefore, be described as fundamentally an analytical concordance, but it is far more than that. For the class of non-academic students of Scripture specially in view the work will be of great value; and even for those who can read the New Testament in the original its utility will not be small.

The following volumes were welcomed as fulfilling the promise of the first. Thus we read concerning Vol. II. in the February, 1940 issue of the same periodical :

Mr. Vine is working well to scale, and this instalment bears out all that was said in our columns regarding its predecessor. Among the most important words here treated come "elect", "faith", "godliness", and "justification", and such are critical tests. Mr. Vine's treatment is clear and truly illuminating, and strengthens our conviction that the work when completed will be a valuable possession for all who without a university standard of education have to teach the Scriptures.

In September, 1940, it is noted that Vol. III. "maintains the high standard of its predecessors"; and the same opinion is repeated when Vol. IV. is welcomed in September, 1941 :

The volume is worthy to rank with its predecessors for painstaking scholarship. The volume contains in addition "Addenda and Corrigenda" and a very full index. We are glad that the exigencies of our time did not prevent the completion of a remarkable work, which, as we have said before as each volume came under review, is fitted to be of great value to all students of the New Testament whether they have a knowledge of Greek or not.

In fact, the work is so indispensable a handbook to the study of the New Testament that many of us who have learned to use it regularly wonder how we ever got on without it. Mr. Vine revealed in it that he was not only a master of classical Greek, but also well acquainted with the more recent discoveries in non-literary Hellenistic and general New Testament archaeology made accessible by such writers as Deissmann, Ramsay, Moulton and Milligan. Many of the entries in the *Dictionary* also reveal close study of Septuagint usage. But he knew that New Testament Greek is not completely explicable in terms of the Hellenistic vernacular or the translation-idiom of the Septuagint; and much of his treatment is more in line with that of such earlier masters as Lightfoot and Westcott. An example of this is his refusal to see no distinction between the two Greek verbs for "love" in John xxi. 15-17 (*agapao* and *phileo*).

In this above all his works, in short, Mr. Vine shows how great a service can be rendered to the Church by well-balanced, all-round scholarship when it is combined, as here, with reverent submission to the Word of God and spiritual insight into its meaning.

2. EXEGESIS

As a classical scholar Mr. Vine's special competence was in the New Testament rather than in the Old. But the Semitic languages were no *terra incognita* for him; his copy of Mrs. A. S. Lewis's *Old Syriac Gospels*, which he presented to the present writer, bears traces of his study of that language; and he remarked a few years ago that he read his Hebrew Bible last thing at night, because he found that it helped him to sleep! In 1946 he made his principal contribution to Old Testament exegesis, a volume entitled *Isaiah: Prophecies, Promises, Warnings*. Here he did not go deeply into critical questions, although he indicated his belief in the unity of authorship of the Book of Isaiah and listed sixteen features common to its earlier and later parts. His interpretation of the prophecies has a marked futurist element; for example, the tenth chapter of Isaiah refers not only to the Assyrian monarch reigning at the time but also "relates to the future time of 'the Day of the

Lord.' " But the most valuable feature of the exposition is the way in which, at the end of each section, its moral and spiritual lessons are summed up and applied in a practical way to the conditions of the people of God to-day.

In the New Testament field, however, Mr. Vine was able to make the fullest use of his scholarly equipment. In a list of his contributions to New Testament exegesis it is easy to find omissions, because these contributions were so numerous. They include studies in the Fourth Gospel (an earlier one, *Leading Themes in the Gospel of John*, and a more recent one, *John: his Record of Christ*), a commentary on Romans (originally published in the early 'thirties in serial form by *The Bible Student* of Bangalore, India, and later—in 1947—by Oliphants), a commentary on 1 John, *Outlines of the Epistle of James*, and a work on *The Two Epistles of Timothy*. At his death he left in publishable form commentaries on Colossians and 1 Corinthians, and was contributing a similar commentary on Hebrews to *The Bible Student*, Bangalore, a new edition of his commentary on 1 John to *The Bible Expositor*, New Zealand, and notes on 1 Timothy to *Precious Seed*. It is to be hoped that all of these will yet appear in volume form for the profit of a wider circle of readers.

Mr. Vine's usual procedure in composing these commentaries was to give an introductory analysis of the complete book, then to print the text of the Revised Version clause by clause or phrase by phrase and add his notes on it, paying special attention to the words and their usage, and expounding more fully passages of theological significance. Among English versions he gave his exclusive preference to the Revised Version, which remains to this day the best translation for the accurate student of the English Bible. Mere quotation from his commentaries will give only a partial idea of his expository method; here, however, is his note on 1 John ii. 2.

*and He is the propitiation for our sins;—*The pronoun "He" bears emphasis and we might render by "He Himself". The word *hilasmos* is used here and in iv. 10 alone in the New Testament. It signifies expiation. In Num. v. 8 the LXX has "the ram of the propitiation", and in Ps. cxxx. 4, "With Thee is the propitiation" (*hilasmos*, in each place).

It denotes the ground upon which God shows mercy to the guilty. Christ Himself, and He alone, is this, through His Death, in the shedding of His blood in sacrifice. Two things are thereby indicated: (1) the finished work of the Cross, (2) the value of the Living Person.

Not only was He the Propitiator by offering Himself, He is in His own Person the Propitiation. This is connected very closely with what has preceded. That He is the propitiation is what gives perfect effect to His advocacy, and thus the statement presents the abiding results of His atoning sacrifice for our sins. Cf. Heb. ii. 17, R.V., "to make propitiation". Such phrases as "propitiating God" and "reconciling God" are foreign to the New Testament. God shows mercy through Christ, and man is the one to be reconciled, Rom. v. 10; 2 Cor. v. 18.

and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.—The little connecting word in the original, rendered "and", does not serve to add a new idea, so much as to counteract an erroneous teaching as to the application of the propitiation. The provision made by the sacrifice of Christ extends to the whole world, yet the actual effect is not universal. The whole world lies within the scope of the propitiation, no one being necessarily excluded from its benefits. The only exclusion is on the part of those who will not avail themselves of it. For the universality of the provision cf. iv. 14, and John i. 20, iii. 16. Nothing is served by the italicised addition in the A.V., "the sins of".

Here we have some of the most distinctive features of Mr. Vine's exegesis, which stamp him as a truly Biblical theologian. In his treatment of *hilasmos* ("propitiation") and its cognates we see his wise refusal to understand the Greek words simply in the light of pagan classical usage (to which, indeed we owe the common idea of a sullen Deity who will be won over only by appeasement), but rather in the sense which they had acquired in the Septuagint as equivalents of the Hebrew terms in which God reveals Himself as taking the initiative in making His grace available for sinners. This interpretation of the terms has had wide currency since Professor C. H. Dodd published his commentary on Romans, but some of us had learned it from Mr. Vine before we sat at Professor Dodd's feet.

The two outstanding commentaries in which Mr. Vine had a hand, however, were those on Thessalonians (1914) and Galatians (1922) which he produced in collaboration with the late Mr. C. F. Hogg. These two teachers made an ideal combination. They were basically agreed in their interpretation of the great Biblical

doctrines, and when Mr. Hogg's theological penetration and command of felicitous and forceful English were united with Mr Vine's special gifts, the result was hard to match, let alone to surpass. For the student of the English New Testament these two commentaries will long remain standard works.

3. ESCHATOLOGY

Another literary enterprise in which Mr. Hogg collaborated with Mr. Vine was their volume on the Second Advent of Christ entitled *Touching the Coming of the Lord* (Oliphants, 1919). In it they showed their adhesion to that form of premillenarian interpretation which posits an interval between the resurrection-rapture of the Church (1 Thess. iv. 16 f.; 1 Cor. xv. 51 ff.) and the return of Christ to earth "with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30), and places in this interval the great tribulation of the end-time. Mr. Vine had stated this thesis in an earlier work, *The Rapture and the Great Tribulation*. But their statement of the thesis deviated in several important respects from its usual statement, and these deviations were for the most part the result of better exegesis. For example, Mr. Vine was too good a Greek grammarian to suppose that "the blessed hope" of Titus ii. 13 could be anything other than the "appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ"—the two expressions being closely linked together under the regimen of a single definite article. Nor did they fall into the error of supposing that the Gospel to be proclaimed in that interval is different in essence from the Gospel as we know it. "The Gospel then, as now, will have for its centre the once slain, now living, Lamb, and it will be made effective by the Holy Spirit, among both Jews and Gentiles" (*Touching the Coming*, p. 156). And mark the words "by the Holy Spirit," for the writers refused to identify the restraining power of 2 Thess. ii. 6 f. with the Holy Spirit, interpreting it rather (as in their commentary on Thessalonians) of Gentile dominion—certainly an exegetically superior interpretation. But perhaps the most distinctive feature of *Touching the Coming* was their treatment of the word *parousia*. They insisted on the primary sense of "presence" and understood the word in its

eschatological use to mean the presence of Christ with His raptured Church in the interval preceding His manifestation in glory. This manifestation—the *epiphany* of His *parousia*, as it is called in 2 Thess. ii. 8—marked the end of the *parousia*. The *parousia* period they further identified with “the day of Christ” (Phil. i. 10; ii. 16), “the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. i. 6), “the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14), and “the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. i. 8); but not with “the day of the Lord,” which in their view was to begin where the *parousia* ended, at the manifestation of Christ in glory.

It may be questioned whether this interpretation of *parousia* does adequate justice to the sense which the word has in Hellenistic Greek. The writers did, indeed, appeal in support of their view to Cremer's lexicon; but Cremer wrote a good while before the study of vernacular papyri revolutionized our knowledge of the common Hellenistic speech. An amusing sequel to their appeal to Cremer materialized in 1937, when the Rev. Alexander Reese published his critique of Darbyist eschatology entitled *The Approaching Advent of Christ* (Marshall, Morgan and Scott Ltd.). Mr. Reese was also a premillenarian, but he represented the school which makes the rapture of the Church and the manifestation of Christ in glory practically simultaneous. In reference to the treatment of *parousia* in *Touching the Coming*, he accused the two authors of reading their Cremer “on the skew” and completely misunderstanding his account of the word. “When teachers misread the Lexicon,” he added, “how can we trust their reading of the N.T., which it explains?” In the author's reply to Mr. Reese—*The Church and the Tribulation*, to which Mr. Hogg and Mr. Vine separately contributed a section apiece—Mr. Hogg suggests that the reader can safely be left to judge whether Mr. Vine “is incompetent to read a lexicon,” and justifies the turning of Mr. Reese's question back upon himself. But, as one might suspect, the real fault in this small matter lies with Cremer, whose style is not free from obscurity and ambiguity. When two intelligent students understand a writer in quite contrary senses, the fault is likely to be the writer's, and it is certainly so in this case.

But the main defect of Mr. Reese's criticism of Hogg and Vine

lay in his lumping them together with the Darbyist school. As independent students and interpreters of Scripture, they cannot properly be classed as belonging to this or any other particular school. If in one distinctive feature they came to the same conclusion as Darby and his disciples, they disagreed with them in many other matters which are equally distinctive of the Darbyist school, and they could by no means be described as conventional dispensationalists.

One further remark in *Touching the Coming* has been thought by many readers to merit fuller development. In the chapter on "The Judgment-seat of Christ" Col. iii. 25 is quoted, and the following comment made on the words, "shall receive again the wrong that he hath done" (R.V. margin):

It may be difficult for us to conceive how God will fulfil this word to those who are already in bodies of glory, partakers of the joy of the redeemed in salvation consummated in spirit, soul and body. Yet we may be assured that the operation of this law is not to be suspended even in their case. He that "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgement" (2 Pet. ii. 9), knows also how to direct and to use the working of His law of sowing and reaping in the case of His children also. The attempt to alleviate the text of some of its weight by suggesting that the law operates only in this life, fails, for there is nothing in the text or context to lead the reader to think other than that while the sowing is here, the reaping is hereafter.

One line of interpretation which did *not* appeal to them in this connection was that which envisages the rapture of the Church as partial and the first resurrection as selective, so that unworthy Christians may "receive again the wrong" that they have done by exclusion from the millennial blessedness and by consignment for that period to the "outer darkness." This view was specially propounded by G. H. Pember, who on one occasion, as Mr. Vine mentioned in a letter some years ago, "wanted to encourage me to advocate the views he had put forth, but I could not do so, and feel that they are contrary to Scripture."

Another contribution by Mr. Vine to Biblical eschatology was *The Roman Empire in History and Prophecy*, a popular work which appeared with slightly varying titles in several editions (the

latest is dated 1936). Here Mr. Vine stated the futurist interpretation of the Fourth Kingdom of the Book of Daniel which identifies that kingdom with the Roman Empire and looks for its yet future revival within roughly the same frontiers as it had in the first century A.D. After an outline of the rise of the Roman Empire and its decline and fall in west and east, the book goes on to give an exposition of the relevant passages in Daniel and Revelation from which the future revival of that Empire is deduced, and considers what features in world-affairs in the present century do in fact point to such a development. This was written before the revolutionary events of the second world war and its aftermath. Many of these events—notably the recent emergence of the State of Israel (the first independent Jewish state since 63 B.C.)—will necessitate the revision of a good deal of futurist literature.

An interesting sequel to the publication of this book may be stated in Mr. Vine's own words (quoted from a letter):

As to my book *The Roman Empire*, not long after this was published I had a letter from a Mr. N . . . , evidently an earnest believer, whom however I have not known personally, asking if I had a book on the subject. He said he was personally acquainted with Signor Mussolini and had often had conversations with him. I replied saying that I was sending him (Mr. N . . .) a copy of my book. This he acknowledged and asked if he might show it to Mussolini and if I had any objection to its being translated into Italian. I told him that he might feel perfectly free to make whatever use of it he liked. I understand that he had some conversation with Signor Mussolini on the subject, and that the latter was interested to hear that the Bible foreshadowed what he himself has at heart as to the resuscitation of the Roman Empire.

Alas for Mussolini's imperial ambitions! It was in the year in which this letter was written (1940) that he took the plunge which involved himself and his regime in ruin. And alas for those theorists who (less disciplined in mind than Mr. Vine) envisaged Mussolini as a subject of Biblical prophecy—except in so far as he, in common with many another of the same character, exemplifies the truth of the prediction made concerning another dictator: "Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him!"

4. CHURCH DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE

Another branch of Biblical theology to which Mr. Vine paid special attention was the doctrine of the Church. Here, as elsewhere, his theology was based on exegesis. "The only way to attain unto the knowledge of the true notion of the Church," as Bishop Pearson wrote nearly three hundred years ago in his *Exposition of the Creed*, "is to search into the New Testament, and from the places there which mention it, to conclude what is the nature of it." This was Mr. Vine's procedure. And his searching of the New Testament usage of the word *ekklesia* led him to the conclusion that in its distinctively Christian sense it is used with two applications :—

(a) to the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era, the company of which Christ said, "I will build My Church", Matt. xvi. 18, and which is further described as "the Church which is His body", Eph. i. 22; v. 23; (b) in the singular number (e.g. Matt. xviii. 17, R.V marg., "congregation"), to a company consisting of believers, with reference to the place in which they are accustomed to meet together, and in the plural, with reference to churches in a district.*

That is to say, the word as used in the New Testament with a Christian connotation refers either to the whole company of God's elect throughout the Christian age, or to any local congregation of Christians. There are, of course, other views on the matter, and Mr. Vine was aware of these and readily produced his reasons for dissenting from them. As for his conception of the Church Universal, there are many who would broaden his definition to embrace the whole company of God's elect not of the present age only but of every age—who would trace the history of the Church Universal back to Abraham, if not indeed back to Abel. What happened in New Testament days, of course, marked a new beginning; but the new beginning was not divorced from what went before. The believers on the first Christian Pentecost were not only the nucleus of the people of God of New Testament times; they were also the remnant of the people of God of Old Testament times. And there is significance in the fact that the word *ekklesia*,

* *Expository Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 84.

which was so quickly used to denote the people of God in New Testament times, was taken over from the Septuagint, where it is used to denote the people of God in Old Testament times, both in the universal and in the local sense.

But Mr. Vine was specially emphatic in denying that the New Testament countenances the common use of the term Church to denote the aggregate of Christians on earth at any particular time.

The view that the term "the Church" is also used to comprise all the saints in the world at any given time is not borne out by the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. Such believers could not be spoken of as either "a body" or "the body" of Christ. At the inception of the present period only a small fraction of the Church, the Body of Christ, was actually in existence; since then those who have fallen asleep do not cease to form part of the complete corporate company. The use of the phrase "the Church on earth" is a contravention of the teaching of Scripture on this subject.*

While most of the New Testament occurrences of *ekklesia* are definitely assignable to one or other of the two senses indicated above, there are a few which make one pause; and it may be as difficult to assert dogmatically that these do not denote "the Church on earth" as it would be to assert that they do.

But these questions are largely theoretical. The practical implications of the New Testament doctrine of the Church emerge in relation to the local congregation—"the Church Universal in its local manifestation." And here Mr. Vine excelled in his insistence on the importance of the local church, as one who was acquainted with this matter in practice as well as in doctrine. He rightly insisted on the administrative independence of each local church as "a foundation truth taught in all the passages that deal with the subject in the New Testament," and he appreciated the necessity of wise government and godly order in the local church in order that it might most effectively discharge the functions entrusted to it by the Lord. His latest contribution to the subject was a chapter on "Discipline in the Church" which he wrote for the symposium entitled *The Church*, edited by Mr. J. B. Watson (Pickering & Inglis, 1949). His chief work in this field was the volume *The Church and the Churches*, published about twenty years ago on the

* *The Church and the Tribulation*, p. 43.

basis of a series of articles which had previously appeared from his pen in the missionary periodical *Echoes of Service*.

The mention of *Echoes of Service* (of which he was an Editor for so many years) reminds us of his interest in another sphere of Church activity—the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. A careful study of this subject in the light of Scripture appeared in 1927 in his book *The Divine Plan of Missions* (similarly based on articles which he had contributed to *Echoes of Service*). The proper aim of the preaching of the Gospel, in any land whatsoever, he saw to be not only the conversion of men and women but their incorporation into independent churches, administered by their own elders according to the Scriptural order, responsible not to a mission or home church or central board of control but to Christ alone. He emphasized, too, that the New Testament has much to say about the methods as well as the aims of missionary work, and that its principles can be disregarded only to our loss. "To adopt expedients of human devising in order to meet any contingency, is to tamper with the Divine arrangements and mar God's handiwork" (p. 76). For the theology of world-evangelization as for its practical consequences, *The Divine Plan of Missions* will repay serious consideration.

