

TWENTIETH EDITION

# Selections of Ministry During Forty Years.



*By* FRANKLIN FERGUSON.

ISSUED FREE

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*Abridged and revised.*

By

FRANKLIN FERGUSON

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a Magazine for Ministry of the Word, etc.

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"Story of a Life Yielded to God."

"Saved, Kept, Satisfied"—Gospel Tract.



READ THE FOREWORD.

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# F O R E W O R D

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FOR more than forty years the writer has enjoyed the highly valued privilege of contributing articles, from time to time, to various magazines. This ministry the Lord has graciously used to the spiritual good of thousands of His dear saints in many lands, and even to this day expressions of appreciation are heard. We bow in worship before our God that He should thus bless our humble service.

The aim throughout has been to give practical ministry for the heart and conscience, and to exalt the Father's well-beloved Son. No attempt is made at scholarly teaching; but to give plain, simple, heartsome matter that all can understand and appreciate.

We offer this modest little Book to the reader, with heartiest wishes for his spiritual welfare; and we pray that the Lord who called us to His service long, long ago, may graciously accept this further effort to feed His flock. He is indeed worthy of all we can do.

**The Book is issued free,** as the Lord provides. Twenty editions have now been printed, 54,000 copies in all. Anyone wishing to extend this ministry can have some copies, and welcome, by making application to the undersigned. The same offer applies to the other publications, viz., "The Church of God, its Truths and Principles," "The Lord is Coming," "Story of a Life Yielded to God," "Saved, Kept, Satisfied"—Gospel Tract.

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# Selections of Ministry.

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## We shall not Pass this way Again.

WHEN we finish a stage in our life and look back upon it, every thought and word and act is there in its place, just as we left it. All is fixed, steadfast, irrevocable, and as one has said: "stereotyped for ever on the plates of eternity." At the Judgment Seat of Christ the bygone days will all come back, one by one, in order as they went, to meet us again in the presence of our Lord. What shall His judgment be? How much shall remain as "gold, silver, precious stones," after He has tested all? (1 Cor. 3:10-17). We cannot recall the past, for it has gone far beyond our reach; but the present is yet in our hands to make it what we will.

Everything passes on without a pause. Time is like a ship which never anchors. Every day brings its work, its opportunities, its responsibilities. What are we doing? Time runs through our hands as water through a pipe. It pauses not till it has run out, and if we stand by unconcerned, making no effort to arrest the flowing stream, we shall not realise our opportunities and duties till they have passed away for ever.

We cannot accomplish all we should like to. We cannot sow every field we see, but we can drop a few seeds by the way as we pass along in fellowship with the Great Sower. There is no seed so small that does not propagate and multiply itself. The bare grain appears veritable weakness as our hand drops it into the ground, but a day comes when we may joyfully gather the waving corn, it may be thirty, sixty or a hundredfold (Mark 4:8). Though there may appear nothing to mark our life as great, yet there may be among the seeds in our basket one that when sown will become a large tree, under whose shadow many shall find rest. Despise not the day of small things (Zech. 4:10). Do your little, and do it well. Opportunities may

appear small and trivial in themselves, but who can say what the issues shall be; and, remember, the same opportunity will never return. We shall not pass this way again.

It is a law of nature that things leave some mark behind them. Leave a mark we must. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7). If we felt the greatness of life, and its possible issues, and the inexpressible value of the things which fill its brief and narrow span, it would tinge every thought, word and act, with the conviction of what must be. Let us seek that Divine grace which shall make us blessings to those who come after, marks that will secure the Lord's "well done" in the Coming Day, when He recalls that which is past.

"God Himself is ever giving;  
Loving is the truest living;  
Letting go is twice possessing."

## Modern Allurements.

WE are living in an evil day, in which the love of many towards Christ is waxing cold. Worldly friendships, society aspirations, love of pleasures, popular recreations, and costly extravagance: these are eating up the very life of Christian testimony, besides destroying the pilgrim character; so that in very many instances there is a surprising lack of those things which should distinguish the professed child of God from the children of this world. "How is the fine gold become dim!" may well be remarked (Lam. 4:1).

Let us remember, when allured by the bait of what is called "good society" with its assumed advantages of social position, that there is between Christ and the world nothing in common. His Cross is a permanent barrier whereby "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). No society is better than that of the "household of faith," described as the excellent of the earth (Psa. 16:3, R.V.), and no position is comparable with the believer's standing in Christ.

What an inordinate thirst there is for pleasure, that leading evil characteristic of the "last days" (2 Tim.

3:4). Everything now must be seasoned with pleasure to suit the popular taste, otherwise things are rejected, even by Christians. Sobriety is out of fashion, and we must not take matters too seriously! Even the preaching of the Gospel must be "bright" and the Services "attractive"; albeit the Holy Spirit has come to convict men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8). Our Christian gatherings also must have a spice of "entertainment," and the speakers "witty" and amusingly "anecdotal," to suit the spiritual degeneracy that has set in. Religious Babylon is permeated with this spirit of amusement. Let us beware of innovations from that quarter, so grieving to the Holy Spirit. The realised presence and power of God, so needful, is not associated with entertainment and lightness.

Be careful of recreation, which is going mad these days. A pleasant walk, a little gardening, fishing, some home hobby, etc., were once the recreations—good for body and mind alike. Now it is the tennis party, the golf links, the cricket and football field, the bowling green—mixing of saved and unsaved together. In the evening, the social party, the popular music, the entertaining lecture, and last and worst, the "pictures." These are not God's provision for the recreation of His redeemed ones, purchased by the blood of His crucified Son; but they are pleasures this world provides for its own. Pleasure, rightly understood, is of God and is good; but it is pleasure in fellowship with Christ and in the simple things His own hand provides.

What unrestrained extravagance is taking possession of the people, and the children of God are being caught in its grip. Things that are plain, neat, simple, and inexpensive, are being exchanged for the up-to-date, fashionable and costly things; as in modern houses and furnishings, latest model in cars, stylish clothing (some hardly decent), golden ornaments, etc. This copying of a doomed world ill befits a heavenly pilgrim and stranger. What an amount of money is wasted on costly extravagant things, that could be used for God and laid up as treasures in Heaven. Oh, for a return to a simpler and Christ-like manner of life, becoming the followers of the One who was meek and lowly in heart (Matt. 11:29).



## Keeping the Heart.

**K**EEP thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Oh, if only these words were engraven upon the tablet of each heart, how differently would it fare with many who set out for the heavenly Canaan!

When Jehu, the grandson of Nimshi, lighted on Jehonadab coming to meet him as he went on a Divine errand to take and slay the prophets, the servants, and the priests of Baal, he asked this son of Rechab, "Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?" The reply was prompt and emphatic: "It is." Then the fiery Jehu gave him his hand, and said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord" (2 Kings 10:15-16).

"Get right with God" is a summons that has startled many a careless Christian's heart and suddenly awakened many a sleepy saint's conscience. What a need there is that the Holy Spirit shall speak these words solemnly in our hearing! The lives of numbers of Christians have become like a rudderless ship upon a rough and dangerous sea. Oh, what will the end of it be?

Is my heart with Him—God's beloved Son? The question should be seriously considered in these days when the god of this world, Satan, is so busily catering for the lusts of all men; when children of God are tasting that wicked one's dainties and losing their appetite for the bread from Heaven. Surely our souls need restoring, especially in view of the near return of our Lord and the soon-ending day of grace.