5. GENERAL THEOLOGY

An experienced exegete of Scripture is well equipped to deal with any branch of theology, and in addition to those branches already dealt with, there were several to which Mr. Vine made valuable contributions. A volume on *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*, published in 1923, set out the lines of study and argument which had led, in the author's own words, to "a strong confirmation of his faith in the integrity, authenticity, and Divine and plenary inspiration of the writings which comprise the Bible." His discussion of the subject was not confined to the purely intellectual plane, but revealed the author's insight into the true centre of Biblical authority and sufficiency.

The Scriptures have proved themselves sufficient, not only to meet the deepest spiritual need on account of sin, but to provide adequately for

the formation of character and for efficiency in every form of Christian service, to direct the life not simply into philanthropic effort for the sake of mere philanthropy, but into that far higher form of service to our fellow-men which is rendered in pure devotion to Christ. It is the revelation of Christ in the Scriptures which draws the soul into personal attachment to Him, and thereby to an understanding of, and sympathy with, His heart of compassion for mankind (p. 116).

Mr. Vine's work on *The Gospel of the Bible* (1929), surveyed the main aspects of soteriology: the Person presented, Sin, Christ the Propitiation, the Cross of Christ, the Vicarious Sacrifice of Christ, Redemption, the Resurrection of Christ, Justification by Faith, Repentance, Righteousness, the Holy Spirit and the New Birth, Sanctification, and the Second Advent. (A helpful appendix dealt with the Atonement and bodily sickness, in the light of teaching current then as now in certain evangelical circles). One reviewer dismissed the work with the remark that the Gospel was no longer preached in these terms—a double-edged criticism, had he only stayed to think! The expression "the simple Gospel" too often reveals marvellously superficial thinking about those things which the angels desire to look into. The present writer remembers Mr. C. F. Hogg remarking once that some people's idea of the Gospel could be summed up in the words "Come to Jesus or you'll go to hell." But the scope of the true Gospel displayed in this work of Mr. Vine's was calculated to give the thoughtful reader high, worthy and worshipping thoughts of the divine wisdom revealed in the way of salvation.

The Twelve Mysteries of Scripture was the title of a volume which brought together a number of studies by Mr. Vine in some of the key-passages of the New Testament, dealing with the mysteries of (1) the faith (1 Tim. iii. 9); (2) the Godhead of Christ (Col. ii. 2, 9); (3) godliness (1 Tim. iii. 16); (4) the Gospel (Eph. iii. 4, 6; Col. i. 27); (5) the Kingdom of God (Matt. xiii. 11; Luke viii. 10); (6) the seven stars and lampstands (Rev. i. 20); (7) the transformation of the bodies of the saints (1 Cor. xv. 51); (8) Israel's hardening (Rom. xi. 25); (9) Babylon (Rev. xvii. 5); (10) lawlessness (2 Thess. ii. 7); (11) God's purposes in judgment (Rev. x. 7); (12) God's will (Eph. i. 9). In all these instances, the word *mystery* "denotes that which, being outside the range of

unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illumined by His Spirit" (p. 9).

A number of other studies in Christian doctrine by Mr. Vine appeared in article and pamphlet form; some of these, along with others by Mr. Hogg, were published in a volume entitled *The Good Deposit*. But in conclusion we may notice his studies in Christology—an earlier book entitled *The First and the Last* and a later one on *Christ's Eternal Sonship*. With regard to the title of the latter work, it might have been objected to one who was a Biblical rather than a systematic or historical theologian, that the title "Eternal Son" is not applied to our Lord in the Bible. (In fact, about the time when this book appeared, one generally evangelical community had formally given up belief in the eternity of Christ's Sonship, though not in His eternal Being as a Person of the Godhead.) But Mr. Vine was a master of words, not a slave of words.

It is true that the word "eternal" is not used in Scripture in connection with the Sonship of Christ, but that affords no proof that the relationship did not exist in the eternal past. Phraseology that is endorsed by the general teaching of Scripture is sound, and the Scriptures give abundant evidence that the relationship was eternal (p. 78).

On the other hand, he did not care to use the expression "eternal generation," first coined by Origen to convey the relation subsisting between the Divine Father and the Divine Son. But his objection was not that the expression is not found in Scripture, but rather that the idea conveyed by the expression is not warranted by Scripture. Theological terms and formulae which "may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture" are unexceptionable and may indeed be positively valuable, but Mr. Vine did not rank "eternal generation" in this category.

The phrase "eternal generation" finds nothing to correspond to it in Scripture. It does not serve to explain the doctrine of the eternal relationships in the Godhead. Human limitations prevent a full comprehension of the eternal. Yet God has in grace conveyed the facts relating to Himself in language the phraseology of which we can understand, though the facts themselves lie beyond the range of human conception (pp. 24 f.).

The question then arises how we are to understand the adjective "only-begotten" (Gk. *monogenes*) applied to Christ as the Son of God, and in what sense New Testament writers saw fulfilled in Him the divine allocution of Ps. ii. 7: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (where "this day" is patristically interpreted as "the day of eternity"). Mr. Vine's study of both these questions is worth our attention. From a comparison of the Septuagint and New Testament occurrences of *monogenes* he concludes rightly that the idea of generation, though etymologically present in the word, is actually otiose; in its general usage in the Greek Bible it "signifies both uniqueness and endearment"; and "in addition to the thought of uniqueness and endearment, the term when coupled with the word 'Son' conveys the idea of complete representation, the Son manifesting in full expression the characteristics of the Father" (pp. 25-27).

As for the words of Ps. ii. 7, it is frequently inferred from their quotation in Acts xiii. 33 that "this day" means the day of our Lord's resurrection—an idea supported by the reading of the A.V. : 'in that he hath raised up Jesus again'. But the word "again"—which, as Mr. Vine points out, "has nothing corresponding to it in the original" and was added "by way of interpretation"—is rightly omitted from the R.V. Mr. Vine understood the words "he raised up Jesus" here in the same sense as the raising up of David in verse 22 and the raising up of a prophet like unto Moses in Acts iii. 22; vii. 37. The matter of resurrection does not appear in Acts xiii until it is explicitly introduced in verse 34. What verse 33 means, therefore, by speaking of the raising up of Jesus is that "God raised Him up in the midst of the nation in the same sense as in the other passages just quoted" (p. 69). What then is the point of time denoted by "this day" when Ps. ii. 7 is quoted as being fulfilled in Christ's being so raised up? His incarnation, Mr. Vine held; although a strong case could be made out for the day of His baptism, when part at least of Ps. ii. 7 was included in the words then addressed to Him from heaven, and when He was raised up publicly as Israel's promised King, anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power. But whether we think of "this day have I begotten thee" as pointing to His incarnation or baptism, or even

His resurrection (in the light of Rom. i. 4), it is plainly indicated that His Divine Sonship was not then initiated, but simply proclaimed.

The Scriptures' chief function is to bear witness of Christ, and the chief end of their study and exegesis is to increase our inward knowledge of Him, under the illumination of the Spirit of God. Nor would Mr. Vine, in all his study and writing, be content with any lower aim than this, for himself and his readers alike. The words with which he concluded the preface to the last volume of his *Expository Dictionary* amply express the spirit in which he sought to carry out all his work :

In any work in which we engage as servants of Christ, His word ever applies, "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do' " (Luke xvii. 10). So with the reminders given by the Apostle Paul, "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful . . . and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. iv. 2, 7). We ever have reason for humbling ourselves before God, for none of us knows yet as he ought to know, and at the Judgment Seat of Christ "the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is".

The Theology Box

IT is not every theologian who writes on Bible themes who answers questions with the accuracy, precision and insight of Mr. Vine.

He kept what he called "My theology box." Questions came from all parts of the world (with a steady flow); some correspondents enquiring about the meaning of difficult and much-disputed passages of Holy Scripture. He never burked an issue or shirked an explanation. His replies show meticulous care. However many duties crowded in upon him, he so husbanded his arrangements that within a few days of receiving enquiries (so the evidence of dated letters proves), the writer received an answer.

It is not claimed that all that he wrote in this way will be wholly endorsed by all our readers, but when consideration is given to the spirit in which he wrote, it will at least command the deep respect and attention of readers. This is what he says about unfolding the "meaning of the words of Holy Scripture":—

"To undertake the work of unfolding the meaning of the words and phraseology of Holy Scripture involves the gravest responsibility and those who do so may well bear in mind the admonition given in James iii. 1 (R.V.): 'Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment.' This is an injunction sufficient to make one apprehensive of the imperfections consequent upon carelessness or culpable ignorance. 'If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know' (1 Cor. viii. 2) is a humbling thought, and the issue, at the Judgment-Seat of Christ, of imperfections in the handling of Scripture may well exercise a restraining influence upon the teacher of the Sacred Volume; for the Scriptures are God-breathed, and to handle them is like handling the vessels of the Sanctuary."

Some choice selections from the "Theology Box" are here grouped in these sections (1) Church truth and allied subjects; (2) Some Scripture difficulties explained; (3) The coming of the Lord and related matter; and (4) Miscellaneous expositions alphabetically arranged for the purpose of easy reference. Nearly all are recent answers.

I

CHURCH MATTERS, ETC.

WHO ARE IN THE CHURCH?

A writer asks whether all the redeemed of all ages are included in the Church, and whether the Gospels can be divided into Jewish and Christian.

It is true that the condition of acceptance with God both in former ages and the present one is faith, but that does not support the view that all the redeemed of all periods are included in the Church.

Again, I do not agree that the Gospels are to be divided as if some were Jewish and others not. That always seemed to me a strange idea. But Scripture does teach that God has different modes of procedure in forming certain companies. Our Lord said to Peter as recorded in Matt. xvi. 18, "upon this rock (the rock of his testimony), I will build my Church". That surely was a clear indication that He would do this at a time future to the time when He said it. If the Church had been in process of formation from Adam onwards, He would have said, "I am building My Church". Since, then, He said He *would* do so, we must look for some indication as to when the building process began, and it seems clear that the occasion was the sending of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

There never had been any teaching in Scripture as to "the Body of Christ", concerning which the epistle to the Ephesians speaks, until after the period had been ushered in which began at Pentecost. The Church in the coming day, when it is completed and

removed, will be an eternal monument to the work of the Holy Spirit in this especial period in which the gospel is being preached for a witness among all nations.

In the periods beginning with the Millennial age, there will be the most intimate fellowship among saints of former ages, and those of the Church, but the Church will remain as the Body of Christ with all the functions that the spiritual figure indicates.

There will also be the redeemed earthly people Israel, quite a distinct company, but fulfilling its functions on the earth.

I would just remark that the word dispensation means a dealing of God. To speak of it as if it signified a period is a mistake.

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Is it correct to say that the Church is the bride of Christ; or is Israel the bride of Christ?

I do not find anything in Scripture to show that the Bride is either Israel or the Church. Surely the Bride, the Lamb's wife of Rev. xxi. 9 consists of all those who will inhabit the great city (ver. 10), the holy Jerusalem, and therefore will include all the saints belonging to O.T. times, all possessed of resurrection life and glory. The Church will form part of that company. The Scripture does not speak of the Church itself as the Bride: this would give an unduly limited view of the company mentioned in Rev. xxi. As to Israel, the O.T. does not describe the nation as the Bride. Whatever it says about the wife in reference to the nation is figurative language which does not justify the description of Israel as "the Bride", and whatever language is used we cannot see anything to identify Israel with the Bride of Rev. xxi.

THE CHURCH : MINISTERS : ELDERS : MISSIONARIES

A correspondent enquires on these matters. (1) Federated assemblies; (2) As sheep do not choose their shepherds, is it wrong to invite a brother to minister the Word?; (3) Should Titus be recognized as a bishop? and (4) Are not missionaries expected to be elders, to exercise oversight and to feed the flock?

"ASSEMBLIES"

We cannot find any collateral link between any assemblies. There were foundation truths common to all, but each assembly existed on its own basis of responsibility to the Lord and His Word. A collateral link is not seen in the N.T. to exist among any set of assemblies.

CHOOSING A MINISTER

To invite a brother to come and minister the Word on any occasion or for a time is not a case of sheep choosing their shepherd. For an assembly to chose its pastor (i.e. its shepherd) by human ordination or human testing is quite a different thing, and that is what exists. To invite a teacher known already as a recognised minister of the Word is not a case of electing or choosing a brother to become a pastor. Teacher and pastor are distinguished. A shepherd does far more than give food. He has to care for the sheep in manifold ways. He tends his flock. Surely the difference must be patent. We must guard against teaching what will support the unscriptural systems of ecclesiasticism.

TITUS A BISHOP?

If you will consider the passages relating to and describing a bishop (an *episkopos*, or overseer), e.g. 1. Tim. iii. 1-7, and note that 'elders' is an alternative appellation to 'bishops' (Acts xx. 17 with verse 28 R.V.) you will see that those who are raised up as such in an Assembly by the Spirit of God (ver. 28) are to be distinguished from a missionary working in a district for a time.

A MISSIONARY A BISHOP?

Where a missionary has settled down to become a "bishop" over an assembly or group of assemblies, his action is conformed to what goes on in apostate Christendom, but it is not endorsed by Scripture. That has been a danger in certain parts of the field.

The A.V. additions at the end of 2 Timothy and Titus are quite contrary to fact. The fact that a missionary looks after converts spiritually and feeds them with the Word of God does not constitute him the "pastor" over them in the scriptural constitution of an assembly. He may, while with them, be a fellow-elder (1 Pet. v. 1) but we need to be on our guard against the idea of a missionary settling down to become a permanent local pastor over a congregation, or over assemblies in a district. He should so teach and labour that the Holy Spirit might do His work of raising up bishops or elders and pastors among those who have been converted, and have been formed into an assembly by his missionary activity.

Arising out of the above answer, the correspondent takes exception to Titus being described as a missionary on the ground that "there is no reference to such in the gifts." This brings a rejoinder from Mr. Vine in these terms :

You will no doubt be aware that the term "missionary" is quite according to Scripture, for it is derived from a Latin word which translated the Greek word *apostolos*. Each word "missionary" and "apostle" signifies a sent one. Inasmuch as God sent you to . . . we should describe you rightly as a missionary. As to Titus, he was Paul's companion in his missionary work, and accompanied him and Barnabas when they were sent from the church at Antioch to Jerusalem. He went with Paul to Ephesus, and it was part of his missionary work from there to go to Corinth on special service. He was with Paul again subsequently, and he was the bearer of the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians. He was only temporarily in Crete, but he did good missionary work there.

"GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME"

I would at once point out the inaccuracy of your idea concerning the phrase "gathered together in My Name". The phrase in the Greek does not describe quite what you say it does. It is impossible in that kind of extended phraseology in the original to regard it as descriptive of a status. Take, for example, the similar construction in Acts xxi. 33, in the phrase "what he had done". Literally this is "what he was having done!" You could not translate in that

way; it describes an act and not a position. Take again the phrase in James v. 15. "If he have committed sins". Literally this is, "If he shall be having committed sins", an utterly impossible rendering. It describes not the state, but the acts of committal. You refer to 1 Cor. xi. 20. I cannot find anything there describing a status as well as an act. The fact of coming together is not expressive of the line of things you advocate. I cannot for a moment accept the rendering, "Where two or three are, having been and being gathered together in My Name". It is not correct to say that this is the present continuous tense. The verb rendered "gathered together" is in the perfect tense. The advocacy of this kind of translation is wrong at its basis, and opens the way for other errors. In Acts xi. 26, the acts of assembling during the year, as expressed in the tense there used, do not involve a continuous condition. What is stated is simply that for a whole year they gathered with the saints in their meetings. It does not do to press the phrase into meaning that their gathering together was a condition instead of a series of acts.

ADDRESSING THE LORD JESUS

A correspondent enquires whether (1) it is wrong to address the Lord Jesus when giving thanks for the bread and the cup; (2) if the Father should be addressed exclusively; (3) if Christ should be thought of as the Risen Lord after the bread and wine have been taken and whether the taking of the elements should be put off until the end of the meeting.

It is plain that it is not wrong to address the Lord Jesus either at the Lord's Table, or at any other time. Thomas addressed Him as "My Lord and My God". The last prayer in the Bible is addressed to Him.

The language of prayer in Scripture is sufficient to cause us to consider that it is undesirable to address God as "dear Father". It tends to lower the spirit of reverence in which prayer should be addressed to Him.

It certainly is the body of the Lord Jesus which is symbolised in the bread and His blood in the wine at the Lord's Supper, and it is His death which we show or proclaim then. The fact that there

is no mention of the Father in connection with the Supper does not mean we are to refrain from addressing Him.

Again, we remember the Lord Jesus as the Risen One before the breaking of bread even while we are showing His death in partaking of the elements. It would be altogether inconsistent not to think of Him as the Risen Lord before the bread is broken. We think of Him at the right hand of God, and as spiritually present in our midst. Accordingly He is to us the Risen One right through the time of gathering. I feel there is a danger in putting certain facts connected with the Lord Jesus into different compartments. This is not the way or mind of the Spirit.

I cannot say that I follow the idea of waving Him as the wave sheaf before the Father. If the thought is that when we speak well of Christ in our prayer to the Father we are so to speak waving Him as a sheaf, the thought may be correct, but we must surely avoid the idea that we are presenting Christ to the Father. I do not find that in Scripture.

In reply to your further question as to the time of the breaking of bread, it seems to me that, considering that this is the object for which we gather together, it is not advisable to put it off until late in the time of gathering. There should be a period of worship but not to the exclusion of the reading of a Scripture and a brief ministry of Christ from a passage, for that is a suitable part of our remembrance of the Lord. His command is "this do in remembrance of Me". But to give a long address on some subject of Scripture is out of place. It is well if the breaking of bread takes place in the earlier part of the hour so that there may be an opportunity for some ministry afterwards by way of exhortation or unfolding of the truth.

SHOULD SECTARIAN CONNECTION DEBAR FELLOWSHIP?

A sectarian connection would not of itself justify refusal of fellowship at the Lord's Table. At Corinth there were those who were guilty of a sectarian spirit, yet no admonition as to exclusion was given as with the delinquent in Chapter v. How much less should a believer be refused who, fulfilling the conditions of being

godly and sound in the faith, has been hindered by denominational association from receiving light upon the Scriptural principles relating to a church! Fellowship is not conditional upon the measure of light received. Deficiency of spiritual understanding in this respect affords no reason for the rejection of one who is a member of the Body of Christ. Reception of such does not involve carelessness or looseness in doctrine or in the fulfilment of God's will.