From the heart proceed "the issues of life." What vigilant guard we should set over those thoughts and ideas working in our bosoms, which ever and anon are released from custody and take form as actions. A little drift will turn the course of a stream; so may a small action lead to momentous issues, turning the whole course of life into a different channel, for good or ill. God alone can tell the result.

"The wide effect of many a word and deed  
Will rise before us in Eternity."

Therefore, "Keep thy heart above all that thou guard-est" (R.V., marg.).

## Seeing the King.

THAT soul-thrilling promise in Isaiah 33:17—"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty"—is nearing its fulfilment. The deepest longings of the ransomed ones will be fully met when at last their eyes see the King. We have waited long for that day, and often the heart-cry has been, "Make haste, my Beloved!" Blessed moment, when we shall rise to meet Him "in the air," and in the "twinkling of an eye . . . changed," and that wonderful Scripture fulfilled, viz., "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). Then shall be seen myriads of ransomed ones, all bearing the very image of Christ.

The King shall be seen in His beauty. "The Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief," will be seen no more as such. The sorrows of Calvary are over for ever, and that visage "once so marred more than any man" is marred no longer, but resplendent in beauty. He will be "altogether lovely" when we see Him as the "Chiefest among ten thousand" (S. of S. 5:10, 16). And what a thought that this glorious Being should have experienced the terrors of Jehovah on the Cross, forsaken of God, and despised and rejected of men. Surely we shall worship and adore Him when in brightest glory we behold Him!

How fully assured then shall we be, that Satan is definitely bruised under our feet (Rom. 16:20), together with all the powers of darkness. How we shall shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). Who can conceive the mighty triumph of that hour!

When we see Him in His beauty, we shall be for ever with Him (1 Thess. 4:17). Ten thousand years in His blessed presence will not bring us any nearer an end; for death will have been abolished, and the wonderful vista of age after age, in endless succession, will meet our enraptured eyes!

## Forward or Backward.

THERE can be no such thing as a Christian being stationary. We are always moving. Either there will be a pressing forward in Divine ways, or there must be declension from God and the Word of Truth. We do well to consider our motion; for on the one hand the backslider's loss is very serious, both now and hereafter; and on the other there is great present and future gain accruing to the child of God, who steadily advances in the way of His commandments.

The annual stock-taking is of vital importance to the man of business, that he may know definitely how he stands financially and, should times be hard, stock-taking passes anxiously. None, save fools, carry on business without sometimes closing doors for an investigation of their affairs. How much rather should the Christian, in these "perilous times," face the question in the presence of the Lord, "How am I getting on? Have I declined from the ways of God, turning to the right hand or to the left?" There can be nothing more needful for the believer than to enter his room, and having closed the door, look into the business of his soul in the Divine Presence.

How shall the mariner know that his vessel is out of her course through strong winds and adverse currents, unless he takes his bearings and consults his chart? A fine ship, with precious lives and valuable freight, has been entrusted to him, and neglect would be criminal. So with our lives as Christians: to whom much has been committed, of them much is required. "To the law and to the testimony" was the watchword of the faithful in Israel of old, when the nation's propensity was backward (Isa. 8:20). We are facing fearful odds in these "last days," but if there is the "purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:23), then by His grace the obstacles in our path will become so many incentives to renewed effort, and stepping stones to ultimate blessing. Even the feeblest saint may be enabled to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

The formation of Godly habits in life, persisted in

from day to day, is the only way of spiritual growth and progression. There is no "royal road" to anything. No, it is a patient continuance in the will of God which crowns life with true success, and at the end earns our Lord's "well done" (Matt. 25:21). May such be ours!

## Contentment better than Gain.

**B**EHOLD the man who is contented with the portion God allows him. He hath a continual feast. He knows no real scarcity, for the Lord doth bless him, so that oft has he found a "scanty fare for one has been a royal feast for two!" A man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses, but in being blessed of the God of Heaven and earth.

"I would not ask for earthly store—  
Thou wilt my need supply;  
But I would covet, more and more,  
The clear and single eye,  
To see my duty face to face,  
And trust Thee, Lord, for daily grace."

Then shall my heart keep singing, and well it may. Let them be rich who will. Those roses may stay where they are, the thorns are too many and sharp. Wait on, there are fairer flowers without briers. They who will be rich will surely pierce themselves through with many sorrows, and fall into many and hurtful lusts (1 Tim. 6:8-10). He who lays up treasures in Heaven is the wiser man, and the coming day will declare it.

Remember Abraham and Lot. Abraham sought not after flocks and herds, silver and gold and apparel, men-servants and maid-servants; yet God gave him of all these things abundantly. His eye was single, his body full of light (Matt. 6:22). God was sought first; other things were added (Matt. 6:33). Lot, on the contrary, could not keep his eyes off the well-watered plain of Sodom. He coveted it; he sought for more; he got it; he lost all. Unhappy man! Let our choice be to walk with God, and no good thing will He withhold. Perhaps we could not all be trusted with as much as Abraham, not being so single-eyed as he.

## Heaven our Home.

WE are going to a Country surpassing for glory and beauty the utmost stretch of the human imagination—Heaven. Concerning it we often sing:

“Heaven is our Fatherland,  
Heaven is our Home!”

Through infinite grace we have become the children of God, redeemed by “the precious blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:18-19), and can look up to Heaven to the One who fills the Throne, and say, Father! We are going to “a Land that is fairer than day,” with the sweet thought that it is our Home.

Heaven is a Place, literally (John 14:2), not simply a condition. It is a place to which our Lord has gone, calling it “My Father’s House,” where there are many “mansions” or abiding places. Yonder He has prepared a “place” for us, and if it were not so He would have told us, so He said.

Heaven is a Paradise (2 Cor. 12:4). God made a Paradise for our first parents, a specially beautiful spot in the fair creation fresh from His hand; there He walked and talked with them until sin was committed. What a charming “garden of delights” it must have been! It has gone from this scene; yet there is another, a fairer one, in the realms above, where sinners saved by “the Blood of the Lamb,” will “eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7); where no sin can enter, nor the communion be hindered. How gladsome is the prospect!

Heaven is a Country (Heb. 11:14-16), transcending all human conception. If this world, still wonderfully lovely, has a charm all its own, then what will the Heavenly be like, the “better country,” where indeed “every prospect pleases” and man no longer is vile, and God and the Lamb are there?

There are Inheritances in Heaven (1 Pet. 1:4), to be truly possessed and enjoyed; likewise many and great rewards for faithful service (1 Cor. 3:14). We know how a country will honour its illustrious citizens; even thus will it be with those whom the King Eternal delights

to honour, honour surpassing all earthly glory (compare Esther 6:7-9).

The Conditions of Heaven will differ greatly from our present experiences. There will be no night there, but one eternal glorious day; no sun or moon will give their light, for God Himself will lighten all the fair scene; the inhabitants feel no fatigue, they never grow old, and they count not time by years; nor shall sorrow, pain, tears, or death be known any more at all, for God will wipe away all tears and make all things new (Rev. 21:4-5).

In Beautiful new Bodies, like our Lord's resurrection body, we shall appear; for no other is suited to the Heavenly environment, and none other could bear the "eternal weight of glory." How strangely does the thought of Heaven move us at times; setting the heart yearning for the day when the eyes shall at last behold our beautiful and everlasting Home. And the best of all our beloved Lord will welcome us there, who loved us and gave Himself for us, ever to be with Him.