THE WINE AT THE SUPPER

To one greatly troubled about the use of intoxicating wine at the Lord's Supper, he writes :

The subject you mention is one upon which beloved servants of God hold varying views. I am thankful to say that in several assemblies the spirit of grace and forbearance is manifested so that where any particular kind of wine has been in use for years in the assembly, there is a desire and willingness to avoid controversy and division . . . I may say that where any dear child of God who has been truly saved after giving way to drink in his unconverted days desires to be associated with an assembly in breaking bread, and is possessed of a sincere desire to avoid controversy and division, this so meets with the Lord's approval that He delivers His child from any temptation to return to old ways.

BINDING AND LOOSING

The promise with which the Lord immediately followed His word to Peter about the keys, namely, "and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven," He subsequently extended to all the disciples, as recorded in Mt. xviii. 18. From this it is obvious that, whatsoever is indicated thereby, it was not, as a principle to be confined exclusively to Peter. The preceding context in the eighteenth chapter shows that the reference there to cases of discipline in order to maintain the Lord's honour, and the succeeding context shows that the power was to be shared with two or three who would be gathered in His Name. He would Himself be

in the midst of them . . . The Lord's words to Peter, therefore, do not in any wise imply that this apostle was to receive a primacy of jurisdiction in the Church, or that he was to have supreme authority to teach and govern under Christ.

THE SILENCE OF SISTERS

Someone writes expressing the opinion that sisters should always remain silent in a mixed company in any activity connected with the assembly, but asks whether this applies to (1) a prayer meeting convened after Sunday school; (2) a husband and wife praying together, and (3) friends meeting in another's home.

The Scripture is very plain that sisters are to be silent in a gathering of an assembly. The phrase in 1 Cor. xiv. 34, "in the churches", means the actual gatherings of an assembly for any purpose. There are meetings in connection with the activities of an assembly which are not church gatherings. A church gathering is one to which any member of the assembly may come. A meeting in a home is not open to all the assembly, that is to say, where an invitation has been given by those who dwell in the home for a few friends to come together. Such a gathering is not in view in 1 Cor. xiv. 34. As to whether it would be suitable for sisters to pray in a home gathering of this sort, much would depend on the character of the company. If there were a large number and several brethren present the feeling of those who were spiritually-minded would be that only the brethren should take part in audible prayer. Where the gathering is small, and there were only one or two brethren present the feeling might be otherwise. But in any case a private gathering of this sort could not be called an assembly meeting. Nor could the command in that verse apply to a husband and wife: this, I am sure, is going beyond the Scripture.

Again, as to a prayer meeting of the teachers of a Sunday school, there are a number of elder brethren who consider that the sisters should be silent, and if the elder brethren were unanimous that they should not take part, it would be pleasing to the Lord if the teachers sought to adhere to the views of the brethren, even though

such a gathering could not be regarded a meeting of the whole assembly.

A further note states :—

A gathering of sisters together for prayer is not a meeting of the church or assembly. We may be guided about this by the fact that at the place of prayer mentioned in Acts. xvi. 13. the women gathered together are evidently there for this purpose and that whereas they could not have a meeting in Philippi they could assemble outside by the river and have prayer there. We may conclude therefore it is not contrary to the mind of the Lord for sisters to meet in this way.

The original makes clear that 1 Cor. xiv. 34. does not refer to the general life of an assembly. If that were so then a mother who had children and had lost her husband would not be permitted to read the Scripture to her children and talk to them about the things of the Lord. Some have taken it to mean that a wife must not engage in prayer together with her husband, but this is not a case of a church meeting . . . You will notice that v. 35 itself makes the distinction clear between an assembly meeting and home life.

BAPTISM

Amongst the mass of papers Mr. Vine left, there is a small piece of paper with these notes on the subject of baptism : In baptism we show our death with Christ; in the Lord's supper, we show His death for us. It is solemn to bury in water (judgment) those who have not died by faith. (Sprinkling pellets of earth over a coffin would not be considered burial!) Death issues in resurrection. 1. All is obscured in sprinkling. 2. All is obscured in baptizing the unconverted. 3. All is obscured in baptizing infants, who cannot believe. Baptism does not (*a*) regenerate, (*b*) make members of Christ, (*c*) make disciples, (*d*) cleanse sins, or (*e*) bring the Holy Spirit. But (1) it teaches us what walking in newness of life is—not walking in the world's vices, pleasures, or religion; (2) the person baptized commits himself to walk as Christ walked, to "put on Christ," to be meek, lowly, pure; (3) Israel had a baptism, but God was not pleased (1 Cor. x).

A questioner writes : Is it scriptural to (1) baptise a person on a

clear confession of faith in Christ, or is it necessary to prove the reality of the profession first; and (2) is baptism (*a*) an assembly responsibility, or (*b*) the responsibility of the one who baptises, or (*c*) the responsibility of the person baptised?

There is no regulation in Scripture by which a person who wishes to be baptised should conform to certain conditions other than the necessity that he or she should be known to be a true believer. The person may be able to state that he is a believer and give a confession in so many ways but at the same time there may not have been the actual experience of passing from death to life through being born of God. It is really necessary to have some confirmatory evidence that this is so. Such evidence will not take long by the manifestation of the life, and considering the character of the times in which we are living, it is really important for a person to be known in this way before being baptised.

Baptism should lead to membership of an assembly. The apostles were commanded not only to baptise but to teach all that Christ commanded. We cannot gather otherwise from the case of the eunuch in Acts viii, for the Lord who undertook for his baptism no doubt led him further after returning to Abyssinia.

The elder brethren in an assembly should be satisfied that the applicant is fit for baptism. It is not simply the responsibility of the one who does the baptising. He should be acting by the agreement of the overseeing brethren. They on their part act for the assembly, and therefore the name of the applicant should be made known to the assembly.

You will see from this that the responsibility does lie with the assembly, and does lie with the overseeing brethren, and does lie with the applicant. One cannot lay down a regulation for the individual without any fellowship such as I have suggested. The course of procedure involves not only the wish of the believer, but the co-operation of all concerned.

WHO ARE THE "UNLEARNED" OF 1 COR. XIV. 23?

In a letter to an enquirer, this answer is given :—

I cannot agree that he was a believer. As I mentioned in my Dictionary, the word describes those who had no knowledge of the

facts relating to the testimony of the saints. A very capable and reliable authority remarks upon the suggestion that the unlearned were unattached Christians, that this interpretation has no support whatever, and is out of keeping with the context. It is an entirely gratuitous assumption, and possibly is used to give some countenance to the supposition that there were believers unattached to assemblies in N.T. times. It was always the design of the Spirit of God that a believer who belonged to any district where there was no assembly should be the means of winning other souls there and helping to form an assembly on Scriptural lines. In the original in verses 23 and 24, I submit that the two terms alike describe unconverted people, and are not alternately descriptive of believers and unbelievers.

II

DIFFICULTIES EXPLAINED

BAPTISED FOR THE DEAD

With regard to the phrase in 1 Cor. xv. 29, "it is for the dead," it seems plain to me that the dead are, firstly Christ Himself. If Christ is not risen, then baptism is in the interests of (that I take it is the meaning of the preposition *hyper* there) a dead Christ, but it is in the interests not only of a dead Christ but also of fellow-believers, by whom the significance of the ordinance is likewise expressed. They have borne witness in the past to their identification with Christ in their baptism, and have therein testified to the fact of His resurrection and of theirs, His physically, and theirs spiritually. We, in our baptism, are one with them in this testimony, and we and they have a mutual interest in becoming witnesses in this way both with regard to Christ and with regard to fellow-believers. Baptism is in the interests of dead *persons* if there is no resurrection. The great foundation doctrine of resurrection is nullified in the combined witness given by all believers! I cannot allow the idea that the verse receives an illustration in the entirely non-Scriptural idea that Saul of Tarsus was baptised to fill the place of Stephen. I do not believe that that is the meaning of the Greek text of 1 Cor. xv. 29.

AN APPARENT CONTRADICTION

A writer enquires about difficulties in reconciling the two following verses, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son but the Father." Mark xiii. 32.

"For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth : and He will show Him greater works than these that ye may marvel." John v. 20.

The difficulty is to be explained as follows. We have to remember that the Lord Jesus had power to refrain from knowing a matter except as in complete obedience to the will of the Father while He the Son was on earth. That is quite consistent with John v. 20, which speaks of experiences in the days of His flesh. It does not mean that He was not possessed of all the attributes of Deity, in fact His refusal to know a certain matter such as the day and the hour of which He spoke, was only a proof of His Deity. I would also point out that the two Greek words translated "but" (literally "if not") might mean "except." In that case the meaning would be that the Son knew the day and the hour only in absolute communion with the Father.

When the Lord said to the converted dying thief, "To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise," He meant that they would be together in the spirit state that day and so they were until the Lord was raised. The region of departed spirits was divided in two parts, Paradise, the place of departed saints, and the dark region of the lost. That is made clear from Luke xvi. Abraham was in the former place and the rich man in the latter, and between the two was "a great gulf fixed." Before the Lord was raised from the dead, He went in His spirit to the former region, and the dying thief went there too. They were both there till the Lord was raised from the grave. Since Christ ascended to the glory, the spirits of departed saints now go there where the throne of God is.

THE SCRIPTURE CONTEXT

How does the existence of Abraham in the disembodied state prove the fact of future resurrection? (Mark xii. 26).

When God calls Himself the God of Abraham, He does not

mean that He is merely the God of Abraham in the disembodied state. Such an idea puts an undue limit upon the significance of the statement. That He is the God of Abraham means that He is the Fulfiller of the promises He made to Abraham, and these promises assured Abraham of resurrection. That the Sadducees denied resurrection, meant that they denied God's faithfulness as One who would fulfil the promises, and therefore denied God Himself. It is necessary to interpret a Scripture in the light of its context; to suppose that the words refer to the disembodied state is to miss the interpretation thus provided.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF "THE LAMB"

How can crowds of unregenerate men speak of Christ as "the Lamb?" (Rev. vi. 16). This seems especially strange when "the Lamb" of Rev. v. is a little animal with seven horns.

At the time when these judgments are falling upon men, the world, both rulers and people, will be in a state of utter and Satanically-inspired defiance of God and denial of Christ both in relation to God His Father and as the One who gave Himself in sacrifice for sin. Under this judgment, God will compel recognition of Himself as the One "on the Throne," and of His Son in all that is conveyed by the title "the Lamb." That compulsory twofold acknowledgement of His supreme authority and of the sacrifice of Christ is accordingly made by His Personal manifestation by reason of which they wish to be hidden "from His face."

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON

It is inevitable that the much-disputed passage in 1 Peter iii. 18-20 would be the subject of enquiry. The answer given is interesting:—

A careful consideration of the construction of the sentence in verses 19 and 20 does not lead me to confirm the view that the preaching mentioned in verse 19 must have been going on concurrently with the disobedience. The absence of the article here does not necessarily indicate the same thing as in other instances. The use or omission of the article cannot be put into rigid conformity to certain rules. The constructions connected with the article are of

very elastic character, and this was especially the case in the Koine Greek language in contrast with the more stereotyped nature of the classical Greek a century or two before. The consequence is that the use of the Koine language, that is, the everyday speech of the people in the writings of the N.T. has been so ordered by the Lord that we need to interpret many Scriptures by the teaching of other Scriptures, and not merely by rigid grammatical regulations. Accordingly the preaching to the spirits in prison demands an understanding of the circumstances in connection with the testimony of Christ and of what Scripture says about spirits who are now in prison. This passage must be compared with the preaching of the Gospel in 1 Peter iv. 6. We have to be on our guard against making grammatical construction conform to certain ideas, and I can scarcely regard the deduction suggested in the matter of the participle use of the verb as demanding the interpretation you suggest.

To another correspondent, he writes on the subject :—

The gospel is not preached to spirits. I do not believe that Christ, after His death, went and preached the Gospel. I regard the spirits mentioned there as fallen angels, who, acting under Satan's authority, sought to corrupt the human race, and make it impossible for "the seed of the woman" to be born. Under God's judgments the whole race was destroyed save Noah and his family. Those fallen angels were consigned to a permanent prison of darkness for their tremendous wickedness. From there they may have had some hope of being delivered. Instead of being prevented from being born, Christ was born of the virgin, and on the Cross accomplished man's salvation. Instead of being defeated, He became a Victor in His death over the powers of darkness (that is, other Satanic forces than the fallen angels who were in prison; for Satan has hosts of spirits acting against God, Col. ii. 15). Having gained that victory He went and proclaimed it (not the gospel, but His triumph) to those wicked spirits in prison. The verb is *kerusso* which has its frequent meaning of proclaiming as a herald. He thereby disappointed their expectations and sealed their doom. Satan made a series of attempts to prevent the birth of Christ, first by blasting the human race, then by destroying Israel in Egypt, then

Judah the tribe in the time of Esther, then the family at Bethlehem. The last attack was at the Cross.

THE PERMANENCE OF MORAL CHARACTER

A lady correspondent cites the following statement from a book entitled "The Bible: Christ and Modernism": "Rev. xxii. 11. makes it very clear that there will be a purgatory after death, for it says, speaking of the dead: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, be holy still.' This clearly proves that death does not change character; it only petrifies it. As we die, so we must remain through all eternity." From this quotation she argues that unless Christians attain "sinless perfection" here, "we shall be petrified by death (or the Rapture) in our imperfect state. She regards the idea as appalling, and adds "Heaven would scarcely be Heaven to me if I take any human weaknesses with me," and asks for an explanation of the Revelation passage. Here is the answer:—

With regard to the statement "as we die, so we must remain through all eternity," some explanatory modification should have been made, so as to avoid any conclusion concerning the idea of sinless perfection, which of course is a gross error regarding believers in their present state. What Rev. xxii. 11 teaches has reference to moral character. The unsaved will still have that character that is mentioned in the first part of the verse, and the saved will still have the character mentioned in the last part of the verse. All believers are righteous and holy, though they are not sinless in the present life, and they will continue to be righteous and holy for ever.

FALLING AWAY AND SINNING WILFULLY

On a scrap of paper torn out of a copy book there are a few brief, but illuminating notes which are valuable because they throw light on two sections of Holy Scripture which have puzzled Christians in all ages.

Bunyan, in his matchless autobiography entitled, "Grace abounding to the chiefest of sinners," writing of these two Scriptures, says, "then methought I durst venture to come nigh unto those most fearful and terrible scriptures with which all this while I had been

so greatly affrighted, and on which, indeed I durst scarce cast mine eye, yea, had much ado an hundred times to forbear wishing them out of the Bible, for I thought they would destroy me; but, now, I say, I began to take some measure of encouragement, to come close to them, to read them, and consider them, and to weigh their scope and tendency . . . By these particulars ('falling quite away,' 'openly,' 'shut up of God both in blindness, hardness and impenitency') I found, to God's everlasting praise, my sin was not the sin in this place intended."

Here are Mr. Vine's jottings: Heb. vi is a comparison of the power of the spiritual system of Christianity and Judaism. Possession of life is not supposed—it is not the subject: it is the power of the Spirit in Christianity. To taste the good word is to understand its preciousness, not to be quickened by it. Many were introduced into Christianity without life. Verse 9 "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany (are near to R.V.) salvation, though we thus speak," makes a distinction between profession and possession. (Cp. 2 Peter ii. 20, 21; 3, 7; 1 Jn. ii. 19.) Only a Jew could fulfil v. 6 "seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame;" Gentiles were not charged with the crime of the murder of Christ. Hence the fire of Isa. lxvi. 15, 16 would come.

In Heb. x. 26-31 it is a sin wilfully, not one act but a sinful course; the tense of the verb sin is continuous. It is defined in v. 29. It is not being beguiled, nor allured, but rejecting Christ, not an ordinary transgression as of one of the ten Commandments. The judgments in v. 27 which will descend upon antichrist and his associates must be the portion of such Jews. By their decision they had trodden under foot the Son of God" (Believers truly born again do not do that.) The "blood of the Covenant" was especially connected with Israel. By it a Jew was "sanctified;" it was that which set apart a member of the Jewish people to God, from the time recorded in Ex. xii. No quickened soul could ever reject the Cross and salvation.

ETERNAL SECURITY

To a correspondent who wanted to have light on this subject,

and asked for explanations of Heb. vi. 4-8; x. 26-31; xii. 14-17; Rom. xi. 17-21; Col. i. 21-23 and Heb. iii. 6; Mt. x. 22; xxiv. 13; Jn. xv. 6; and 2 Peter ii. 20-22, Mr. Vine replied at considerable length. From the explanations, some extracts are here given, the first two Scriptures having been explained above.

In Heb. xii. 14-17, the words "without holiness no man shall see the Lord" do not mean that a believer can be lost. A believer has been brought into holiness, and he must pursue it. If he sins he is unholy in the act, but he does not become an unholy person; there is a remedy for his sin. Moreover, he is chastened that he may be partaker of God's holiness (v. 10), and God remains his Father (v. 7). He cannot be put out of His family. To fall short of the grace of God (v. 15 R.V.) is not to lose one's eternal life, but it may produce a root of bitterness. That Esau was rejected does not mean that a believer can be lost.

Rom. xi. 17-21. There is nothing here to support the idea that a believer can be lost. There is a warning to the believer not to be wise in his own conceits. In Israel branches were broken off for lack of a faith which they never had, and a person may "partake of the fatness of the olive tree," and not have faith. Abraham represented the root and the lump. We must avoid pressing into the figurative language of the tree and the branches the idea that a truly born-again soul can be cut off by way of losing his eternal life which God has given him in Christ on the ground of faith. That is not what the passage teaches, nor is there any statement or figure which indicates it. A believer does not become like an Israelite who never had faith, but he must not pride himself in anything that he is. That is the warning. (See v. 21.)

Col. i. 21-23. There is nothing here suggesting the possibility that a believer may forfeit his eternal life. The subject has to do with the Judgment-Seat of Christ, and there a believer may not be free from blame (or blemish R.V.) and from reproof. That will mean loss of reward if he has not fulfilled the conditions in v. 23 by failing to continue in the faith (not in faith but in a doctrine of the faith). A believer may be led astray doctrinally (many are), but he does not lose his eternal life on that account, nor if he fails to continue "grounded and steadfast" (that is, in the faith), but is moved

from the hope of the gospel. Many true believers are led astray concerning the truth relating to the Lord's coming. Many in the church at Corinth went wrong in the faith and were even led astray as to the resurrection of Christ. In spite of all the evils in that church there is never a hint that one of them could lose eternal life. Restoration was held out to the erring . . . Paul addresses them all as believers and sends all of them his love.

Heb. iii. 6. The way the original puts the "if" clause makes it an encouragement rather than a condition. The verse does not teach that if a believer loses his "boldness and the glorying of his hope firm unto the end" he ceases to belong to God's House, and therefore forfeits his life. That is reading a wrong idea into the verse. What it teaches is that we *do practically enter into the reality* of belonging to God's House (there is no "own" in the Greek, it is God's House) if we hold fast our boldness and glorying. To think that the passage teaches the danger of forfeiting the life is to turn what is an incentive and encouragement into a severe condition. Many a believer fails to enter practically into his glorious privileges, but God does not make him cease to be one of His children and a member of His House on that ground.

Matt. x. 22. The Lord is not warning the disciples that if any of them do not endure to the end amidst their persecutions and sufferings they will forfeit their eternal life. He is speaking about affairs in the Jewish nation. The one who endured to the end would be saved from the Divine doom that would overthrow Jerusalem and the disaster that was destined to come upon the people. And so it happened. Some were killed (Lu. xxi. 16) and some lived to escape the destruction. So with ch. xxiv. 13. The Lord is not speaking in these passages about the Church, the Body of Christ, and any such possibility that a believer should be made to cease to be a member of Christ's Body and forfeit his eternal life. The subject is not the Church, but the circumstances of the Jewish people.

John xv. 6. This does not teach the loss of eternal life. The Lord is showing the disciples that there is vital union between Himself and them. But the union and its fruitfulness is to be main-

tained by their abiding in Him. This does not lie merely within their power. They are dependent on Him. He says "My Father is the Husbandman." The figure He employs is not the possession of eternal life, but how to be fruitful. There are two sorts of branches, the non-fruitbearing and the fruitbearing. The former He takes away, the latter He cleanses. There is no thought of losing eternal life. The Lord is picturing the use of the pruning knife, in the one case, and the removal of such things as parasites and mildew in the case of the other. He shows the disciples that, walking on earth, they should be pruned by the Father, and be cut off if they bore no fruit; for the subject here is not that relationship with Christ in Heaven by the Holy Spirit which cannot be broken, but of that link that even then was formed here below, which might be vital and eternal, or which might not. Fruit should be the proof.

2 Pet. ii. 20-22. This passage is speaking of "the unrighteous" (v. 9. R. V.) in contrast to the godly. The unrighteous here are not failing or backsliding believers. The description of these unrighteous ones in vv. 10-22 cannot apply to believers. In v. 20 the description is of those (and there were and are such persons) becoming religious and gaining a knowledge of the Lord and getting to know the way of righteousness, who turn from such knowledge and go back to their former polluted life. The mere knowledge of Christ does not make a person one who is "in Christ," a true believer possessed of eternal life. The knowledge of the way of righteousness is not sufficient to give a person eternal life or to make him regenerate. The persons disclosed in this passage had never been born again. The whole chapter deals with the ungodly and their doom. It is a great error to take vv. 20 to 22 to apply to believers, especially coming as it does continuously upon vv. 1 to 19. Finally, not one of the passages mentioned is contrary to the Lord's promise "that whosoever liveth and believeth on Me *shall never die*" (Jn. xi. 26) and that He gives His sheep "eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand," and "no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John x. 28, 29). Scripture does not present such contradictions as are involved in the suppositions which read into passages things that are not there.

ADOPTION

A place and state of a son, given to one to whom it does not belong by natural descent. It is the Holy Spirit who produces the realisation of sonship and the attitude belonging to sons. As natural birth establishes natural relationship, so spiritual birth establishes spiritual relationship. God does not adopt believers as children, they are begotten by the Spirit. The relationship is intelligently realised expressing filial confidence, communion and obedience and enjoyment of the love of God the Father. Into this life of communion with the Father and Son the sons of God are introduced by the Holy Spirit that Christ's prayer may be fulfilled as to oneness (John xvii. 21).

JOINT HEIRS

An heir is one who has received an allotted possession by right of sonship. Believers are to share in all that belongs to Christ. He shares His inheritance with us. There are differences between the conditions attaching to this inheritance and those relating to an earthly inheritance.

- (i) the natural is usually possessed on the death of the father; the spiritual is bestowed by and shared with One who never dies.
- (ii) in Jewish law the eldest son got the largest portion, the daughters were excluded, unless there were no sons. Under Roman law, sons, daughters and those adopted shared the inheritance equally. All believers will share Christ's inheritance.

GOD IS A GOD OF LOVE

Readers will like to have the extended notes of an address that he gave, in which he dealt with imagined objections to his thesis of the love of God.

How can God be a God of Love?

- (i) Look at the wickedness, needless slaughter, sadism, organised cruelty which exists.

Does God rule the world? Either God would prevent it, but

cannot; or, God can, but will not. If the former, He cannot be omnipotent, if the latter, He cannot be love.

This is not a new problem—saints, sages and philosophers have ever looked at it.

All this has ever been because there always has been sin. Here is the answer. God created men to have a free will, and made them creatures who could choose. He did not make them machines (Gen. i. 27; v. 1; ix. 6; Jas. iii. 9). Man chose to do wrong.

God would destroy their free will if He compelled them to do right. It would be a dull world if they had not a will of their own. Having a free will, if they choose evil, men cannot blame God.

God could make them do right only at the cost of destroying the right to choose. The only way to prevent all sin is to repeal all law.

But, do you mean to say that God sees all the carnage, and folds His arms and says, "Well, it is bad, but I cannot do anything about it, and I'm not to blame"?

The answer is: "No. God is doing something about it. The Old Testament says a good deal about what He does." But, says one, what has the Old Testament to do with the problem of a God of love and a world of evil?

Answer: The Old Testament confronts us at the very beginning with the fact of evil, and then tells us God intends to do something about it.

His plan is this: He takes a man out of his pagan surroundings, gives him a new beginning in a new country (Gen. xii. 1-3). From him He forms a new nation and keeps teaching them He requires right conduct. When the New Testament begins a man appears who says He is God and can forgive sins. This was foulest blasphemy to the Jews.

(ii) *But* I do not believe Jesus was God. He was a moral teacher, etc., but not God.

Answer: You have put yourself in a difficulty. Any man who was merely man and said what Christ said would *not* be good and a moral teacher. Either, He said what He said, knowing it was

untrue, in which case He was *false*; or He thought His sayings were true, and they were not, in which case he was *mad*. So Christ's claim to be God is the only real solution. (See His statements of unity with the Father in work, John v. 17; action, John v. 19; Being, John x. 30 and xiv. 9.)

But: Whether Jesus was God or not is beside the point. The important thing is what He taught, not what He was or thought He was.

Answer: Yes, what He taught is important, but this is inseparable from who He was and what He did, and these are the important things (John viii. 25).

But: Christians may be wrong.

Answer: Then the Gospels are wrong, for much is occupied with His crucifixion, death and resurrection, e.g. John xii. to xxi.—the last week of His life, and the rest of the New Testament shows that Christians, while remembering His teaching, were constantly talking about His death and coming to life. Everything to them depended on that. So far from God being indifferent about evil, He has dealt with it and solved the problem by giving His sinless Son to die in sacrifice for sin, and there is salvation from sin's penalty and power for those who turn to God.

But how?

Answer: This is not so difficult as men make it appear. What saves us is not *understanding* the sacrifice and resurrection. What saves us is the *fact*. How do vitamins work? My inability to explain does not render them useless. It is the fact of the Cross, not the theory.

But why are repentance and faith necessary?

Answer: Just as with vitamins: you must eat before they become effective.

(iii) But if Christ is coming, why delay? Why not drive evil out by force?

Answer: He wants us to join His side *freely*.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Here are a few jottings taken from eleven pages of notes on The Sermon on the Mount:

Practically all the sermon is in Paul's Epistles. It is said to be *Kingdom* truth, after the Church is raptured, but this is a dispensational interpretation, an undue cutting up of Scripture. The Sermon contains nothing outside the daily life and expectation of the believer.

The Sermon presents :—

- (1) The Deity of Christ,
- (2) the character of Christ which is to be imitated, and the sinfulness of human nature,
- (3) the true standard of the believer's life,
- (4) the standard by which we shall be judged by the Lord (Matt. v. 48),
- (5) the sort of life which is worth living—"Learn of Me,"
- (6) an incentive, not to obtain life, but to walk as Christ. It is easier to become a Christian than to be one,
- (7) new views on fellow subjects of the Kingdom, things temporal and neighbours' needs,
- (8) it anticipates the coming of the Spirit; the requirements to be met by Him,
- (9) it presents the evil condition of the world,
- (10) it deals with disposition,
- (11) it teaches what taking up the Cross is,
- (12) it teaches the highest motives—towards men, benevolence; towards self, secret discipline; towards God, communion through pleasing Him.

Blessed—happy—to be congratulated, are :—

- (i) The poor in spirit—not poor spirited, but courageous (see Isa. lvii. 15; 2 Cor. vi. 10)—separated from all that is contrary to spiritual mindedness. Christ clung to nothing external.
- (ii) Mourners—grieving at sin and death. Christ wept twice.
- (iii) Meek. See Matt. xi. 29; xxi. 5; 2 Cor. x. 1; 1 Pet. iii. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 23. Reward : cf Ps. xxxvii. 11; reigning with Christ.
- (iv) Hunger and thirst, strong craving. No attainment to

finality. Earnestly desiring Christ. Phil. iii. 9, 10.
Satisfied with Christ. John vi. 35.

- (v) Merciful : the opposite to malice, springs from sympathy and kindness, active pity. Compassion which does nothing is pernicious hypocrisy. Reward present and future. 2 Tim. i. 18.
- (vi) Purity. 2 Cor. vii. 1; Heb. ix. 10; xii. 14. "Unless the vessel is clean, whatever you pour in turns sour" (Latin proverb).
- (vii) Peacemakers. Harmony, wholeness. It costs. The reward is we become like Him—sons of God—and known as such.
- (viii) Persecuted for Christ's sake. 1 Pet. iv. 14, 15.
- (ix) Reproached, persecuted, maligned. 2 Tim. i. 8. We gain the world's respect, not popularity. There are sins of thought and will. Christ goes behind the act to the purpose and disposition.

A few annotations follow on the "Disciples' prayer" of 55 words which is meant to train us in habits of communion.

Our Father : relation essential.

Hallowed : Keep sacred His revelation of His Name.

Thy Kingdom come : the certainty of rule.

Thy will : the acme of blessedness.

Give us this day : An evening prayer (24 hours).

Forgive us : the need of being right and at peace with Him. God deals with us as we deal with others; else service is marred.

Lead us not : the need of watching and praying. Unless we watch and pray God lets us be brought into the scope of temptation.

Deliver us : from Satan's special work.

Everything a Christian does is part of a great spiritual whole. Every act must have a simple motive; every kind of conduct gets reward on the plane of its motive. "The light of the body is the eye." The eye stands for the hidden man of the heart. There should be one object—to be pleasing to God. 2 Cor. v. 9. We shall not find ourselves free from trouble; but trouble is part of God's

sufficiency for us. Judging others is a result of lack of faith. Humility makes the best of others, and is severe on self. To judge rightly needs sympathy and self-judgment and aiming at restoration. Our conduct must be the reflection of what we have gained and learned of God (Matt. vii. 12). If we enter the narrow gate (v. 13) there will be self-renunciation and acceptance of Christ as Lord, and "life that is life indeed." In v. 23 "I never knew you" also means "Ye never knew Me."

Following these summarized notes is a page on which more than 70 New Testament references are tabulated, showing that the teaching in the Epistles is parallel with the Sermon on the Mount.

III

RELATING TO THE COMING

THE COMING AND OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

I have never been able to find a Scripture which intimates that the hope of resurrection held by the saints of O.T. times will be fulfilled when Christ comes in glory to reign. The view expressed that this is taught in Hag. ii. 7 is an example of how people fail to ascertain the real meaning of a Scripture by careful enquiry as to the true rendering. Those saints are with the Lord as are those who have fallen asleep during the present period. They all are "the spirits of the just made perfect." What an extraordinary idea it is that when the Lord comes to the air to receive us to Himself, He will leave the O.T. saints still in the spirit state.

CHRISTIANS AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Answering a Christian young man who had made enquiry whether believers of this Dispensation will pass through "the great tribulation" Mr. Vine writes: If such passages as 1 Thess. i. 10 were read either in the accurate R.V. or with a knowledge of the original, very clear light would be thrown on the subject. That verse tells us that in waiting for the Son of God from Heaven we are waiting for One who is "our Deliverer from the coming wrath." The word is just the same as in Rom. xi. 26, where it has been

rendered the "Deliverer." The wrath is that which is going to be exercised by God at the end of this present period, and the judgments by which the wrath is to be poured out are described in Rev. 6 to 19. The saints are clearly told in this chapter of 1 Thess. that they are to be delivered from it. How can we be delivered, and yet go through it? It is clear that the time of "Jacob's Trouble" of the great tribulation is the one in which the judgments of the wrath of God are to be poured out upon the nations under the Man of Sin. The apostle goes on to show in 1 Thess. ch. iv how this deliverance will be effected.

SLEEP IN JESUS

To one who asks how 1 Thess. iv. 14, "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him," can be reconciled with verse 16 "and the dead in Christ shall rise first," he writes: The circumstance mentioned in verse 14 is not the rapture when the Lord comes to the air but His subsequent coming in the manifested glory of His Kingdom (see 2 Thess. i. 10). The saints in Thessalonica were assured that God was calling them into His own Kingdom and glory (ii. 12). For that kingdom they had suffered (2 Thess. i. 5), and they were fearing the possibility that they might be deprived of their share in it through death. For that reason the apostle wrote to reassure them. He therefore tells them in verse 14 that those who had fallen asleep would be among the number. He then proceeds to make clear that the Lord is first coming, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, to the air, and that all His saints will be caught up to meet Him there, those who have fallen asleep being raised and the living changed, and all forming one company. That event is to take place before what is mentioned in verse 14, and so the apostle makes clear that instead of any saint still lying asleep in the grave after the rapture, all, both those who have fallen asleep and the living, will come with Him in His glory for the establishment of His Kingdom: for all will have been caught up to meet Him on the previous occasion.

I may add it is very important to have regard to the Revised Version in verse 14, "them that are fallen asleep." The verb is not in the present tense. That mistranslation has given rise to the error

of the sleep of the soul. I would also point out that the phrase "in Jesus" is an erroneous rendering. I cannot understand how the translators came to render the Greek preposition *dia* by the word "in." That preposition with the case that follows never means anything else than "by means of." Accordingly the meaning is "even so them also that have fallen asleep, by Jesus will God bring with Him." The phrase "by Jesus" is put at the beginning of this enclosing statement of the verse for the sake of emphasis, and the point is that when the Lord Jesus comes in His manifested glory, God will bring all the saints in that glory by means of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is borne out by what follows in the next verses, and in confirmation of this vv. 15 and 16 both begin with the explanatory word.

THE PAROUSIA

The word *parousia* rendered "coming" literally denotes "presence." It is a noun formed from the verb *pareimi*, to be present, and thus signifies "a being present with." In Phil. ii. 12, Paul uses the word in the phrase "not as in my presence only" and contrasts it with his absence from Philippi. The translation "coming" is misleading. There are other words which denote "coming," such as *eleusis* (Acts vii. 52), and *eisodos* (xiii. 24), and the corresponding verb *erchomai* (Luke xii. 45, etc.). Whereas these words fix the attention on the journey and the arrival at a place, *parousia* fixes it on the stay which follows on the arrival there. It would be preferable therefore to transliterate the word rather than translate it, that is, to use "parousia" rather than "coming" wherever the reference is to the Lord Jesus. Where *parousia* is used of the Lord Jesus it refers to a defined period. Thus in 2 Pet. i. 16 it describes, not the daily and the general accompanying of the Lord with His disciples among the people, but that limited period during which He was transfigured before them (Matt. xvii. 1-8). Where it is used prophetically, *parousia* refers to a period beginning with the descent of the Lord from Heaven into the air (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17) and ending with His revelation and manifestation to the world . . .

During the *parousia* of the Lord in the air with His people,

Paul expected to give account of his stewardship before the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. iv. 1-5; 2 Cor. v. 10). The presence there of the Thessalonian converts and their commendation by the Lord would mean reward to the evangelists who had been the means of their conversion, and to the pastors and teachers who had laboured among them.

The *parousia* of the Lord Jesus is thus a period, with a beginning, a course, and a conclusion. The beginning is prominent in 1 Thess. iv. 15; v. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 23; James v. 7, 8; 2 Pet. iii. 4; the course, here and in 1 Thess. iii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 3, 37, 39; the conclusion in 2 Thess. ii. 8; Matt. xxiv. 27.

"THE BETTER RESURRECTION"

It seems to me that "the better resurrection" of Heb. xi. 35, is a matter of reward at the Judgment-seat of Christ which will follow the resurrection. It cannot of course mean that there are differences in the resurrection itself. Those who were "faithful unto death" not accepting deliverance will have a greater reward than those who escaped torture by giving way to fear and so accepting deliverance. The indication is that all were believers. The reference could not be to unbelievers because they would not have a resurrection to life. To escape death by accepting deliverance will mean a loss of reward, and they therefore will not have a "better resurrection" though actually they will be raised from the dead. There seems to be a certain difference between what is suggested in that verse and what Paul refers to when he says "if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." That would seem to refer to the present life resulting from spiritual resurrection. That is indicated by its desire expressed in verse 10 "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." That is the true aim of every believer here and now. It involves "the fellowship of His sufferings," and conformity to His death. That the reference is to a present attainment and not the coming resurrection of the saints is further indicated by the context in verse 12 where the apostle mentions that he has not reached the ideal but that he is pressing on "toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (verse 14). He exhorts us all to be thus minded and it is just as we

live this life of the experience of the power of Christ's resurrection day by day that we shall receive a greater reward hereafter. Accordingly, I gather that Heb. xi. 35 points to the future while Phil. iii. 11 deals with the present. The two passages have just this in common that a reward hereafter is the outcome.

ONE TAKEN. Matt. xxiv. 40, 41.