## Divine Fellowship Conditional.

IN the first chapter of the First Epistle of John, there is brought under our notice a fellowship of an exceedingly blessed and holy nature, even "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Like the Salvation of God, which is offered to all mankind, yet realised only by them that believe the Gospel; so this Divine fellowship, whilst open to all saints everywhere, is experienced only by such as observe the simple condition—"If we walk in the light as He is in the light." Many there are who undoubtedly are children of God, yet are they far from this holy communion, because of unjudged sins in heart and practice.

The message that we have heard of Him is that "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." We might have thought a more appropriate announcement would have been, "God is love"; for are not fellowship and love mingled together? In chap. 4, love is fittingly the

message, for the theme is God sending His own Son into the world that we might live through Him. But in chap. 1, it is "light" not "love"; because fellowship is the subject, and it can only be had in holiness. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:45); and we are exhorted to "follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

We can deceive ourselves in the belief that "we have fellowship with Him," whilst we may actually be "walking in darkness." If such is the case, how sharply are we reminded that "we lie, and do not the truth." How it calls for an honest examination of ourselves, with unsparing measures with our wicked ways. A real desire to walk with God will humble the flesh within us. How tender will be the conscience, and so sensitive of sin in thought, word, and deed!

Why is there introduced here the Blood of Jesus Christ cleansing us from all sin? Just because the Divine Presence reveals the slightest evil in us. If, on its discovery, we confess and judge with abhorrence the sin, then He is "faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Thus are we maintained in the light, and so have we "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Then in that happy, daily walk together, with nothing between, in sweetest communion shall we enjoy "the days of Heaven upon the earth" (Deut. 11:21).

## The Lack of Power.

THE complaint is made that there is a sad lack among the saints of the power of the Holy Spirit in life and testimony. Admitted that this is so, what then is the cause and what the remedy? We will consider the subject in the light of Holy Scripture.

The normal state of every soul "born again" is that he has a supernatural life (John 3:3-8), and his body has become a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), without which he has no part in Christ (Rom. 8:9). Moreover, at his new birth he is by the Spirit baptised (immersed) into one body, whether Jew or Gentile, whether bond or free, and is made to drink into one

Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). There is no second baptism of the Spirit; this is done once for all for every member of Christ's body.

But there is the filling of the Spirit, with varying degrees of fulness. Its extent is governed by the measure that the Spirit is ungrieved within us (Eph. 4:30); by how truly the "branch" abides in the Vine (John 15:4); and by how closely we walk in the truth (3 John 3). "Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). "Be filled with the Spirit" is as much a command as "love one another" (John 15:12).

Given these essential conditions, the believer then comes under the controlling power of the Spirit, and, unmistakably, there will be a life filled with God. The real point at issue is not that we shall have more of the Spirit, but rather that He shall have more of us. Consequently the more we remove the obstructions of sin, worldliness and unbelief, the more will the Divine Power be in evidence in our life. There may be nothing spectacular; but a holy and serene power will be there, which will tell for God continually.

Everything is known by its fruits (Matt. 7:16). The proof of being full of the Spirit, is "the fruit of the Spirit" produced in the believer, which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23). A Spirit-filled soul will undoubtedly exhibit conformity to the image of God's Son (Rom. 8:29), and in him will "the life of Jesus" be manifest (2 Cor. 4:10). More time given to prayer and confession and meditation in the Word, with a closer walk with God, will make us, in a very real sense, "vessels meet for the Master's use" (2 Tim. 2:21).

Now that the Spirit has come, according to promise, and taken up His abode in all saints, we have no indue-ment of power to tarry for, as before Pentecost; but now simply to yield ourselves to God (Rom. 6:13), that He, unhindered, may work in and through us, "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). We shall not need to think or talk of "power," it will be there in the life for certain; because God Himself will verily be in us and with us, and His realised presence is power.



## The Supreme Requisite.

ONE thing stands pre-eminently above all others in our relation with God, and that is obedience. He attaches the utmost importance to His will alone being done, whether in Heaven or on earth (Matt. 6:10). Implicit obedience on the part of His creatures is demanded, and never will He allow His supreme will to be resisted with impunity (Rom. 9:19). Pharaoh found this out to his complete destruction. Why have the Jews, the ancient chosen people, been so severely chastened? Simply, they persisted in refusing to obey the voice of the Lord. Of that nation we have His pathetic lament: "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river" (Isa. 48:18). To know and do the will of God is what He requires of us. We must therefore read His Word daily, meditatively, consecutively, prayerfully, and according to the four key words of Deuteronomy—hear, remember, keep, do.

So important is it to learn to obey, that God begins with the child, giving it the only commandment with promise, that it may be well with the child and its days lengthened. And the father is told to bring up his child "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:1-4). If the child does not learn to obey the parents when it is young, how will it obey God in after life? Young believers are exhorted to submit themselves unto the elder, obeying them that are the guides of the Assembly (1 Pet. 5:5; Heb. 13:17); yea, all of us are enjoined to be subject to one another; and this subjection is likewise to be rendered to those who are in authority, to the King and all rulers (1 Pet. 2:13-17).

The "spirit of lawlessness" is spreading everywhere—in the home, in the Church, in the world—preparing the way for the Lawless One, whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His Coming (2 Thess. 2:8). In contradistinction, let us seek grace that it may truthfully be said of both reader and writer, "Your obedience is come abroad unto all men" (Rom. 16:19).

## The Supreme Example.

THE beloved Son of God is presented to us as the absolute and perfect expression of obedience to the Father. He it is to whom the whole family of God is pointed, that all may see the beautifully flawless Standard for our emulation. We read the very remarkable statement: "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience" (Heb. 5:8). His life on earth, from the manger to the Cross, was one of complete subjection to His Father, and He could say without contradiction, "I do always those things that please Him" (John 8:29); and again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me" (John 4:34).

Twice from the opened heavens did the Father bear witness of His Son; first, at the close of His private life in Nazareth, and later on the Mount of Transfiguration in the midst of His public ministry—"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). At the end of His testimony our Lord could say with perfect truth, "I have glorified Thee on the earth. I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4). His obedience was "unto death, even the death of the Cross" (Phil. 2:8). To the followers of His steps comes the admonition, "Be thou faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10).

For all the children of God, what can be better for them than that they, too, "learn obedience" throughout the varied experiences of life, by considering Him? We shall not reach the same standard of excellence as the Master, for in this also "He must have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1:18); yet we may so live as rightly to merit the term "obedient children," and so give pleasure to the heart of our Father in Heaven. He who "learned obedience" in the days of His flesh, has become "the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. 5:9); and when the Voice was heard on the Mount there were added the two important words, "hear Him." He who perfectly obeyed commands our obedience, as He is our Lord; but it is the obedience of love. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14:21).

## Character of Worship.

A SWEET simplicity marks a Scripturally-gathered assembly of saints for worship. No human minister or leader or presiding elder are ordained to guide the proceedings. The worshippers are gathered together by Divine appointment to meet their risen and glorified Lord, once crucified for them. A table is spread with a loaf and a cup of wine—simple emblems of His body given and His blood outpoured. The purpose is to show the Lord's death and to remember Him. All are wholly dependent on the Holy Spirit, who is the Revealer of Christ to the soul, and who brings to remembrance the things concerning Him. He leads forth the worship.

In the Book of Revelation, chap. 5, we see the redeemed multitude worshipping before the Lamb; occupied with His worthiness, the death He died, the results of His redemption; while praise, thanksgiving and adoration flow from their hearts. This indicates the nature of acceptable worship.

First, we contemplate the Son of God in the past eternity—His glory, majesty, excellence, absolute perfection; Himself the object of the Father's love and delight, the alone worthy One. Behold Him from Heaven's side. See the Son in the bosom of the Father, before the world began. The sight fills our vision, expands our conception of His transcendent glories and supreme worthiness.

Next, we meditate on the amazing stoop from the "excellent glory" to Calvary's suffering and shame. We consider the emptying of Himself of the outward display of glory and majesty, taking the form of a bond-servant, making Himself of "no reputation"; yet fully retaining His attributes as God, though in a truly human body. Deity and humanity united in His person, but not fallen humanity (Phil. 2:6-8). We think of Him upon the Cross, "The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29); we think of the "waves and billows of God's wrath going over Him, the Bearer of our sins; we see Him enduring the terrors of

the Almighty to save us from the "vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7).

"Oh hear that sad, expiring cry,  
     'Eli lama sabachthani';  
 Draw near and see the Saviour die,  
     On the Cross!"

Now we turn to the blessings which flow to man from the sacrifice He made: "Hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood . . . hast made us kings and priests . . . we shall reign." There is in all this the Godward side of the Cross, likewise the manward; an equal balance of the truth is essential to a full standard of worship. God has been glorified; we have been saved. All we have and are we owe it to His blood. It is this personal touch that begets our gratitude and calls forth adoration, praise and thanksgiving. "He loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

This holy contemplation of our Lord fills the heart, finding expression in hymns, in audible or silent thanksgiving, and by selections from the Word. "Whilst the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof" (S. of S. 1:12). The Lamb who was slain is alive for evermore (Rev. 1:18). He whose death we commemorate is coming again, to receive us unto Himself. Then the emblems on the table will be needed no longer, for we shall behold the pierced hands and feet of our Redeemer. But till He comes we show His death in the appointed manner.

## The Sure Word.

VERY important is it for the heart to be firmly established in the certainty of every "Thus saith the Lord." These are days of research and criticism, when things are not taken for granted because taught by one's forefathers. Everything nowadays is thrown into the crucible and tested, the most hoary and time-honoured beliefs being treated like all else. The analyst and dissector cannot keep his hands off things; not even the Word of God is too sacred for his fingers. With great pretensions of learning and superiority, the impious critics

discuss the Sacred Oracles and audaciously pass their judgment on what the Holy Spirit has written for our learning—those grand old doctrines for which many of our ancestors suffered martyrdom. Ah, these modern deceivers who beguile unstable souls, will one day die, and the Scriptures they pulled to pieces in life may be read at their funeral, and will later condemn them at the judgment (John 12:48).

Satan, however, has not skimmed the cream of scholarship. Along with the irreverent study of the Bible are found pious men in the front ranks of every branch of learning, who prayerfully examine the Old Book, verse by verse, line by line, and word by word; whose conviction of the Divine authorship of the entire Volume is profound. Their difficulty is not to believe the Word, but to disbelieve it! These God-fearing scholars exhort us: "Continue thou in the things thou hast learned and hast been assured of" (2 Tim. 3:14). Let us heed the exhortation and stick with might and main to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

There is nothing else for it, but to fear God and trust His Word, and be simple enough to believe it from cover to cover, and confidently proclaim its doctrines. Christ's blood and righteousness is our plea, and around His Cross we rally. Nothing can shake the Cross nor destroy the peace it gives.

Only the Christian whose faith is in the "more sure Word of prophecy" (2 Pet. 1:19) can be unaffected by all things around, and wear a smiling face and sing, "All, all is well!" Should he be called to pass the "vale of death," for him it is no "leap in the dark," or entering upon the "dread unknown." The Word of God received in faith has shed a clear ray of shining light upon the future, which brightens as the end draws near. The believer's spirit emerges from the "shadow of death" into broadest daylight, the light of the Saviour's presence. We shall see Him and be like Him in that day. The far-off glory gleams through the portals of the Heavenly City. Christ has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

## A Path no Fowl Knoweth.

**G**OD has a path for Heaven-bound pilgrims. It is beyond the ken of nature's sight. The fowls of the mountains and the wild beasts of the forests know not of it. The vulture's eye discerning from the mountain peak the fallen carcass on the plains below, has not espied the path. The prowling lion in quest of prey has not crossed it, though all the tracks of the desert are known to him (read Job 28:7-28).

Where then is the path, seeing it is hidden from the eyes of all living? The "men of renown" are seldom found among the travellers by this way; for "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. 1:26).

There is, however, a path through the waste. Many, to their joy and everlasting reward, have found it, and by faith trodden it. In Hebrews, chapter 11, called by somebody "The Divine Westminster Abbey, where Old Testament saints have a memorial before God," their immortal names are enshrined. They would tell us that the path of walking with God, the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it; for the treasure they have found in His companionship cannot be valued—no, not with the fine gold of Ophir. They weighed well the path in the balances of the sanctuary of God, putting the world with "the pleasures of sin" in the one scale, and "the reproach of Christ" in the other (Heb. 11:25-26). They estimated that Christ and His reproach far outweighed the world at its best. What was all earthly status to them? Their far-seeing eyes had espied the "city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

This, then, is our path in the land wherein we are strangers, and it leadeth to the Land that is fairer than day. The way is no less sure than the love we adore, and we have nothing to fear nor to dread. We shall find to our joy that, "The path of the just is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18, R.V. mar.).

## The Life that Tells.

THE Christians of good purpose are they who walk with God (Gen. 5:22), in separation from this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). As they walk with Him there is perfect agreement (Amos 3:3); there is sweetest fellowship (1 John 1:3); there is the power of Christ resting upon the soul (2 Cor. 12:9); there is world unconformity and Heavenly transformity (Rom. 12:2); there is the eye turned toward the City of God and the lips confessing we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13-16), and the heart in joyful expectation of the Saviour from Heaven (Phil. 3:20-21). All this is accompanied by diligent service for the Master, as Gospel testimony, pastoral care, teaching the Word, according as each one has received the gift (Eph. 4:11).

In a walk that tells for God, there is special emphasis to be placed upon taking heed what we hear (Mark 4:24). From the platform and the press an immense volume of teaching is pouring into the world, much of it destructive to the child of God. To keep clear of this poisoned torrent is a great difficulty. A man can be judged by the things he gives his ears and mind to. Oh, for the ear attentive to the Divine Voice, amid the babel of earth sounds. The most dangerous thing, by far, is the religious press with its specious propaganda of Modernism—a modernising of the Holy Scriptures, altering and rejecting to suit the intellect and taste of man. "The Lord shall have them in derision" (Psa. 2:4). No religious book or paper should have our time and attention that impairs the appetite for the Holy Scriptures, and fails to kindle love for the person of Christ. What can compare with that all-comprehensive and infinitely precious Library of 66 volumes—the Word of the Living God! Life and time alike are too short for the prayful study of these books, bound together as one harmonious whole.

That aged and saintly man, Robert Cleaver Chapman, whose reputation for Christ-likeness is world-wide, was, practically, a man of one book—the Bible. It is said he was once asked if he would like to read a certain book, to which he replied very graciously: "I am reading a most interesting Book which I have not yet finished." And he never finished it, though he lived nearly 100 years.