The word "then" in verse 40 goes back to verse 36 and to the end of verse 39, and clearly points to the coming of the Son of Man. That coming will not take place at the beginning or during the course of the judgments mentioned from Rev. vi. It will take place when the Lord comes as in Rev. xix. Not till then does He come as the Son of Man.

You mention that one shall be taken away "for judgment." The two verses do not mention anything about judgment. We must be careful to avoid reading into a statement what is not there. When the Lord comes as the Son of Man, that is, at His Second Advent, those who have worshipped the beast will be taken from the earth. The Scripture does not say how, but it may be that angels will do it. Those who are taken will not go to judgment. Their judgment will be at the Great White Throne after the Millennium. The passage simply says the one shall be taken and the other left, that is, for Millennium glory.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

"For I say unto you, that unto everyone of you that hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." Luke xix. 26.

While this verse may be taken to apply to different circumstances as, for instance, to those who receive the Gospel or reject it, yet it is necessary to consider it primarily in connection with the whole passage. The Lord had just been giving the parable in vv. 11 to 24. Then we must also observe in verse 11 that "He added and spoke a parable." Accordingly this must be taken with the preceding passage about Zacchæus. Now Zacchæus had put matters right in connection with the money committed to him under God. From that time onward he evidently determined to act faithfully concerning the matters of his occupation and the use of what God com-

mitted to him. It was evidently this that led to the parable spoken by the Lord immediately. Moreover, whereas the people thought that the Kingdom of God would appear immediately, the Lord directed their thoughts to a considerable period in which God's servants would have certain things entrusted to them, and that eventually they will be rewarded according to the way they have used what has been committed to them. They must devote the gifts entrusted to them, whatever the nature of the gifts may be, to the service of the Lord, whose they are, and when the Kingdom is set up, they will have the rewards for faithfulness and share His authority accordingly. Verse 26 therefore, shows that whoever has been faithful in the discharge of the responsibilities committed to him by the Lord will have a greater position of authority than those who have failed to be faithful. The man who has been utterly faithless will have no reward given to him at all, and the position he might have held in the coming Day will be extended to the one who has been faithful. All these cases, with their varying conditions, are to be distinguished from the enemies who will be destroyed (verse 27). It is happy to think of the change that has come in the case of Zacchæus, and we may hope to see him occupying a good position in the Kingdom to come.

IV

MISCELLANEOUS EXPOSITIONS

ANATHEMA OR LORD

"No man speaking by the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 3, R. V. The test of the witness is the due acknowledgment of Christ. The two utterances, "Jesus is anathema" and "Jesus is Lord" were the battle cries of opposing spiritual forces. Readily would the words of execration spring to the lips of hostile Jews. "Anathema" designated that which was devoted to God for destruction under His curse. That was how the rulers of the Jews, and the people after them, regarded and treated Jesus of Nazareth. That was how they instigated the Gentiles to do the same, and the utterances became the glib expression of Satanically-inspired antagonism.

onism, whether on the part of Jew or Gentile, to the Gospel and the Person whom it proclaimed. Doubtless, upon occasion, when testimony was being given by the preachers of the gospel, or in the midst of an assembled church, the witness would suddenly be interrupted by the blasphemous cry "Jesus is anathema" uttered by opponents of the truth.

ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT

"And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things." 1 John ii. 20.

"Ye" is emphatic; "anointing" (R.V.), the act stands for the effect. (In Israel, kings, priests and prophets were anointed.) Christ is the Anointed. In Leviticus chapter i to vii, the subject is the sacrifice of Christ, then in chapter viii and ix, the anointing of the priests; and in chapter xi the perils of the priesthood and the safeguards. Believers are priests in virtue of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He guides into all the truth (John xvi. 13). "Ye know all" that is, the power of the Holy Spirit is sufficient for knowing the truth and opposing error. (See R.V. margin which makes verse 21 parenthetical.) The children of God know it, not the Gnostics.* Believers need not pray for the anointing: it is an act of God, and given on being born of the Spirit. The truth springs from God, who cannot lie. There is no neutral ground between truth and error. In verse 27 it must not be supposed they did not need teaching, but that they could detect false teachings. Human instrumentality is never to take the place of dependence on God, but young believers are to be free from the fanaticism which refuses the help of the spiritual gifts. The anointing is true, for He is the Spirit of truth. (John xiv. 17; xv. 26; xvi. 13. See 1 Cor. ii. 9-15.)

AS HE IS

"Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, even so are we in this world." 1 John iv. 17.

The opening statement of verse 17 may be rendered as follows :

* "The best MSS. read *pantes* rather than *panta*, 'Ye all know it.' This anointing is open to all Christians, not just a select few." *Word Pictures of the N.T.* A. T. Robertson, p. 216.

"In this is love (i.e. the Divine love) perfected in us." The "herein" connects the preceding verse with what follows. When God sees the perfecting of His love in us, as shown in our love to others, that is to say, when He sees us united to Him, not only positionally but in practical experience, He sees in us the likeness of His own Son, the One in whom He is well pleased; and in this way "as He is, even so are we in this world." This last statement has to do with the character of Christ, not with the fact that we are saved because of our identification with Christ.

Now this manifestation of Christ's nature in us is connected with our boldness in the day of judgment, that is, the boldness with which we shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The ground of this boldness is our present likeness to Him.

"BELIEVING" AND "BELIEVING ON"

The expression "believing on" is the most important of all those that refer to belief. It involves more than "believing" or "believing in." Literally it is "believing into," and thus is suggested, not the mere acknowledgment of certain facts, but at all events usually, an intimate union between the Person in whom faith is imposed and the one who exercises it; the phrase "believing on the Name" occurs elsewhere in the Gospel of John in ii. 23, and iii. 18. The Name is expressive of the character and authority of the Person referred to. In chapter i. 12 and iii. 18, to believe on the Name of Christ is to enter into the Divine relationship and to acknowledge His authority over the life, with the result that the character becomes manifested in the believer.

CHILDREN OR SONS

I fail to see how anyone can gather from Scripture that children of God are not sons if at any time they are guilty of an act of disobedience. There is no believer who is entirely and permanently free from disobedience, and if because of a transgression they ceased to be sons of God, then no believer would be a son of God. The word son or sons conveys the thought of what is characteristic, and the characteristic does not cease because of an act of sin.

Nowhere do I see that sonship is something achieved by obedience. The fact that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God,"

is indicative of a characteristic, and does not suggest a kind of achievement by self-effort. A true believer responds in his general conduct to the leading of the Spirit of God and intelligently doing so he shows that he is not a mere child in a sort of spiritual infancy. When I point out that there is emphasis on the word *these* in Rom. viii. 14, suggesting that these and no others are sons, I merely seek to point out that firstly no unconverted person can be a son of God, and secondly that sonship is not mere infancy. You will notice that Gal. iii. 26 R.V. rightly says "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus . . ." I cannot for a moment agree to the idea that only those who meet together as we do are sons of God. This is surely a great perversion of the truth, and if Heb. xii is used to support this idea it shows a misunderstanding of the passage. There were many Hebrews who were merely professing faith and had never actually been converted through definite acceptance of Christ. The author of this epistle deals with these Jews in more than one place in his epistle. They were attracted to Christianity but desired to retain their Judaism. In chapter xii, verse 8 he makes clear that every believer suffers chastisement from God as his Father and that if a person knows nothing of chastisement he is not related to God as his Father, but is a bastard.

"DEAD ONES" RAISED

In Rom. i. 4, the words "the dead" is in the plural in the original, and the verse teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ was declared (or rather marked out) as the Son of God with power by the resurrection of dead ones, that is to say, His own resurrection and that of others whose resurrection depended on His. The great point, of course, is His own resurrection, but in Matt. xxvii. 52, 53, it says that when the Lord died, "the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered into the Holy City (that is, Jerusalem), and appeared unto many." I take it that the plural in Rom. i. 4, refers especially to this great event. Christ was manifested as the Son of God, that is to say a proof was given of His Divine relationship to the Father by the fact of His own resurrection, for death could not hold Him, and by the fact that others

were raised. They had to wait their resurrection until His had taken place.

In a certain way all the saints who are yet to be raised will in the fact of their resurrection bear their testimony to His Divine and eternal Sonship, but primarily, I think that what is stated in Rom. i. 4 is the act of past history, continuing the series of facts already stated.

DRUNKARD

In reply to your enquiry as to 1 Cor. v. 11, the word *methusos* used there denotes a habitual drunkard. The assembly has not to keep company with such a person. There is a difference between a single act of becoming intoxicated, say upon an occasion, and the practice which makes a person a drunkard. The word *methe* denotes habitual intoxication, and the only difference between the two words *methusos* and *methe* is that the former is an adjective and the latter a noun.

HADES

The word Hades signifies the unseen, and so stands for the place of departed spirits. Luke xvi makes clear that the region was divided into two parts, (1) the region of the lost, and (2) the other which was called "Abraham's bosom." The two were separated by an impassable gulf, but the whole locality was Hades. The description "Abraham's bosom" was appropriate in addressing the Jews. It signifies a place of rest, peace and love, to which Abraham their forefather, the man who was justified by faith, had gone. The word "paradise" means an enclosure, a large enclosure, a pleasure ground. It also stood for the abode of the souls of the saved till the Lord's resurrection. That it was not the same as the heaven where God's throne is, is clear from the Lord's words after He had risen from the dead, that He had not yet ascended to the Father. On the day of the Lord's crucifixion, He assured the dying malefactor who had trusted in Him that they would that day be together in the place of bliss. I gather that the view of those who hold that at our Lord's Ascension the saints of previous ages were brought into bliss where the Throne of God is established, is right. This would be the third Heaven into which Paul was caught up (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4).

There are different paradises. The garden of Eden was one; the place called "Abraham's bosom" in Luke xvi would be another; and the third heaven is another. That this change of locality is what is referred to in Eph. iv. 8, is not improbable. At the same time it is quite possible that the phrase is a vivid description of the Lord's triumph over the powers of darkness, and death which were overcome by means of the death and resurrection of Christ. If this is so it would not alter the fact of the change in the locality of Paradise referred to already. I take it that the reference in Eph. iv. 9 which may be translated "into parts lower than the earth" is the Lord's descent into Hades, and not to the grave. The main point of that verse is that the personality of the Lord was unchanged throughout. This is stressed in verse 10. That is to say, as Son of God and truly man, His combined Godhood and Manhood remained unchanged.

"JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES"

The teaching of this sect is really that of Pastor Russell of America. They deny the full Deity of Christ and the complete efficacy of His atoning sacrifice as taught in the Scriptures. They hold the idea that the dawn of the Millennium took place some years ago and that the return of Christ was spiritual, and that therefore the world is passing through the first stage of the Millennial Kingdom. They also teach that eventually everybody will be saved, and that there is no such thing as eternal punishment. I have little doubt that those who are obsessed with their doctrines will maintain that they hold the teaching of Scripture as to the atonement. It may be that some of them do, but it was not the teaching of the leader.

NUMERICAL STRUCTURE OF SCRIPTURE

I have looked into this subject, and while I would not deny that it may have some profit for the student, I think a good deal has been read into it, which cannot really be endorsed. Panin's book caused a sensation when it was published, especially in America, but there has been a good deal of valid criticism of some of its contents.

ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

"God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him". 1. John iv. 9.

The perfect tense, "hath sent", signifies the abiding results of Christ's mission (contrast the aorists, or point, tenses "loved" and "sent", in verse 10 below).

The word *monogenes*, "only-begotten", is found only in writings of the Apostle John, four times in the Gospel (i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 18) and here. In the Septuagint, however, the word is used to translate a Hebrew word which it also renders in other places by *agapetos*, "beloved". Thus Gen. xxii. 2 reads "thy son, the beloved one"; so again in verses 12 and 16. Psalm xxii. 20 has *monogenes*, "only-begotten one"; so in Psalm xxxv. 17 (margin, "My only One"). The title "only-begotten" speaks of the eternal relationship of the Son to the Father, and at the same time expresses the Father's delight in the Son. It is a term used absolutely of Christ in His Divine relationship, whereas the title "Firstborn", while used of Christ in distinction from all creatures absolutely, yet bears reference to them. The thought of love and delight must not be lost sight of in considering the word "only-begotten", though the eternal relationship needs also to be borne in mind.

He it was, as so described, whom God sent into the world. The stress in the original, placed upon the word "only-begotten", should be noted—"His Son, His Only-Begotten". The definite article is used before "Son" and "Only-Begotten", and gives prominence to both relationships. This is so also in the Gospel, iii, 16.

PRACTICE OF SIN

"And everyone that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness." 1 John iii. 4.

The tense is the present continuous and expresses a practice and not an act. The A.V. "committeth" is misleading. Neither here nor anywhere in this passage is the commital of an act in view. The Apostle is dealing with that which characterizes the life. The purpose is to contrast the children of God with those who are not (see verse 10). It would be as well always to avoid the use of the verb "commit" in this passage. In the original the contrast is

clearly marked between this phrase and that in ii. 29, "every one that doeth righteousness."

"Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither knoweth Him" (verse 6). This alone is sufficient to make clear that practice is in view, and not the committal of an act. Every believer does sin, see i. 8. Yet the believer is one who has seen Christ, by faith, and does know Him. What is implied here, then, is a ruling principle of the life. He who, being a believer, has seen Christ and knows Him, does not continue in sin.

"And he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (verse 9). Here again, not the committal of an act is in view, but continuance in sin. It is not a case merely of moral impossibility; relationship to God, once it is established, not only abides for ever but precludes the possibility of continuance of sin as a practice of the life.

PROVING THE SPIRITS

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits." 1 John iv. 1.

Dokimazō, "to try," is to be distinguished from *peirazō*, a word with a similar meaning. That they resemble one another is evident from their association in 2 Cor. xiii. 5, and Ps. xxv. 2 in the LXX. John rarely uses either. This is the only place where *dokimazō* is found in his writings. *Peirazō* which is frequent in the New Testament he uses only four times (John vi. 6; Rev. ii. 2; x. 3, 10). *Dokimazō* is never used in the sense of proving, as is the case of *peirazō*. Broadly speaking the proving signified by *dokimazō* suggests a good motive, the hope that what is tested will stand the test, whereas *peirazō* frequently suggests the hope that what is tested will be found wanting, though this is not always the case, for *peirazō* is used once of God in Heb. xi. 17, and once of the Lord Jesus (John vi. 6), with whom the purpose always is the benefit of the one who is tested. While the proving of spirits is itself a spiritual gift (1 Cor. xii. 10), yet all believers are responsible to form a judgment concerning spiritual things, and, as the Apostle has pointed out, provision has been made for this under the "anointing from the Holy One" (ii. 18, 20, 27; cp. 2 Tim. ii. 7).

SIGNS OR MIRACLES

His works are called "signs." The word *sêmeion*, sign, is more than a mere miracle. A miracle is that which excites wonder, but a sign is a significant appeal to the heart of man, used in this case by God to produce an acknowledgment of His existence, power or character. So the miracles wrought by Christ were testimonies to the fact that He was the Son of God.

SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST

In regard to the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, I consider that we are only safe in strictly adhering to the language of Scripture in the matter of His sinlessness. Various views are expressed on the points you mention, but this is not a subject upon which we can feel free to draw deduction. The Scripture states that Christ "did no sin," and that He "knew no sin."

In dealing with anyone who expresses the view to which you refer, we should refuse to enter into controversy and demand what I have pointed out, namely, that we go by the phraseology of Scripture, and not by our ideas upon it. This holds good in regard to the fact that Christ was tempted of the Devil.

SLEEP OF THE SOUL

With regard to the magazine article it looks as if the writer is a follower of Bullinger, and believes in the sleep of the soul in the intermediate state. If so he is entirely wrong. As to Luke viii. 52 this and the parallel passages are the only places where *katheudo* is used of death, and I sometimes wonder whether, after all, the Lord actually used the word in that sense. In 1 Thess. iv. 13 and 16 the writer is accurate in saying that this refers to those who are dead, and also in what he says about being watchful or the opposite. I cannot hold the view that the antithesis of watchfulness is death.

SWEAT OF BLOOD

The statement made by Luke is that the Lord's sweat was "as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground" (Luke xxii. 44). The phrase "as it were" would indicate that the sweat did not

consist of actual drops of blood. Had that been so, it would have been simple to say that the sweat was great drops of blood. Luke, as a medical man, takes care to describe the circumstances by inserting the said phrase. Wherever the word is used in the original, it presents something similar to what is mentioned, but not the actual thing itself. We must therefore, I think, look upon it in this way, and guard against the idea that the Lord was making expiation for sin at any time previous to the actual shedding of His blood on the Cross.

UNDYING WORM

The Lord's metaphorical use of the word "worm" in Mark ix. signifies the gnawing self-reproach of conscience in ever continuing and unavailing remorse. It is a terrible description of the state of the lost who have merely lived lives of self-indulgence in rejection of the light God has given. The figure is one of decay and loathsome humiliation, and that unending. The Lord's description of the state of the rich man in Luke xvi. is a confirmation of His use of the word "worm." Just as maggots prey on putrid carcasses (see Isa. lxvi. 24), so the remorse of conscience preys on the thoughts of those of whom Christ is speaking in His words in Mark ix.

WATER AND BY BLOOD

This is He that came by water and blood. 1 John v. 6. The explanation, which seems probably the right one, is that the statement may be taken to mean that Christ was made manifest as the Son of God (see verse 5,) first in His baptism in Jordan; there the Father bore witness to the fact that He was His "Beloved Son" (Matt. iii. 17; see also the testimony of John the Baptist in John i. 31-34), and secondly He came by blood also; that is by the Cross and the laying down of His life. This the Apostle mentions very emphatically by negative repetition, as stated in the end of verse 6. The two events have essentially to do with His mission. He came as the Sent One of the Father.

CHAPTER III

Some Vital Bible Themes

A MAN who can write clearly on great Bible themes will always have thousands of grateful readers. If, in addition to this, he writes with strict adherence to the teaching of the whole of the Scriptures, he will help many preachers and teachers. When Mr. Vine committed his thoughts to print, there was always to be found scholarship, accuracy, forceful language, a simplicity of style easy to grasp, special attention always being given to the exact meaning of important words in the English and Greek texts, in the absence of which much defective teaching arises. He also preserved balance and perspective.

From all his writings, papers and notes I have selected some choice extracts on the glory of the Person of Christ, His death, His resurrection, ascension and second advent; and have given rather fully a valuable section on the Holy Spirit, which may be considered appropriate in view of current teaching. With a view to instructing and stimulating preachers of the Gospel, considerable space is also given to what the gifted writer penned on this and closely allied matters. The paragraphs are headed with short descriptions for purposes of easy reference.