## God's Axemen.

IN old time "a man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees" (Psa. 74:5); and the spiritual woodman is accounted famous of God by his weighty and skilled use of Holy Scripture upon the stout hearts of rebellious men. There have lived but few to rank with John the Baptist, whose blows fell with a thud and a keenness of edge that shook oaks of Bashan. But his axe was heavier than the weak muscles of this generation could swing; it had been forged in the wilderness, and its edge was guaranteed not to turn. The new pattern is regarded an improvement on the heavy and roughly-shaped one that John used. It is lighter and more highly polished, and there is much greater comfort in swinging it. Yes, but what sort of trees can such axes fell?

When John wielded his axe in that sermon reported in Matthew 3, he made the chips fly. That rough-looking man in the camel's hair suit, with loins girt with leathern girdle, whose meat was not dainties for fastidious palates, but locusts and wild honey: that man produced a trembling in the hearts of the dwellers of Jerusalem and all Judea, and a confessing of their sins. This is the need of the times: men of God skilled in the use of the axe of the Word, and not mere playing at being woodmen and snipping trees with gilded toys. We need men whose lungs have inhaled the desert air, who hold not men's persons in admiration; men absorbed with one object, the Cross of Christ; men who traverse the world as strangers and pilgrims, who suffer the loss of all things for the Master, as did Paul. There is a widespread outcry nowadays against hard strokes; but we have observed that the heavy blows of a man of God are worth their weight in gold, for the good they bring to souls.

Brethren, let there be heart and vitality in our ministrations; let us put soul into our gospel preaching and exhortation to saints; let us speak in all fidelity as before God, and speak as men on the eve of a catastrophe, for verily the climax of the age is approaching. Let us



be men essentially of one Book; and not merely read it, but soak the mind in it till we think of little else, morning, noon and night. And let us be men of the sanctuary who commune with God, and from His presence come forth with the Divine message.

## A Woman's Hair.

A SERIOUS thing is the cutting and shingling of a woman's hair, that which God declares is her glory (1 Cor. 11:15), and was given her for a covering (verse 15), and as the sign of her husband's authority (verse 10, see Scofield Bible). Of course the worldly woman is determined not to follow Bible ideas, and laughs at the very thought of restricting the cutting of her hair. But shall a Christian woman, knowing that to have short hair is a shame to her (1 Cor. 11:6), and knowing why the long hair was given her by God; shall she go and have it cut? To put aside the Word of God so that she may follow the ways of the world which "lieth in the evil one" (1 John 5:19, R.V.), is a serious offence, though some may have acted without sufficient thought of wrong.

In drawing the attention of Christian sisters to this thing, it is not done in a carping spirit; but because the teaching of Scripture is as clear thereon as can be, and because so little attention is given to it in public ministry. Many transgress for lack of knowledge, and this shows the need for wise and gracious exposition of the Word by elder brethren that may prevent sheep and lambs of the flock being shorn; and may lead in instances where the hair has already been cut, to it being let to grow again. All truth is to be ministered in its due season, without partiality, in view of the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Let all concerned "suffer the word of exhortation" (Heb. 13:22), and not thrust aside what may feel disagreeable. Did we but realise what is the present trend of things in the world, as God sees, how careful would we be to show our obedience to His holy will in all things!

## Taking Time to Read.

A CHRISTIAN manufacturer was asked, "When do you manage to find time to read and study the Word of God?" The questioner well knew the gentleman's life was a very busy one; that to minister on the Lord's day and at other times, as he did, must need a fair share of time allotted to private devotion. "I never find time to read," he replied, "I am at the mill from early till late, and business needs so much of my attention, how do you think I could find time?" His friend said, "How then do you manage?" Looking at the other's puzzled face, he said, "I will tell you: I take the time. For one hour in the day I turn the key of my private office, and during that hour no one can see me while I read and study the Word. If I did not take time, I should never find time."

About the year B.C. 1451, God drew His people's attention to the importance of an habitual meditation in His Word, saying, "This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8).

Four hundred years later, the Lord needed to remind His people of this exceedingly important habit of life. In describing a truly blessed man, He says of him, "His delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psa. 1:2-3).

After a lapse of a thousand years, A.D. 60, God speaks for the third time to impress upon forgetful minds the highly essential practice of steadily going on, day after day, with the thoughtful reading of His Word: "Whoso looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

## Testing Times.

THE seasons all have their turn. First, we see the spring-time with its buds and blossoms and its signs of life and growth on every side; then comes the genial summer with its warmth and sunny days, bringing on and ripening the fruits of the earth; autumn with its dry and withering leaves, sees the completion of the ingathering of the harvest; while dreary winter follows, laying its icy-cold hand upon everything.

Assemblies of God's people have their seasons in like manner. It is not always spring and summer, or even autumn; there comes also wintry experiences which will test the soul severely. How lovely is a company of saints in the joy of their first love, and progressing in testimony and fruit-bearing till summer has come. They are like "gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters" (Num. 24:6).

"Tongue can never express  
The sweet comfort and peace  
Of a soul in its earliest love!"

Wherever God does a work, Satan with his utmost power and subtlety seeks to mar that work, and if possible destroy it. Opposition from without never succeeds like trouble within; the former will weld the saints together, the latter will tear them asunder and weaken them. We may wonder why the Lord permits a testing time to come upon us; but He has in view the refining of gold and the purging away of our dross. Difficulties will arise, with perplexity how to act. Unpleasantnesses come in, roots of bitterness spring up unexpectedly, no sooner one trouble is past than another arises. Some believers become estranged from their brethren, and may even leave the Assembly; a chilling air seems to pervade the atmosphere, freshness and warmth are gone, and saints are losing interest in the meetings.

When such a wintry season has set in, the one thing needful is to put on warm clothes which God has provided. They are these: Bowels of mercies, kindness,

humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness, Word of Christ dwelling richly, singing with grace, doing all things in the name of the Lord. Read Col. 3:12-17. In due time the spring will return, with all its abundant signs of charming new life and growth, and we shall be able to say, "Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come!" (S. of S. 2:11-12).

## Caring for the Saints.

**T**HERE is an urgent call for godly and disinterested men as shepherds of God's people. The flock for which the Good Shepherd gave His life is pressingly in need of them; men of the sort described by the apostle Peter, who will "feed the flock which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Thus will the God-given overseer sincerely and genuinely look after the flock, and his care will have the appearance of a spontaneous flow from the heart, like the upflow of an artesian well. Of such it will be blessedly true, "The hearts of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother" (Philemon 7, R.V.). This condition comes by sweet communion with God in the sanctuary, and there realising how precious to the Shepherd are the sheep and lambs of His flock. He who desires the work will often find it arduous, at times unpleasant, and even unpopular; he must be prepared for suffering, discouragement, perplexity and misunderstanding. If prepared for this unique path, which true and noble men have trodden, which the Lord's footsteps have marked as His own; then He hath need of thee!

Besides the usual work of oversight in well established Assemblies, there is much need of wise men with shep-

herd hearts, set at liberty to visit the little struggling companies of believers here and there; some hidden away in the backblocks, some nestled on the lower slopes of ranges, some in the up-country townships—all needing a sympathetic care for their state. To cast in one's lot with the people of God scattered abroad; for them to live and labour; to cheerfully "endure all things for the elect's sake"; this will bring its own special reward in the "crowning day" coming by-and-by.

A fine example is given us in Luke 2:8, to be well remembered: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night." Like Jacob they, probably, could say, "Thus I was, in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from mine eyes" (Gen. 31:40). In this thing also let us keep before us God's servant Moses who "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible," and who had "respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11:24-27).

The great mustering of the sheep from every land is coming, when the whole flock shall be gathered in the fold above. In view of that time it behoves us to be busy in the field, early and late, counting no toil too much for Christ's beloved sheep.

## Family Training.

**T**HERE is not seen, speaking generally, that holy zeal for families which characterised Moses' demand to Pharaoh to let all Israel go three days' journey into the wilderness to hold a feast unto the Lord. He said, "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go . . . there shall not a hoof be left behind" (Exo. 10:9, 26). Noble declaration!

It is painful to see Christian parents, even well versed in truth, bringing up their families in such a manner that they acquire a greedy liking for worldliness in its attractingly varying forms. Some are desirous of having the children introduced into what is called "good society." Friendships are sought after and encouraged with those who are strangers to the ways of God, and

the children are invited out to things that once upon a time the parents protested against. Having tasted "the pleasures of sin," you cannot restrain them. Numbers of fathers and mothers will see their children "go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46), all because of the worldly upbringing they gave them, and for not checking them when young. Neglect in the spiritual training of families will yet be proven a fearful thing.

The history of Lot is sad reading. Though he was called "a righteous man" (2 Pet. 2:8), yet he settled in Sodom, taking his family with him into that wicked environment; marrying some of his daughters to men of the city, for he had risen to influence and sat with the chief persons in the gate. But what a wreck of a home! Part of his family perished in the fire God rained on Sodom; his wife was judged as soon as she left the doomed city; whilst his two daughters who escaped with him, proved themselves afterward as shockingly depraved women (Gen. 19:31-38).

What a different story is told of Abraham. God has summed it up in these magnificent words: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19).

In Nehemiah's day so serious, indeed, had family matters become, that the children of many of the Jews "spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jew's language, but according to the language of each people" (Neh. 13:24).

From so distressing a state of matters, one turns with much pleasure to 1 Chron. 25:5-6, where we read: "And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the King's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman." Think of it: a family of 17 serving in the house of the Lord! Heman must have been a glad father and a thoroughly godly man.

## Keep the Blinkers on.

SOON after my conversion, in the year 1881, I spent a holiday with my father at a watering place in the West of England, where he was engaged in Bible-carriage work. On the day I returned home two evangelists called, who accompanied us to the railway station. As the train moved, one of them stepped up to the carriage window and said, "Keep the blinkers on. Good-bye." For a time I was left puzzling over what he could mean, until I remembered that "blinkers" are to keep a horse looking one way—straight before it; to prevent its attention being taken with objects to the right or to the left, or things coming up behind. They were words fitly spoken, and oft remembered with profit.

Solomon may have had the same idea when he wrote: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil" (Prov. 4:25-27).

Keep the blinkers on, and keep them on all the time: the danger lies in taking them off, even for a moment. No carter or farmer with his wits about him, would remove the blinkers from the head of his horse while still harnessed to his cart. Many a good horse, whose owner laughed at the mere suggestion of it "playing up," has done so when the blinkers were taken off, and smashed his cart and harness.

The young colt in its training dislikes its freedom interfered with. You see it shake the head and prance about and try to get the blinkers loose. The spirited creature must be subdued, and the master have his way. His patience and perseverance gains the day, and though the restriction at first felt irksome, the master has carrots and oats for his colt besides blinkers. "Be not as the horse, which has no understanding"; think it not hard of the Lord to say, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." We are in His service through infinite grace; and if He bids us turn our eyes from the delusive pomp and glitter of this world, let us do so with good will and cheerful heart; for we shall find that His restrictions are not irksome in view of the compensating privileges and blessings of obedience.

## Translating Baptism.

**I**N the Scriptural ordinance of Baptism we declared our death, burial and resurrection with Christ, that henceforth we should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). The old "I" reckoned as dead and buried, with all his ways; yet raised to life as "a new creature" in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

Was Baptism merely our obedience to an ordinance of the New Testament? It was that, and much more. It was intended to be a governing principle of life for the rest of our days on earth, that is, the day-by-day reckoning of ourselves as fully identified with Christ: "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17).

What sanctifying power has such truth when introduced into the daily affairs of life! Are we ceasing to translate Baptism into practical living? Since the day we were buried in the water, typical of death, and rose again from the figure of the grave, in the professed experience of a new life, dead and buried to all the former worldly manner of living, and now alive to God in the Kingdom of His dear Son: God has been looking for clear proof of all we professed. Has he found it? The time since our Baptism has tested us. Where God by the Holy Spirit has done a real work in the soul, there should be a marvellous change that cannot be hid to the eyes of all living. Where is the good of Baptism if not followed by death to sin, self and the world; and by the exhibition of heavenly tastes, desires and works? If we have at all failed thus to live, let us turn again to the Lord with contrite confession, and He will forgive us and heal our backslidings; and though the loss suffered cannot be regained, yet the rest of our time may now bear fruit to God's praise.

We are in the Laodicean stage of the Church's history, which is just before the coming of the Lord (Rev. 3:14-22). One solemn statement characterises it: "Luke-warm, neither cold nor hot." So distasteful is it to Him that He declares, "I will spue thee out of My mouth." Laodicea has much profession and seeming prosperity,



yet possessing nothing of real value in the sight of Heaven. Let us be among the overcomers of this closing period, who hear the Master's voice as He stands at the door and knocks; and who open to Him, and He enters and sups with them and they with Him!

## It is the Last Hour.

THIS present period of time, from the Cross to the Coming of the Lord, is looked at in two ways, viz., it is a day to be followed by a night; it is a night to be succeeded by a day (Isa. 21:11-12).

Speaking of His service as the perfect Servant of God, our Lord said, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). Judging of the times we are living in, we may indeed say, "The day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out" (Jer. 6:4). It is quite evident there remains very little "day-light" now, ere the darkness closes in, and we are compelled to rest from our labours for the Lord.

The great Apostle Paul, viewing things from a different standpoint, says, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12). In the Gospel of Mark we find the night divided into the four watches—even, midnight, cock-crowing and morning (chap. 13:35). The "Sun of Righteousness" set at Calvary in a stormy scene, and the night set in—long, dark and dreary; no light anywhere visible, but as seen by faith in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-6).

The question of Isa 21:11, is given in the margin of the Revised Version as, "Watchman, what hour of the night?" Not the state of the night, as in the text, but what is the time? Weary watchers are longingly looking for the "break of day," and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2). What joy thrills the heart as the watchman's cry is at last heard, "The morning cometh!" which means the long night vigil is ended.

To all who compose the Church, the Coming One will

first appear in the morning watch as "The Bright and Morning Star," the forerunner of the day (Rev. 22:16). They say, "The darkest hour is just before the dawning"; and as this world state seems to have reached its darkest, then let us comfort our hearts by the words of the beloved apostle John, "We know that it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18, R.V.). The hour is made up of moments, quickly passing. It may be any moment now, and we shall hear the thrilling "shout" of our descending Lord, and we shall be "caught up" (the raised and the living saints together) to meet Him "in the air," in the "twinkling of an eye" (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58).