I

CHRIST HIMSELF

HIS ETERNAL PRE-EXISTENCE

Christ Himself declared His eternal pre-existence when He said to the Jews: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58). Strictly rendered it is: "Before Abraham came to be, I am." He sets Himself in contrast to Abraham in this, that Abraham's existence had an inception, His own existence was

marked by no beginning; Abraham's was limited by the condition of time, His had been eternal. Conscious of His limitless, timeless existence in the past, He speaks of Himself by the eternal title of Jehovah, the great "I am."

CREATOR SUSTAINER SIN-PURGER

In the introduction of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is presented in His pre-existence as the Creator and as the Sustainer of all things, as the Sin-Purger at Calvary (Heb. i. 3), and as the unchanging everlasting One in the future (verse 12). This passage associates the three, the eternal past, the central point of time, and the eternal future. The past eternity and the future eternity of His Being find their focus at the Cross.

HIS SON FROM HEAVEN

In the Epistle to the Galatians the Apostle states that "when the fullness of time came God sent forth His Son born of a woman, born under the Law" (Gal. iv. 4). The reference plainly is to His being sent forth from Heaven to earth by incarnation, and not to any subsequent mission in the days of His flesh. This passage clearly indicates that God sent forth One who was already His Son.

ETERNAL LIFE WAS MANIFESTED

The Apostle John, in the introduction to his first Epistle, says, "The Life was manifested and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the Life, the Eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John i. 2). He does not here say that He who was the Life was "with God", but that He was "with the Father." The term "Father" implies the existence of a Son. The terms "father" and "son" are correlative. In no other sense than that of pre-existent Fatherhood and Sonship can the Apostle have made such a statement.

THE FIRSTBORN OF ALL CREATION

The Apostle Paul speaks of Him as the "the Firstborn of all creation" (Col. i. 15). The mode of expression in the original and the context of the passage, sufficiently guard against the idea that

Christ is to be classed with the Creation itself. The idiomatic form of expression distinguishes Him from all created beings, and declares His priority and superiority to them. The next verse is explanatory of this title, and shows that instead of being created, He was Himself the Creator. The term, "only begotten", is absolute; as such, Christ stands alone in timeless relationship with the Father. The term "firstborn" is relative; it does distinguish Him from all creatures, but it brings them in view so as to show His infinite superiority to them.

GOD ANOINTED HIS PERFECT SERVANT

"God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts x. 38). This does not imply that Christ was in Himself void of supernatural power, or not possessed of the attributes of Godhead prior to His being so anointed, nor does it imply that He was without the Holy Spirit up to that time. His works were wrought as a result of a Divine unction. And herein we learn more fully the glory of His grace as the Perfect Servant; for it shows that, while His Deity gives to all He did a unique character and value, He did not act merely in virtue of His Godhood, but, continuing the position of dependence on, and subjection to, the Father, He lived and taught and wrought and offered up Himself, and won His mighty victory, in the power of the Spirit. Had it not been so He would have failed to preserve perfectly the place of a bondservant, which He took so really in this world.

HIS SINLESS LIFE

His sinlessness vindicates the doctrine of His Virgin Birth, and explains the fact. Again, His sinless life gave Him a claim, by the Divine Law, to exemption from death. Yet He died. His death must, therefore, have been vicarious. "Christ died for our sins." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." Further, His sinlessness determined His resurrection as His rightful prerogative. God's Holy One could never see corruption.

A Person was required who had an adequate apprehension of the nature and claims of God. He must likewise be proved to be free from all taint of sin. He must be one who would bear the

curse of the broken Law, or his suffering would be on his own account, and consequently no judicial advantage could accrue to others therein. He must, moreover, put himself in connection with the Law, that he might be tested thereby.

Now there was only one Being who could and did fulfil all these conditions, and that was the Son of God. He put Himself into relationship with man by becoming incarnate. He did not dispossess Himself of Deity but continued in the form of God (Phil. ii. 7). Thus combining in Himself absolute Deity and true humanity. He submitted to be tested in all points and was proved sinless.

HIS UNIQUE SUPERNATURAL DEATH

His death was unique, in that, in His case alone, the choice lay between dying and never dying at all. He could have refrained from drinking the bitter cup. It follows that, death being the consequence of sin (Rom. v. 12; vi. 23), the death of Christ was substitutionary. "He died to atone for sins not His own." "He was wounded for our transgressions," "Jehovah laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii, 5, 6). False ideas of the atonement are largely due to light views both of sin and of the holiness of God.

The restrictions He imposed on Himself are consistent with His true Manhood. At the same time in these very restrictions He constantly displayed His supernatural power. Nowhere is this more strikingly exhibited than on the cross. Certain details regarding His death distinguish it from the crucifixion of a mere man, as, for example, His mighty shout, the dismissal of His spirit, and prior to it the bowing (or rather, reclining) of His head, in contrast to the natural order in which the last breath is followed by the drooping of the head. His death could not have been the death of a mere man. It is useless to argue that God cannot die and therefore Christ was not God. He who was God could become also Man in order to die, and this He did. His death was the supernatural death of One who was both Man and God.

THE RESURRECTION: ITS TREMENDOUS IMPLICATIONS

The resurrection of Christ is the keystone of the arch of

historical evidences relating to His Person and work. The fact of His resurrection confirms the truth of His Deity, His supernatural birth, His sinlessness, and His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross. Apart from His resurrection there would be no Christian faith to declare.

The message of the resurrection comprehends and sums up all that the Gospel declares. If the resurrection is not a fact there is no Gospel to preach.

Moreover, the resurrection was both the climax of past developments of life, involving the formation, progress and destiny of the Church, and the eventual deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption. The resurrection was the great theme of apostolic testimony. It should ever be present in the preaching of the Gospel.

PASSING THROUGH THE GRAVE CLOTHS

The body of the Lord had been bound in linen cloths with about one hundred pounds weight of spices (John xix. 39, 40). John describes Peter as entering into the tomb, and seeing the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that had been around the Lord's head, not lying with the linen cloths, but "rolled round in a place by itself." There is no suggestion that the head napkin had been folded up and put in another part of the tomb. That cloth was still lying in its folded shape where the head had been. So were the body cloths. Neither friends nor foes had touched them. Friends would not have moved the garments from the body; foes would not have left them in the position in which they were found. Nor again was there any indication of a struggle to obtain release. The Lord had simply left the clothes as they had been bound around Him. This is the significance of John's statements as to the binding of the body and the position of the cloths, and of his testimony concerning himself, "he saw, and believed."

THE ASCENSION OF THE CHRIST

As His resurrection was corporeal so was His ascension. His was a spiritual body—a body, not a spirit—free from all limitations imposed by natural conditions, yet still bearing the marks of His crucifixion and of the spear-wound in His side. No dematerial-

ised Being entered Heaven. The Lord was still truly man and as such was possessed of all the constitution and attributes of man—body, soul and spirit. When the Apostle says, "He that descended is the same also that ascended" (Eph. iv. 10), he is simply stating the fact of the Lord's unchanged personality.

THE SECOND ADVENT: CHRIST'S OWN HOPE

While the Scriptures set before us the Lord's Return as the hope of believers, it is especially presented as the object of Christ's own expectancy. The hope is essentially His hope, and we can only rightly experience the power of its anticipation as we so view it. His eager anticipation breathes in His words to the disciples in the upper room: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am ye may be also," and further, in His prayer that follows: "Father I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am." So again four times in the Book of Revelation His message rings out, "I come quickly," first in the letter addressed to the Church at Philadelphia (chap. iii. 11), and then finally three times at the close of the Book (chap. xxii. 7, 12, 20).

WHAT SCRIPTURE CALLS "THE HOPE"

"And be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel" (Col. i. 23). That he is referring to the Lord's second coming is clear from the contents of the epistle. He has already spoken of "the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel" (i. 5). He subsequently speaks of Christ Himself as "the hope of glory" (verse 27), and specifically mentions the facts of the hope when he says, a little further on, "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory" (iii. 4).

The hope, then, of which the Apostle speaks, is not simply the prospect of experiencing the bliss of the heavenly state, nor is it the rapture of the saints when the Lord comes to the air. He will indeed fulfil His word of promise, "I come again and will receive you unto Myself;" then the saints, both those who have fallen

asleep and those "that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord," will, as a united company, all with glorified bodies, be "caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 15-17). But this great act of resurrection power will itself be anticipatory of the consummating event when the saints are manifested with Him in glory. That is what Scripture speaks of as "the hope."

II

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Mr. Vine wrote a trenchant 20 page booklet on "The baptism of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit," in which he argues that the correct use of the phraseology of Scripture in any subject is of the utmost importance. Phrases which differ from one another are never interchangeable, and since all Scripture is God-breathed, it is necessary for an understanding of the mind of the Lord, to have regard to the precise meaning of the terms and expressions used.

He begins by discussing whether believers have Scriptural ground for desiring and expecting the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with the accompanying manifestations mentioned in certain passages in the Acts of the Apostles; whether, in other words, in failing to realise these privileges, they are missing a benefit which God intended them to receive. He says some maintain that this baptism consists of an outpouring of the Spirit of God accompanied by visible effects. Others regard the baptism of the Spirit as simply an alternative phrase for the filling of the Spirit.

He then elaborates the subject.

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE NOT PENTECOST

It has been boldly advocated in recent times that "the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire is the acting of the Holy Spirit upon and in the believer in His fullness, and is always borne witness to by the fruit of the Spirit and the outward manifestation so that we may receive the same gifts as the disciples on the day of Pentecost."

What is the testimony of the Gospels? Mark records the

prophecy of John the Baptist concerning Christ as follows: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (i. 8). The testimony given in John is this: "He that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit" (i. 33). Matthew and Luke record the Baptist's additional prophecy that Christ would baptize "with fire" (Matt. iii. 11; Luke iii. 16). The context itself in each of these two passages is sufficient to show that the baptism of fire does not relate to what was to take place at Pentecost. The fire is symbolic of the judgment which would descend upon those in the nation who rejected the testimony of God. The appearance of tongues like as of fire on the Day of Pentecost was not a baptism of fire.

Again, on the day of the Lord's Ascension He renewed the promise to the disciples, telling them to wait in Jerusalem for its fulfilment. "John indeed," He said, "baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts i. 5). This clearly had specific reference to the day of Pentecost and to that day alone. The Lord did not mention anything about fire. The fulfilment of the promise, and the circumstances of that day, are recorded in the second chapter.

WHAT THE BAPTISM IS

He then refers to the one and only reference in the whole of the Epistles, namely that in 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Here the Apostle says, "for in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jew or Greek, whether bond or free; and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." This passage would signify that upon that occasion the whole Church was by the Holy Spirit's action incorporated into one integral company, a spiritual entity; that those who were already believers on that day, and those who would afterwards believe, were thus actually and prospectively formed into the body of Christ, all the members having been in the mind of God according to His eternal counsels. The verse obviously does not refer to a coming of the Holy Spirit upon individual believers as a baptism accompanied by outward signs.

The passage gives no ground for praying now for the baptism of the Spirit, nor does Scripture anywhere give countenance to such a prayer. There is no case recorded either in the Gospels or in the Acts, nor are believers anywhere instructed to make such a request.

SIGNS VINDICATING CHRIST'S CLAIMS

Having shown from the book of *Acts* that the first part of the new era was transitional—a period in which God was giving a special testimony to the Jews as a nation, the booklet says that the first great purpose of the signs accompanying the baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost and on certain other occasions was to vindicate to God's earthly people the Person, attributes, work and claims of the Lord Jesus, as the Son of God and their Messiah.

By the time that the nation had definitely and persistently refused the testimony, these signs or supernatural actings of the Spirit of God had been withdrawn.

The records of the Acts of the Apostles show that the supernatural signs accompanying the baptism of the Spirit on certain occasions after the day of Pentecost, were manifested for the purpose of convincing these Jewish converts as to this goodwill of God towards Gentiles.

"TONGUES" A SIGN TO UNBELIEVERS

Certain facts must be borne in mind concerning the gift of tongues. "Tongues," says the Apostle, "are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving" (1 Cor. xiv. 22). Those manifestations were not intended therefore for the edification of believers but as a demonstration to those who were outside the Church. Again, there is a clear testimony that such supernatural gifts as speaking with tongues, prophesying, etc., were not intended to continue throughout the history of the Church. The Apostle lays down, as a principle, that "when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. xiii. 10).

We do not deny that God can impart to a believer upon occasion the power to speak in a foreign tongue immediately, but that would not disprove the cessation of the gift of tongues as exercised

in Pentecostal times and Apostolic days, prior to the completion of the New Testament.

ALL CHRISTIANS COMMANDED TO BE FILLED

All believers are commanded to "be filled with the Spirit". They are not exhorted to desire to be baptized with the Spirit but to be filled. "Wherefore," says the Apostle, "be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunken with wine wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18).

Now this filling of the Spirit is not a matter of sensational display, emotional demonstration or excitement. The passage which follows the command in verse 13 is explanatory of what the *filling* is. Those who are filled with the Spirit are thereby under His controlling power with regard to their worship, their speech and their conduct. They make melody with their heart to the Lord, they give thanks always for all things, and they learn to subject themselves one to another in the fear of the Lord. The filling of the Spirit finds expression in the relationships of every-day life; in that of wives towards their husbands, and husbands towards their wives (verses 22-23), of children towards their parents, and parents towards their children (vi. 1-4); of servants towards masters, and masters towards servants (vi. 5-9). Thus one who is filled with the Spirit honours God and displays the character of Christ, being conformed to the Divine will.

When a person is filled with the Spirit, that is no guarantee of a continuance in that state. The Apostle Peter was filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, but he was not so filled on the subsequent occasion when he came to Antioch and Paul had to resist him to the face, when "he stood condemned," for the reason that before the arrival of certain brethren from James he ate with Gentiles, but after they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circumcision (Gal. ii. 11-12). That was not being "filled with the Spirit." This filling, then, requires repetition when one has in any way departed from the will of God.

Again, he who is filled with the Spirit will manifest the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit does not consist in the seeing of visions, speaking with tongues, extraordinary movements of the

body, hysterical shakings, and spectacular displays of healing powers. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance (or self-control)" (Gal. v. 22-25). The filling thus produces fruit-bearing in spiritual power, manifesting itself in character and conduct in conformity to Christ. The believer who is so filled is not carried beyond the realm of his intelligence, he is simply possessed of an led, not to think introspectively of the power of the Spirit within understanding of the will of God. The Spirit-filled person will be him, but to be looking unto Jesus; for it is the design of the Holy Spirit not to glorify Himself but to glorify Christ.

All this teaching of the Apostles in relationship to the permanent work of the Holy Spirit in the Church is on a far higher spiritual plane than the Pentecostal signs which were given in the first days of gospel testimony.

III

THE GOSPEL AND ALLIED SUBJECTS

PREACHING CHRIST AND THE CROSS

"We preach Christ crucified"—not the theory of the Gospel, not an explanation of the power of the Gospel or of its mode of operation, but Christ and His cross. The cross is the centre of all Gospel preaching guided, approved and owned of God. Everything must lead up to it or flow from it.

THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

Further, "the cross of Christ" is not simply an alternative expression for "the death of Christ." It is of the utmost importance to bear this in mind. "The cross of Christ" does far more than express the fact of the infinite love of God to man in the death of His Son; it exposes the enmity of the human heart against God, reveals the true nature of sin as in the sight of God, and makes known the impossibility of bridging, by any human effort, the chasm that separates unregenerate man from God.

The phrase "The word of the cross" is interpreted in the Apostle's statement "we preach Christ crucified"—not Christ on a cross, but "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," that is to say, the living, exalted, glorified Christ, as the One who has been crucified.

THE GREATEST TRAVESTY OF THE GOSPEL

The arch-adversary of God has so planned his greatest travesty of the Gospel that Christ should be largely represented to men as either in a cradle or on a cross. He whom the Gospel preacher has to present is a living Christ, "a Prince and a Saviour"—on the ground of His expiatory death indeed, and that as a result of His incarnation—but emphatically a risen, exalted, glorified Lord "able to save to the uttermost, and to be received by faith as Lord of the life as well as Saviour. Further, it is especially needful for preachers of the Gospel in the present day to proclaim constantly that the body of Christ was raised from death, and to use the testimony of Scripture to declare this foundation truth.

AN IMPORTANT FACTOR: CHRIST IS LORD

It is important to bear in mind that the Gospel proclaimed Christ as Lord as well as Saviour. A Saviour He is indeed, but let us see how he was proclaimed according to the testimony of Scripture. (See Luke ii. 11; Acts ii. 16; v. 31; x. 36; 2 Cor. iv. 5; Rom. x. 9; xiv. 9; Phil. ii. 10, 11; Rom. vi. 23.) Scripture does not endorse our inviting our hearers to receive Christ as simply their Saviour . . . Christ is God (John i. 1). He is the Creator (vv. 3 and 10); He is Life and Light (vv. 5 and 8). He is the Only begotten Son (verse 18). He is One who has a claim upon men (verse 11). How needful, therefore, to make clear that regeneration, which comes by receiving the Son of God by faith, involves the recognition of His Lordship.

THE CROSS AND SIN

The Cross casts its solemn and terrible light upon the condition of all men by nature and the danger to which sin exposes them. The death of Christ stands through time and eternity as a witness

to the character and consequences of sin. The due consideration of this was never more needed than in the present day, when the currents of those popular notions which influence men to minimize the character of sin, and to put confidence in the natural impulses of the human heart, are running strong.

THE TRUE CHARACTER OF SIN

The necessity of recognising the true character of sin in the sight of God is but preliminary to the adequate setting forth of the righteousness of God in the punishment of sin and the grace He has manifested toward the guilty.

GOD'S GRACIOUS GOOD WILL

In one of that series of statements of foundation truths of the faith which are interspersed throughout the 1st Epistle to Timothy, the Apostle declares that God "willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." "Willeth" is the right rendering, as expressive of goodwill rather than of determination. There is no Scripture which intimates that God has determined that all men should be saved. There are passages, indeed, which teach the contrary, and nowhere does Scripture contradict its own teachings. What is set forth, then, is God's gracious will towards men in spite of their universal sin.