But what of the night? Christ who is the only source of Divine light, is "despised and rejected of men"; therefore spiritual darkness covers the face of this evil world, notwithstanding man's boasted light and knowledge. Make no mistake about this age: it is an age of grossest darkness and fearful retrogression, having rejected the true Light. "The morning cometh, and also the night." We look for the dawning of a perfect day, without clouds; afterward will come the night of outer darkness for the wicked, that will know no morning!

## Consider your Ways.

• WE are astonished beyond measure at the trifling and unreasonable excuses Christians often make for staying at home from the Lord's Table. It all arises from such a low state of soul that the heart's action towards that blessed One who was crucified, has become so feeble that in some cases it might almost be questioned whether it pulsates at all.

A little headache, a slight cold, a trifling indisposition, a melancholy feeling, a wet day: all serve in turn to empty seats which by right should be filled. It is rather far to walk, the day is hot, I feel rather upset, there is so much to do when you have a family: all are excuses which should not be entertained in view of the Lord's request on the night of His betrayal, "This do in remembrance of Me." The Son of God, having before

Him the appalling death of the Cross (all for our sake), could set His face steadfastly towards Jerusalem, where He had to suffer; whilst we have to-day the melancholy spectacle of some of His disciples excusing themselves from His Table by all manner of excuses.

Let us observe the ways of these Christians when it is Monday and not Sunday, when their objects in life are to the front. What an astonishing transformation! Now the difficulties of home-life and business are undertaken with energy and persistence. Hail, rain or indisposition, these people will be found attending to their duties, and will smile and say, "Diligent in business, you know!" At home, too, see how the children are making ready for school in time for 9 a.m., whilst on Lord's day morning it was a hurry-scurry to be ready for 11 o'clock. "Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways" (Haggai 1:5). The heart is off its centre, Christ. Once upon a time we heartily sang—

"Thou, my everlasting portion  
More than friend or life to Me!"

and a once favourite text was, "My Beloved is white and ruddy, He is the chiefest among ten thousand" (S. of S. 5:10). It used to be, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psa. 122:1). The day was when the memorial feast would not have been missed had we to weather a storm to be there. We would sit at His table and weep as hearts were softened at His "free grace and dying love"; shut in with Him, the light of earthly glory died, while our lips took up the song—

"Fade, fade each earthly joy—  
Jesus is mine!"

We looked not with restless eyes at the clock on the wall, but, entranced we gazed by faith on the crucified yet risen One, and we wished for a thousand tongues to sing our great Redeemer's praise. A day in His Courts was better than a thousand (Psa. 84:10); yea, a foretaste of Heaven below!

"I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek Thy servant" (Psa. 119:176).

## What is the Harm in it?

THIS is a remark people often make. Would it not be much more to the point, at a time when craving for something questionable, to reverse it and ask one's self, "What is the good in it?" When we find such questioning arising in our heart, is it not an indication that we are not fully satisfied with God's dear Son and our portion in Him? When God separated Israel of old from the life and bondage of Egypt, and brought them to Himself into the wilderness, He gave them manna fresh every morning to sustain them: man did eat angel's food (Num. 11:4-9; 21:5; Psa. 78:25; John 6:48). Their Redeemer had given them Heaven's best and satisfying portion. Never man before had tasted such food, and nothing else could have been better for them. Yet, they became discontented with the Heavenly provision; their souls got "dried away"; they even "loathed" the manna and wished for some of the old fare of Egypt, and wept because they could not get it!

One may ask, "What is the harm in the fish, cucumbers and melons of the Egyptians?" leave alone the strong-tasting things as leeks, onions and garlic. Such as the first three may be all very well in the land of bondage, but this was not God's choice for His pilgrims in the desert; for them He had, literally, bread from Heaven. Satisfaction with Divine provision means happiness; discontent with it means murmuring. So the people murmured.

These lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, and pride of life, are not of the Father but of the world (1 John 2:15-17). Somebody may exclaim, "Oh, you are a kill-joy, God means us to enjoy ourselves." But we reply, "Killing what joy?" Certainly not "the joy of the Lord," the "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (Neh. 8:10; 1 Pet. 1:8). These so-called "harmless" things will, sooner or later, hinder a walk with God. Let us avoid them; then we shall have a soul fresh like a watered garden, in which "are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old," for our Beloved (Isa. 58:11; S. of S. 7:13).

Sometimes the question is put in this form: "Where

is the Scripture against it?" In all our associations in life, God has written all that He deems needful for our guidance. If a question arises, however, for which there is no direct instruction, then we should inquire of the Lord, and we may be directed to something in the Word that will give an indication of what would be, in that instance, consistent with the will and character of the Lord. The absence of a clear command does not give liberty to do what we may think wise, nor is its omission an implied sanction. Let us observe the silences of God, which may have quite as important bearings as His uttered Voice. Where there is no commandment, neither a principle to guide, then we show our wisdom in leaving the matter quite alone.

## Refuge in Troublous Times.

WE live in days of trouble, probably exceeding anything since the world began; but worse conditions are yet to come before the end, when the Lord shall set up His Kingdom. The most stable things, likened to earth and mountains, are moved and carried, as it were, into the midst of the sea. The nations of Europe and the Far East rage, and the war and tumult of their strife is heard afar off, even to the ends of the earth, and all nations are moved with the swelling thereof. The basest passions of men are let loose, and broken up is the thin veneer of civilisation, culture and modern Christianity. Colossal destruction stalks abroad, and inconceivable misery follows its steps. Human blood has flowed in unheard of measure, and the wails of the bereaved have risen to Heaven in increasing volume. "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure" (Isa. 5:14). What multitudes are drinking a cup of wormwood and gall!

Amid the confusion and strife there is a safe retreat for the believer, found in the Lord Himself. Oh, the comforting words of Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear . . . the Lord of Hosts is with us!" He alone can be our confidence. He has His way in the sea and His path in the mighty waters (Isa. 43:16). "Be

still, and know that I am God," are words to calm our agitated spirit. The heart finding repose in Him shall not be moved, and the streams from the river of God shall make us glad.

The 46th Psalm is clearly a Millennial psalm; the exaltation of Christ, as God of the whole earth, is its theme. The works of Jehovah, and their decisive results in the desolation of human pride, and the quelling of the anger of the nations by the majesty of His power, are in view. Israel's deliverance from all their enemies will then be consummated, and a new era of peace and blessing upon the earth will be brought in. The Church, caught up and glorified, will reign with Christ.

But the Psalm has a present application to all who have found a refuge in God, amid the changing scenes and vast upheavals of these "last days," appropriately termed "perilous times" (2 Tim. 3:1), also translated "difficult" and "fierce," the combination giving us the full idea. We may truthfully and triumphantly exclaim, "The God of Jacob is our refuge!"

## A Throne of Grace.

OUR ever gracious God and Father has made loving provision, by "the throne of grace," to meet the weaknesses and supply the needs of His children here below. Read Heb. 4:14-16.

"Having then a great High Priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need" (R.V.).

Infirmity is feebleness, failing, a want of strength. In itself it is not sinful. The apostle Paul in referring to Christ's strength being made perfect in his (Paul's) weakness, says "Most gladly therefore will I rather

glory in my infirmities"; how could he glory in them if they were "besetting sins"? Sin calls for punishment; infirmity appeals for help.