A MOST IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

The preacher of the Gospel is not justified in declaring to all and sundry that Christ died in their stead. Consider what such a statement involves. If Christ died in the stead of an unregenerate person indifferent to God's claims and hardened in sin, he may, if he accepts what is told him, reasonably take it to mean that, in spite of his condition as an unrepentant sinner, he is no longer subject to judgment, for Christ has died in his stead; he is no longer in the place previously occupied. If I tell men, regardless of their condition, that Christ has died in their "room and stead," I am in danger of conveying a wrong impression, and of ministering to that careless and deceived state of soul which thinks that

salvation is already possessed and heaven secured, when all the time the person has not accepted the conditions of the Gospel, is still under condemnation and under the wrath of God, and is wandering down to perdition instead of to an imagined heaven. Only faith can say, "He died for me."

THE DEATH WHICH SEPARATES FROM GOD

The moment self-will was substituted for the blessedness of fulfilling the will of God, the relationship was inevitably broken, and man passed into death, not the extinction of being (death is never so viewed in Scripture), but separation from God.

SIN RETRIBUTION AND GRACE

The Gospel preacher cannot ignore the nature of sin in the sight of God; he has to realise and present the true character of guilt and its Divine retribution if he is rightly and effectively to proclaim God's love and redeeming grace in and through Christ. The actings of Divine grace are based upon the fact of Divine righteousness. The infinite holiness of God is an essential element in the display of His love.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN

The universality of this condition is strikingly stated by the Apostle. Speaking of mankind in general as "the sons of disobedience," he says, "among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind" (Eph. ii. 3). The word rendered "lusts" is the ordinary word for "desires," and that rendered "desires" signifies the inclinations of the will. He is speaking therefore, not merely of that which is base in the eyes of society, but of the bent of the natural mind. Paul himself, a person of exemplary morality from his youth up, puts himself in the universal category of the "we all."

SIN IS LAWLESSNESS

"Every one that doeth sin," he says "doeth also lawlessness : and sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4, R.V.). "Lawlessness" (*anomia*)

is the word—not merely transgression of a law, nor simply its non-observance; it has a far deeper significance; it denotes the denial or rejection of law or restraint, in the spirit of self-will and resistance to God. This is what characterises sin. The Apostle is not saying that lawlessness is sin; that is so, but what he is defining is sin, not lawlessness.

THE VARIED CHARACTER OF SIN

The great variety of expression adopted in the Scriptures to describe the character of sin is significant of its heinousness in the sight of God. It is a falling short of the standard (*hamartia*); an overstepping of the bounds of God's will (*parabasis*); disobedience to His voice (*parakoē*); a stumbling instead of uprightness (*paraptōma*); culpable ignorance (*agnoēma*); a diminishing of what is due (*hēttēma*); transgression of a law (*paranomia*) and the rejection of law (*anomia*); unrighteousness (*adikia*); a wandering (*planē*), etc.

Sin is neither a temporary misadventure, nor is it simply a disease or a disaster, nor again is it "a necessary stage to higher things." "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4 R.V.). It is a disregard of the will of God. It is due to unbelief (Rom. xiv. 23; John xvi. 9). God, as moral Governor of the universe, gave to man a law which was the reflection of His righteous character, a law the fulfilment of which was for man's highest welfare. The breach of that law was culpable disregard of the Creator's beneficent will, and rendered man liable to God's righteous retribution. The very attributes of God demanded the execution of the penalty. To refrain from exacting it would be to nullify the law and belie the Divine character. Divine forgiveness could be imparted only in a manner consistent with God's claims of justice, the rectitude of His administration and His irreconcilability to evil.

Atonement is impossible to man. Repentance would be ineffectual, for it could not restore the broken legal relation to God. An amended life could not do so, for it could not cancel previous guilt. Man in his unregenerate state cannot please God (Rom. viii. 8). Nor could the sinner make atonement by death, either for himself or for his fellow men. Expiation is demanded on a righteous basis.

PUNISHMENT CONSISTENT

The punishment was perfectly consistent with the attributes and character of God. Nothing less would have been consistent. Sin is not merely the greatest infelicity of the creature, depraving the soul, extinguishing its light, vitiating the human powers and violating their harmony; it has done more than this, it has disaffected the heart of man to God, and by severing him from his Maker, has inevitably engaged His justice and the exercise of His righteous wrath.

REPENTANCE ILLUSTRATED

The change referred to is illustrated again in what is said of the people of Tyre and Sidon. Had the works been done in those cities which were done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, "they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi. 20. 21). "The men of Ninevah . . . repented at the preaching of Jonah" (xii. 31). The actual record of their repentance is that "they turned from their evil way" (Jonah iii. 10). That turning to God exactly expresses what repentance is on man's part, namely, the alteration of the attitude as the effect of the change of mental view. So in every case where the word is found.

THE SPIRIT AND THE NEW BIRTH

The Spirit of God uses the Word of God and the message thereby of the Spirit-guided preacher, and by this means accomplishes His work of regeneration in the heart of the convicted sinner. The Lord's use of the word "water" with reference to the new birth suggests at once the removal of uncleanness. Uncleanness is man's condition by nature, for he is "born in sin." The new birth cannot be effected without the removal of this uncleanness. Hence, when the Apostle Paul is showing the impossibility of salvation by human works done in righteousness, he speaks of "the washing (margin, laver) of regeneration." Since the removal of the defilement of sin is impossible save by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle adds that salvation is by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii. 5).

THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

The Lord had said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." What is born partakes of the nature of that which produced it. And since this new nature essentially involves life in Christ, the one who, by the regenerating power of the Spirit, is born of God, is thereby immediately in Christ: "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature (margin, there is a new creation), the old things are passed away: behold, they are become new" (2 Cor. v. 7). All this is quite distinct from Christian baptism, which in Scripture succeeds regeneration, and is confirmation of it.

JUSTIFIED AND RECKONED RIGHTEOUS

The Gospel pronounces a Divine sentence of acquittal in absolute grace, and in a manner consistent with God's holiness and righteousness, upon those who stand convicted at the bar of His justice. To be justified is to be reckoned righteous in the sight of God. Righteousness is the condition of being right. Justification brings more than the remission of sins, it involves the removal of guilt.

The act of justification is not the impartation of a change of character, it is a deliverance from condemnation; not the improvement of a condition, but the complete alteration of a condition, a change from guiltiness to righteousness, from separation from God to acceptance with Him.

THE GOSPEL AND THE LORD'S COMING

The personal return of the Lord is a doctrine essential to the Gospel. Preaching which eliminates it is defective in one of the main elements of the message of life.

The preacher, while handling subjects relating to eternal destinies, will avoid drawing deductions from the testimony of Scripture and using them to frighten his hearers into salvation. The Scriptures themselves are sufficiently solemn in their warnings concerning these matters, without being marred by our deductions.

Zeal for the truth may lead us to blunt its edge. Zeal for the salvation of the perishing may carry us beyond the limits of revelation. Zeal that is not according to knowledge only hinders the work of the Spirit. The facts of the Lord's Return and its issues, as plainly stated in the Word of God, have been used in multitudes of cases to arouse souls to a sense of their danger and need, and to draw them, under the power of the love of God in Christ, to the feet of the Saviour and to find pardon, peace, and salvation in Him.

A NOTE ON DIVINE HEALING

The view is being advocated widely that in carrying on His work of Divine healing in the days of His flesh the Lord was making atonement, and that an essential part of the truth of the Gospel is that healing may be claimed by faith as a redemptive right as a result of this. Such teaching constitutes fundamental error; it tends to undermine the truth of the absolute efficacy of the death of Christ, and is therefore subversive of the doctrine of the Atonement.

A passage to which appeal is especially made, in support of the error that Divine healing is in the Atonement, is Matthew viii. 16, 17, which relates how, when many were brought to the Lord who were possessed with demons, "He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bear our diseases (A.V. sicknesses)." This is taken to signify expiatory work. Hence it is argued that the preacher of the Gospel, if he is to stand "foursquare on atonement ground," is called to preach deliverance from sickness on the basis of Christ's atoning work and on the condition of faith. The fact is that this doctrine, instead of making Gospel preaching "foursquare" with the Word of God, goes beyond its teaching, and of the seriousness of such an offence Scripture itself speaks. The prophecy was fulfilled in the acts the Lord was then accomplishing. He bore upon His spirit these afflictions in deepest sympathy with the sufferers, but in no sense was He suffering thereby under the judgment of God.

CHAPTER IV

Fragrant Fragments

THE following short selections are gathered from Mr. Vine's writings extending over many years. They are recorded, not indeed, to be read through and then laid aside, but with the object of employing, to good advantage, the "stray five minutes" which happen in the lives of all of us.

Each paragraph can be read in a few moments, and the thoughts easily stored in the mind. A moment is "a fraction of eternity." In it, visions are sometimes flashed into the mind which influence the direction and course of life, and may even mould a destiny. A flash of thought, like a flash of lightning, often gives rapid illumination in a dark region. God uses words to convey messages to men. Words, like seeds, can yield great harvests. Dean Alford wrote this striking sentence:—

"There are moments which are worth more than years. A stray, unthought-of five minutes may contain the event of a life. And this all-important moment—who can tell when it will be upon us?"

Certainly such moments happen when man meets with God—often by means of a few words.

FILLED WITH HIS POWER

When we make it the business of our life to seek those things "where Christ is seated on the right hand of God", our life is filled with His power and with the consciously enjoyed effects of His ministry in the Sanctuary.

WHAT CHRIST IS DOING FOR US

Do we not often fail to remember that both our deliverance from danger and our experiences of joy, as well as the disciplinary

experiences of sorrow come by reason of what Christ is doing in the presence of God? We owe, indeed, everything to the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit, but what the Spirit does is inseparable from the ministry of Christ in heaven.

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TABERNACLE

The Holy Spirit was *signifying* that the way into the Holy Place was not made manifest. Let us observe, in passing, that the writer attributes to the Holy Spirit the spiritual significance of the details of the Tabernacle. This makes clear that the Pentateuch narrative is not merely a historical record; the history carried with it a spiritual teaching which the Spirit of God unfolds in the New Testament.

HABITUAL COMMUNING FOR SERVICE

It is useless to attempt to speak for Christ unless we are living in communion with Him. Knowledge of truth in itself is not sufficient. We may rise to give an address and find ourselves able to do so because we know the doctrines of Scriptures, but our testimony is valueless unless we have received an unveiling of Christ to our souls, an unveiling which is imparted in our times of daily meditation and communion; and is enjoyed as a habit of our life.

TRANSFIGURED AND REFLECTING

"Reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord." The thought is not that of looking into a mirror, where, indeed, we might behold ourselves, but of reflecting the light that shines into us. The believer himself is the mirror, and it is given to him to receive the manifestation of the glory of the Lord, the glory of His moral virtues as well as of the truth relating to His attributes and His work of grace, and then, while being transfigured himself, to reflect this blessed light to others.

JESUS-JEHOVAH

It is the name Jesus . . . the Name that combines the title of

Jehovah with the work of salvation which He accomplished for us, the Name that speaks of the sympathy of One who knows our frame with all its frailty, this is the Name which is prominent in this exhortation (Heb. iv. 14-16).

OUR LIVES UNDER HIS AUTHORITY

If we cease to glory in Christ we give evidence of failure to apprehend the privileges of our heavenly calling. By a bold confession we show that we really are partakers of the heavenly calling and that all the arrangements of our life are under the authority of the Son of God as our Lord.

HIS UNFAILING SYMPATHY

The single word in the original "touched with the feeling of" denotes literally "to suffer with." It is practically the same word as our "sympathise," and it suggests that one who sympathises places himself in the position of the sufferer. He has Himself been in our position, He has experienced our temptations, sin apart.

A JOYOUS RULE OF LIFE

"Ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. iii. 24). "Sanctify in your hearts," says the Apostle Peter, "Christ as Lord" (1 Peter iii. 15). This is not an attainment to be reached by the Christian of mature experience, it is the joyous rule of life for every believer.

LIVE IN A HOLY ATMOSPHERE

This experience is the will of God for the believer (1 Thess. iv. 3, 4). The Christian is called, not for uncleanness, but in sanctification (verse 7), that is to say, "to live his life in a holy atmosphere." For this purpose God has "given us His Holy Spirit" (verse 8); here the word "holy" bears emphasis, in keeping with the subject of the passage.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

To receive Christ is to be sealed by the Holy Spirit, who immedi-

ately comes to indwell the believer. By this sealing he is set apart to Christ; he belongs to Him (Mark ix. 41; 1 Cor. iii, 23); he is "Christ's bond-servant" (1 Cor. vii. 22). The realisation of this enables him to say with the Apostle, "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

THE CHRISTIAN'S EXECUTION

At the cross we learn the exceeding sinfulness of sin; there we learn the exceeding riches of God's grace. The cross is the death of the self-life. The former self prior to regeneration. It is the carrying out, in the Person of the sinless Son of God, of the Divine sentence of death pronounced upon the guilty. "Our old man was crucified with Him . . . he that hath died is justified from sin" (Rom. vi. 6, 7). The believer has received his execution in the death of His Redeemer.

THE GLORY OF OUR HIGH PRIEST

It is the person who imparts dignity to the office, not the office to the person, and in this respect Christ stands in contrast to all other high priests. The majesty and efficacy of his High-Priesthood are the more conspicuous because of what has been said of His Godhead as the Son of God, His incarnation for the suffering of death, and His exaltation as the One crowned with glory and honour.

HELP FROM OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

No other can give help as He can to those who are tempted. For He has suffered all the forms of temptation which we experience, passing through them unscathed and victorious, and now in His exaltation with a priesthood characterised at once by essential Deity and perfect manhood, He is able to exercise mercy in succouring those who are tempted. He is thus a merciful High Priest.

CONSIDER HIM

We are exhorted to be constantly considering Him, to seek to take in with earnest attention and continual contemplation all that He has been and is to the Father for us. That is the force of the word translated *consider*.

WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR THE CHURCH?

If a man denies the historicity of the virgin birth, the sinless life, the vicarious sacrifice, the resurrection and ascension to God's right hand, of the living Christ, he plunges himself into a difficulty, for how can he explain the very life and existence of the Church through these hundreds of years?

LIGHT IN THE MIDST OF DARKNESS

How often we have heard of conversions in heathen lands, not merely by what a missionary taught but by the missionary's life in the midst of the darkness!

THE VERY WORDS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

Is there a child of God who has doubts about the accuracy of the original Scriptures? . . . or some fear that perhaps one of the writers made a mistake in a word? As another has said, there may be earthquakes about, but we shall find hereafter that not only the writers, but the words that they wrote have been crying out to us, "*Do thyself no harm, we are all here . . .*"

DILIGENCE TO LIVE IN HIS REALISED PRESENCE

We are to be found "in peace, without spot and blameless" in the sight of God (2 Peter iii. 14). God takes cognisance of His saints and judges their ways, and we are therefore to show ourselves such as are known and approved by Him. Our life is to be lived in the realised presence of the Lord and in the enjoyment of His approbation . . . If we are diligent about this and our habit of life is Godward, we shall experience the inexpressible joy of "a

mind at perfect peace with God." Such a possession is worth our utmost diligence. Its value is priceless.

A DECISION AND ITS TREMENDOUS ISSUES!

"The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge" (Ruth ii. 12). What tremendous issues hung upon Ruth's decision! Her choice of the people of God instead of her own nation found its reward in the birth of the ancestor of the Messiah. The ultimate deliverance of the nation, in the dispensations of Divine grace, by the incarnation and death and resurrection, was secured and made to hinge upon her determination. More still, her choice stands permanently connected with the whole scheme of redemption. How vast, how far-reaching are the effects of what remains on record in that brief yet homely and touching narrative of the virtuous Moabite woman's life!

PARTAKERS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

What heavenly radiance shines upon us when our sufferings are the outcome of our identification with Christ and devotion to Him! We learn what it means to be "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." What a prospect lies before us in such circumstances! "Insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of His glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy" (1 Peter iv. 13).

WHEN HE SATISFIES US

There is indeed a present reward in the enjoyment of His presence and the experience of His love and power. Happy truly is our portion when our soul is as a watered garden, with all that that means of beauty and fragrance and fruit for Him, and when He satisfies us with His goodness. This, however, is but the earnest of what lies before us in fulness when we receive His "Well done, good and faithful servant," when, having suffered with Him here, we shall reign with Him hereafter.

BEARING HIS SCARS

"From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17). These were marks of the sufferings Paul had experienced at the hands of man in consequence of his loyalty to Christ. He bore these scars (*stigmata*) as a banner is carried by the standard-bearer, with exulting joy in the honour conferred upon him. It is not given to many of us to suffer for the sake of Christ in this way, yet we may so enter into the spirit which characterises the apostle, that we shall abstain from emulating the manners of the world and from becoming conformed to its ways, and shall testify by our lives whose we are and whom we serve.

ANTICIPATING OUR DEPARTURE

If we enter into His mind for us, and realise the blessedness of being "at home with the Lord," so far from shrinking from our departure we shall anticipate it with joy. The idea that we shall lapse into unconsciousness until the resurrection is flagrantly opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures. There is not a passage to support it in all the Holy Word. The very phrases "At home with the Lord," "with Christ," contradict the idea. So does the statement that the spirits of departed believers are the spirits of the just made perfect.

SEVEN HINDRANCES TO DISCIPLESHIP DISPLACED

The seven hindrances to discipleship which seem to be indicated in this collection of narratives (Luke ix. 37-62) are: unbelief, dullness, rivalry, prejudice, vengeance, impulsiveness, and half-heartedness. Against these we may antithetically set, as those qualities which should characterise the followers of Christ: faith, discernment, humility, considerateness, patience, forethought and wholeheartedness. The cultivation of these virtues will conform us to the image of our Lord, and make us to tread the path of true discipleship with its holy privileges. These qualities are essential features of the Kingdom of God and it was the extension and the

power of that spiritual kingdom which the Lord was pressing upon His actual or would-be followers.

PARTNERSHIP IN HIS YOKE

A disciple is essentially a learner. In the one place where the Lord speaks of His heart, He says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy (the word really has the significance of "kindly"—easy to bear because of the kindness of the one who imparts it), and My burden is light." How blessed is the partnership of such a yoke! How rich the experience of that discipleship which, while receiving the spirit of the Master, finds rest in His service!

LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE

"And hereby know we that we know Him" (1 John ii. 3). The tenses of the verb differ in the two parts of the sentence. The first is present continuous, expressing a course of procedure, the second is a perfect tense, expressing completeness. To bring this out, we may paraphrase thus: "Hereby we constantly have the experience of knowing that we have come to know Him." For further instances of the continuous tense of this word see ii. 5, 18, 29; iii. 1, 19, 24; iv. 2, 6, 7 (not verse 8), 13, 16; v. 2 (not vv. 13, 15, 18, 19, 20). The word is *ginōskō*, i.e. "to learn by experience," and this is to be distinguished from *oida*, used in the verses mentioned in brackets, which means "to know by immediate knowledge, or by intuition."

VICTORY AND ITS RECOMPENSE

Faithfulness in resisting the spiritual foe is the sure precursor of power in service for God. And the character of the service is often determined by the nature of the victory over temptation . . . Fidelity to the will of God, under pressure of temptation, brings its recompense in this life, and will receive its eternal reward hereafter.

THE FELLOWSHIP WHICH IS OURS

"Yea and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ": there is very strong emphasis on the word "our." This might be brought out in the following way: "The fellowship which is ours (that which distinguishes what believers have in common, in contrast to any other form of fellowship), is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

DO WE REALLY LOVE THE LORD?

The disciples were the special object of the Father's love because they had loved Him, the Son, and had believed that He came forth from God (John xvi. 27). They listen to His prayer, and learn therein what joy He has in their faith. He tells the Father that they have received His Word, have known that He came forth from Him, and have believed that the Father is in Him . . . After the prayer of John 17, they have but to see the crucified One raised from the dead and present with them in resurrection life and power, and their faith will be perfected and unshakeable . . . So may our faith lead us to respond to His love by the loving devotion of our whole being to Him, by taking up our cross and following Him with ardent, unstinted and undying affection. Do we really love the Lord with that deep-rooted affection which will mould our very life and shape our conduct according to His own character?*

THE ASCENSION OF THE SAINTS

The ascension of the Lord both marks the fact that the saints are already spiritually raised and seated with Him in the heavenly places, and is the guarantee of their ascension in one united, redeemed and glorified company when His resurrection shout is heard, and He receives them to be for ever with Himself.

OUR ADVOCATE

We have an Advocate with the Father—*Parakletos*, our English

* The writer was once sitting with the late Mr. William Olney in his study and asked "What was the secret of C. H. Spurgeon's power?" Mr. Olney almost leaped out of his chair and said with deep emotion, "It was his personal love for Christ."

word "paraclete," is used only by the Apostle John in the New Testament, four times in the Gospel (xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7) and here only in his epistles. It literally signifies one who is "called to one's side," and hence one who acts as an advocate, undertaking another's cause. As the corresponding noun *paraklesis* "comfort," "exhortation" shows, it has the extended meaning to signify the act of consoling or supporting. There is a difference in context between this passage and those in the Gospel. Here the word has to do with the question of sin; there, where it is used of both Christ and the Holy Spirit, it more especially refers to solace and support, and so is rightly rendered "Comforter." As a High Priest the Lord Jesus deals with guilt; as an Advocate He effects restoration. Sin interrupts communion, which is restored through His advocacy.

BOLDNESS OR SHAME?

"And now, my little children, abide in Him, that if He shall be manifested we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John ii. 28). Here the reference is to the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is indicated by the words "that . . . we may have boldness." The "we" includes both the Apostle and his readers, both the pastor and those for whom he has cared spiritually. Anticipating the time of the Judgment-seat he looks forward to see in them the fruit of his labours on their behalf, so that he and they too may receive a full reward as a result of their abiding in Christ. The boldness which he trusts will characterise both him and them in that august scene is set in contrast to the shame which would result from their having failed to abide in Christ in this life, and their consequent loss of reward at the Judgment-Seat.

THE SECRETS OF SPIRITUAL UNITY

Unity can exist only where we have a right estimate of ourselves, a realisation of our own littleness and demerit and that unassuming self-abasement which is a reflection of the lowliness of Christ; when, too, we exercise that spirit of glad submissiveness to God's dealings which produces considerateness towards others even when

under provocation, the "invincible might of meekness," which reflects the meekness of Christ and overcomes evil with good. To these is to be added the long-suffering which patiently bears with unreasonableness and meets disappointment with quiet fortitude. Only so can we forbear one another in love. That kind of forbearance is not studied courtesy or frigid endurance, but is characterized by the holy attachment which binds believers together in the bonds of Christian love.

THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE WHOLE MAN

The issue of this life of holiness is set before us in the Apostle's prayer in 1 Thessalonians v. 23: "The God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is to say, he desired for them the continuous and complete realisation of this calling, that by His power they might be enabled to live consistently with the fact that every part of their complex being belonged to God. Not an increasing degree of sanctification is intended, but that the sanctification of each believer might extend to the whole man in every part, and all this so that they might be found to be free from blame at the Parousia.

CHRIST IS OUR LIFE

Spiritual life is maintained in communion with God by faith, and Christ is Himself our life, but this is because He died for us, and we must own His death as our death before we can enjoy His life as our life. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood," He says, "abideth in Me and I in Him" (John vi. 56). The one who believes is brought into permanent union with Him, and it is as we constantly realise the value and efficacy of His death that we really experience what abiding in Him is, and He in us.

CONTINUOUS FEEDING UPON CHRIST

In John vi. 53 the words "eat" and "drink" are in the aorist or momentary tense, indicating the necessity of obtaining life once and for all on the ground of the death of Christ. In the following

verses the tenses are continuous, showing that the one who has passed from death to life appropriates by constant experience as a believer the effects of His death. Effects which are ministered by the Spirit of God. The word for eat in verse 53 is *phagein*, the ordinary word with that meaning; in the verses which follow it is *trogein*, which denotes "to chew."

LIFE OBTAINED: FELLOWSHIP TO BE ENJOYED

The object for which the Apostle John wrote the Gospel was that his readers might "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and that believing they might "have life in His Name" (xx. 31). His object in his 1st Epistle is that they may know that they have eternal life. The Gospel was written to produce faith and its effect, the Epistle was written to confirm faith. The Gospel was written that the blessing of eternal life might be obtained; the Epistle, to produce the joy that comes from possession (i. 4), the joy of fellowship with God and with His Son and with fellow-saints.

SOWING TO THE FLESH OR THE SPIRIT

Sowing to the flesh is not confined to the grosser appetites and doings. He also sows to the flesh who takes thought merely for his own needs and disregards the claims of God concerning others. He sows to the Spirit who, recognising the Divine claims, wholeheartedly presents himself to the Lord to fulfill His will. Hence, in reference to doing good to others, the Apostle proceeds to say "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal. vi. 9).

CHRIST SUFFERED, BEING TEMPTED

He was "tempted in all points like as we are." The question is often raised, how could temptation be real to Christ, considering His absolute sinlessness? The Scripture says that "He suffered being tempted," and that on this account it is that He is "able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18). He suffered being

tempted! His very power to suffer and His moral perfection made the force of temptation the more real and terrible to Him.

THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY

The deliverance of our bodies from bondage to corruption will bring deliverance also from the very presence of sin, and is to take place at the Coming of the Lord Jesus. This redemption of the body is the object of our expectation, and is spoken of as "the adoption," or sonship (Rom. viii. 23); for the sonship which believers enjoy in their union with the Son of God, and which secures their inalienable relationship with God the Father, constituting them "heirs of God" (verse 17), will be consummated when Christ comes "to fashion anew the body of their humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory."

REWARDS FOR FULFILLING HIS WILL

"The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing (or "training") us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 11-13). The hope and the appearing are not distinct in point of time; the appearing defines and specifies the hope. This ultimate manifestation should be the constant anticipation of those who believe the Gospel, and well may the hope inspire such with the aim of being well-pleasing to the Lord. For then will they come forth to reign with Him, exercising the power given to them at His Judgment Seat by way of rewards for faithfulness here in the fulfilment of His will. According as they have lived "soberly and righteously and godly" in the life into which the Gospel has brought them, so will be their reward.

OVERCOMING

"Because ye have overcome the Evil One." Overcoming is a prominent subject in John's writings, especially in this 1st Epistle and in

Revelation. It is found six times in the Epistle and seventeen times in the Apocalypse. The perfect tense indicates the abiding results of past victories. There is, of course, no suggestion that there are not further conflicts in store.

WHAT HIS LOVE OFFERS

We are exhorted to draw near with boldness . . . not that we may "obtain" mercy, as if it were something that involved difficulty in the getting, but that we may *receive* (R.V.) it, as that which His love is ever holding out for us (Heb. iv. 16).

CHRIST'S PRESENT WORK IN THE SANCTUARY

The all-necessary and all-sufficient work of Calvary has been followed by the all-necessary and all-sufficient work of the Sanctuary. Were we more fully to realise what Christ is to the Father for us, and how He is engaged on our behalf, our fears would be banished, our unbelief subdued, our cares removed, and the peace of God would indeed garrison our hearts.

HOW TO ANTICIPATE OUR HOPE

We have fled for refuge to lay hold upon "our hope." To lay hold on it is to purify ourselves even as He is pure, and to anticipate our presence with Him then by the enjoyment of His presence now, enduring as seeing Him who is as yet invisible.

CONFESSION AND COMMUNION

Not only does confession of the Son, that is, confession that Jesus is the Christ and all that is involved therein, carry with it the confession of the Father, it involves, too, Divine relationship and communion with the Father. That is more than holding an article of faith or knowing the will of the Father. Confession of Christ goes with possession of Christ, and those who receive Him become children of God (John i. 12). To acknowledge the Fatherhood of God and deny the Deity of Christ is utterly incompatible. For the

association of the truth that Jesus is the Christ, with that of His relationship with the Father, see Peter's confession (Matt. xvi. 16).

THE CHOICES OF A MORAL BEING

The possibility of doing wrong on the part of a creature is contingent upon the possession of true moral freedom. God did not choose to withhold that liberty from man. The highest privilege he possesses in virtue of his manhood is the ability to accept the benign will of his Maker as the absolute law of his life, and this privilege carries with it the power of rejecting His will. Moral beings, free to obey, have a capacity for disobedience.

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

He who is filled with the Spirit (R.V. in spirit) is marked by cheerfulness, peace and is superior to depression. The Spirit possesses the affections and thought. If we walk in the Spirit (Gal. v. 16) we submit to His leading and power and refuse the promptings of the flesh. He who walks by the Spirit in private life is the one who will keep step with his brethren. If there is diligence in sowing to the spirit by the use of the Scriptures to develop spiritual life, there will be abundant harvest in Eternity.

SOWING AND REAPING

"Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7). That, and nothing but that, for to the law of seedtime and harvest there is no exception in either physical or spiritual realm. We reap what we sow—not what we meant or thought we had sown.

It is fitting to end this book with these 50 short stimulating extracts which will call to mind the gracious personality who has been taken from us after faithfully serving his generation.

The Worker is taken, but the work goes on.

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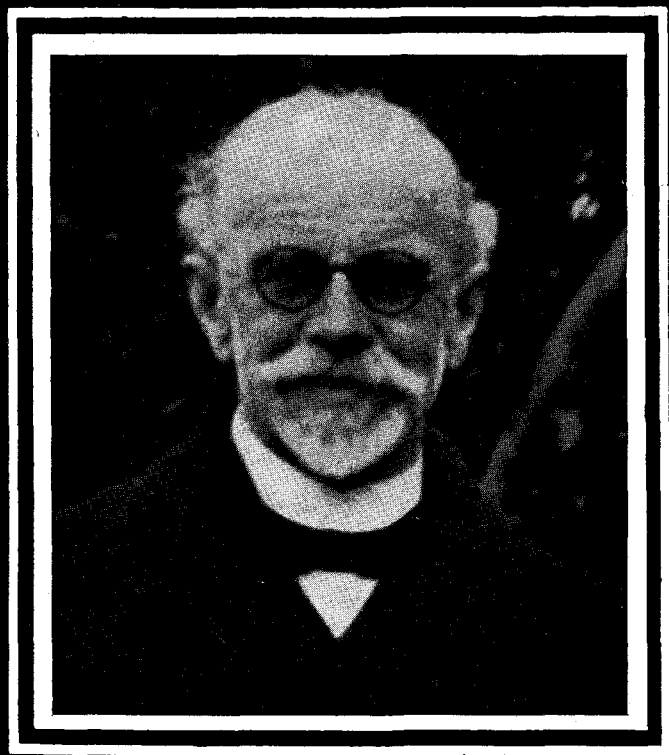
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W·E· VINE

HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY



Percy O Ruoff

Four words in Gen I + II.
 1. create: 1, 21, 27 (So in Num. 16-30, i.e. an original creation).
 2. make: 7, 16, 25
 3. form: 2, 19
 4. build: 2, 22
 1-3 occur in Ps. 43, 7.

Created: bara (Heb), i.e. bringing into existence the non-existent, not same word as Ex. 20, 11, where asah = work with, change, or form the previously existing. When a cake is made it is not created.

There is a unity of purpose & aim visible throughout the whole of the Pentateuch.

Modernism: We are to disbelieve the grand desc'n of the creation of man in God's image + stumble into geological pitfalls. Noah's flood: of the consequences of the Canaanite water finds its own level. The patriarchal history is eclipsed by a puzzle as to the number of Jacob's grandchildren. So much we regard our parents as interesting subjects for the exp'n of an anatomist instead of their living a long & happy life. ourselves as their children. The record meets our needs independently of arch'cal, geological, zoological, astronomical, chemical & other puzzles.

Creation lies beyond the domain of science: science has no tools to write, & no terms to express it. Moreover human language cannot supply terms.

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES, for describing it. It is simply attributed to God's operation. In 1st chap. God's name appears 30 times. Imagine a scientific treatise doing that. In the "5th watch" of the 1st chap. the purpose of God as foretold in the calculation of the 1st chap. is applied to the 5th. The purpose of God as foretold in the calculation of the 1st chap. is applied to the 5th. The purpose of God as foretold in the calculation of the 1st chap. is applied to the 5th.

GENESIS

The subject of Gen I + II is the creation of man to God. Man as a creation is not to be understood + appreciated by the anatomical comparison of his skeleton + skull with that of gorillas + chimpanzees.

a particle not multiplying the heard up things

CHAPTER 1

1 The creation of heaven and earth, 3 of the light, 6 of the firmament, 9 of the earth separated from the waters, 11 and made fruitful, 14 of the sun, moon, and stars, 20 of fish and fowl, 24 of beasts and cattle, 26 of man in the image of God. 29 The appointment of food.

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

3 And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

B. C. 4004.

1 Luke 8. 44.
 2 John 1. 1, 2.
 3 Heb. 1. 10.
 4 Ps. 8. 3.
 5 & 33. 6.
 6 & 89. 11, 12.
 7 & 102. 25.
 8 & 136. 5.
 9 & 146. 6.
 10 Is. 44. 24.
 11 Jer. 10. 12.
 12 & 51. 15.
 13 Zech. 12. 1.
 14 Acts 14. 15.
 15 & 17. 24.
 16 & 17. 24.
 17 Heb. 11. 3.
 18 Rev. 4. 11.
 19 & 10. 6.
 20 Ps. 33. 6.
 21 Is. 40. 13, 14.
 22 & Deut. 4. 19.
 23 Ps. 74. 16.
 24 & 138. 7.

herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day

from the night, and to be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let the light be between the firmament and the earth: and God made two great lights; the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night: and he made the stars.

15 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and God made the sun to govern the day, and the moon to govern the night, and the stars.

God created "The Word" was.

was. God did not create it so for sea 85:45-16 2 waste

deep. i.e. universal flood. This is the flood mentioned in Geology. and so

1 A COMMONLY

R.V.

the light
Spirit to reach wind upon
- same word in 2:1.
- mighty wind
cp Rev. 18:16
v.3. The wind dispelled
the mists at the
command of God &
light shone in
the light & darkness
word on the earth at
the same time as in
the nat'l order of Day & Night
- "The Day One" was: 24 hours
v.6. The light made raised
the waters in swarms
made, ~~apart~~, not created
i.e. God employed the previously
existing. The
prev. existing Heavens was even-
ing and there was
morning, a
v.9. = end of the
universal flood
There was now a great up-
heaval - layers of earth
were raised - hence the
varying strata - & hence
the geological "faults"
The shallow beds are there least
disturbed - limestone peaks
were much disturbed. Hence
the pre-historic rubble drifts,
these collected by the
rushings of water

it was good: and God divided
the light from the darkness.
5 And God called the light
Day, and the darkness he
called Night. "And the even-
ing and the morning were the
first day.
6 "And God said, "Let there
be a firmament in the midst
of the waters, and let it divide
the waters from the waters."
7 And God made the firma-
ment, and divided the waters
which were under the firma-
ment from the waters which
were above the firmament:
and it was so.
8 And God called the firmament
Heaven. And the evening and
the morning were the second
day.
9 "And God said, "Let the
waters under the heaven be
gathered together unto one
place, and let the dry land
appear: and it was so.
10 And God called the dry
land Earth; and the gather-
ing together of the waters called
he Seas: and God saw that it
was good.
11 And God said, Let the
earth bring forth grass, the

12 Gen. 1:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000

15 And let them be for signs
in the firmament of the heaven
to give light upon the earth:
and it was so, ~~and~~;
16 And God made two great
lights: the greater light to
rule the day, and the lesser
light to rule the night: he made
the stars also.
17 And God set them in the
firmament of the heaven to give
light upon the earth,
18 And to rule over the day
and over the night, and to
divide the light from the dark-
ness: and God saw that it was
good.
19 And the evening and the
morning were the fourth day.
20 "And God said, Let the
waters bring forth abundantly
the moving creature that hath
life, and fowl that may fly
above the earth in the open
firmament of heaven.
21 And God created great
whales, and every living crea-
ture that moveth, which the
waters brought forth abun-
dantly, after their kind, and
every winged fowl after his
kind: and God saw that it was
good.

as he, not created, they were
created before. They were
now made to do their
work upon the earth, which
had appeared in the
preceding day
v.16 = God made two lights
to rule the day & the night
to rule the light, & the
stars to rule the night
also. Sun, moon &
stars were not created
on this 4th day, they
were created on the
time of verse 1: they
were made to do
a work now for the
newly appeared earth
(i.e. land etc.)
v.17 let fowl
18 Heb.
on the
face of the
expanse
of the
heaven.
19 the
great sea-
monsters,
20 kinds,
its
its author and
the principles of its
testimony.
In establishing a history
it is of importance
to bear in mind the
gist & intention of W.

The most criticism of details of the Pentateuch
keeps out of sight the important features, & wastes
attention by harping on lesser matters.