Our great High Priest is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for in all points He was tested as we are, sin apart. He became a real man, with human feelings and sympathies, but with this difference—in Him was no sin and He knew no sin (1 John 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:21). As "the man Christ Jesus" He could feel tired with a journey; could feel the discomfort of His surroundings; understood the pang of hunger and thirst; knew the feeling of loneliness; wept at the grave of a loved one; felt the sharp arrows of criticism and false imputation; experienced the relentless opposition of Satan: in short, He was no stranger to all that goes to make up human experiences of life, right well knowing its varied trials and sorrows. He could never break down, whatever the test; and His perfect knowledge of our every circumstance gives the fullest confidence in coming to Him. He will not fail the least of us, but at our cry will hasten to assist, pouring His comforts into our soul, giving power to the faint and increasing strength to them that have no might (Isa. 40:29).

Drawing near "with boldness" implies the speaking all one thinks; and that perfect love which casteth out fear (1 John 4:18) emboldens us to use all holy frankness. The "mercy" we shall receive, means kindness, beneficence; in the Psalms where the word so often occurs it may be rendered loving-kindness, as in the Newberry Bible. "Mercy" is not mercy for the past, but present kindness full of love, alleviating the suffering, cheering the tried, and strengthening the weak. The word "grace" is graciousness, and indicates a friendly willingness to help in time of need.

"Let us therefore draw near" to this "throne of grace," where there is abundant mercy for all the children of God, and we read "His mercy endureth for ever" (Psa. 107:1). Then shall our mouth be filled with laughter and our tongue with singing as we come from "the throne of grace," saying, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad" (Psa. 126:2-3).

## Complaints and Accusations.

A VERY common sin among Christians, and the cause of much deadness and spiritual poverty in Assemblies of saints, is this speaking evil of one another. We deplore its existence, with its withering effects. It is utterly un-Christian-like, and thoroughly like Satan who accuses us before God day and night (Rev. 12:10). That "little member," so sternly denounced by the apostle James (chap. 3 of his epistle), will give many of us a great deal to answer for, when the Lord shall judge His people.

That aged and honoured servant of God, Mr. Robert C. Chapman, stopped an "accuser of the brethren" with the emphasised remark, "My brother, they are beautiful sheep, they are beautiful sheep!" The accusation may have been true, but Mr. Chapman could not lend his ears to tales of the shortcomings of those who, in spite of all, were yet "precious as the blood that bought them," in God the Father's sight.

I do not say we should refuse ever to hear an evil report of a fellow-member of Christ; but when "faults" are mentioned between one another, the Scripture is careful to introduce prayer: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed" (Jas. 5:16). Though this does not apply, strictly speaking, to telling tales; the point is that when "faults" are in anywise referred to, prayer ought certainly to follow. How else can fervent love be maintained in the family of God?

Remember what the Lord did to Miriam by the way, after that the people of Israel were come forth out of Egypt. Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and He said, "Were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" Miriam became leprous, white as snow. Upon Moses' intercession for her, the Lord commanded she should be shut out of the camp seven days as unclean, and after that she was received again healed. But we also read that during those seven days Israel journeyed not; reminding us that the sin of evil-speaking had hindered the progress of God's people. Read Numbers 12:1-16.



## Judgment Seat of Christ.

[I]t is well ever to keep in mind the "day of account" that is coming for us all. We are "stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10), and as such shall have to render to our Lord an account of our stewardship. All that we are accountable for must needs be brought before the appointed Auditor, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God has announced, "We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ," and "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12); moreover, "God shall bring every work into judgment" (Eccl. 12:14). There can be no exemptions.

The idea held by some is that the Judgment Seat will be simply the joyous occasion of the distribution of rewards, and the conferring of honours, and the giving of praise and glory to all who deserve it; which is far from being the full truth of the matter. It will certainly be all this, but more. There will also be "hidden things of darkness" come to light; "counsels of the hearts" made manifest (1 Cor. 4:5); the wrong materials used in our building operations will be revealed and burned; great losses suffered; rewards and honours forfeited for ever (1 Cor. 3:10-15). Oh, think of it! How sobering to our minds should be this serious aspect!

All the redeemed family will share equally the Father's love and the many glorious privileges of His Home on high, the eternal abode of His myriad hosts of sons and daughters. But in the Kingdom to come, the places of honour and the rewards are apportioned to those who have merited them, according to their degrees of faithfulness on earth (Matt. 25:23, Luke 19:12-19).

The question of our eternal salvation will not be raised at the Judgment Seat; that was long since settled at the Cross for every believer. The fact of our standing before Christ in our bodies of immortality disposes completely of such an idea. It is the Lord judging His people as to their testimony, works and service down here; approving and disapproving; rewarding and with-

holding rewards; adjusting all things by His perfect standard, once for all.

With everything finally settled and all the Lord's people having received their due, tears wiped from weeping eyes, then will the eternal glory be ushered in. No more will a cloud cross our sky, sorrow and pain will be felt no more at all, and the Church will appear "as a Bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). Happy day that will never have a night!

Though solemn and searching as this subject is in certain respects, yet we can thank God for the Judgment Seat of Christ. It will mean much to have had the mind of Christ upon everything; with His correct estimate of all; so that never a question shall ever be raised again; but there will be the feeling of full acquiescence with all His judgment, without a tinge of jealousy at others receiving more honours than ourselves; all saints perfectly happy together, for ever, in the eternal glory of God!

## The Lord's Table and Inconsistency.

THE order and meaning of the Lord's Supper is set forth in 1 Cor. 11; but in chap. 10 the apostle emphasises a specially important principle, namely, that fellowship at the Lord's Table demands separation from all things opposed to it, or inconsistent with it. He shows that all who partake at the Table are identified with all that it expresses; just as all who partook in Israel's sacrifices of old were identified with the altar upon which they were offered. Therefore to have fellowship with whatever things are anti-Christian is to be definitely associated with what is opposed to Christ—a very serious conclusion!

When an Assembly meet to "break bread," they exhibit a wonderful communion or participation: they are sharers in the body and blood of the Lord. That body has been given for them as the perfect and all-sufficient sacrifice to God; that blood in its eternal efficacy has

been shed for the remission of sins. In this Divine Substitute they are fully accepted before God, and now one with Him by a union indissoluble. As they worship the Father in spirit and in truth, and partake of the emblems, they enter in thought into the significance of the Cross, with bowed hearts, often too full for words to express the felt emotions.

There is a cancer attacking the spiritual state of many professed believers, causing serious symptoms of insensibility to the things of God. It is the lure of this present godless age, in its round of pleasures and worldly associations, spiritually called adultery and fornication (1 John 2:15-17; Jas. 4:4). At the time when Israel provoked God to jealousy with their golden calf, there ensued an almost unbelievable state of religious confusion: Aaron the High Priest built an altar before the calf, and said, "To-morrow is a feast to the Lord!" The people brought their burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and "sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play" (not pray)—they danced before the idol! (Exo. 32).

The parallel is found to-day when professed members of Christ sit down to partake of His Supper (supposedly one with Him in His death and resurrection), and rise up and join in, more or less, with the ways and pleasures of this condemned world, for the rest of the week. It is the sin of idolatry: other objects have displaced the Christ of God in the heart's affections.

The issue is quite clear: Christ or the world! There can be no compromise. It is Christ and His rejection, or the world and its favour; it is the Lord's Table, or "the table of demons" (all unholy fellowship). A choice must be made and a decision reached; a laying aside of all things inconsistent with the truth of the Lord's Table.

"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11:28-29).

## Womanly Modesty.

THE influence for good of a virtuous woman is beyond calculation. A chaste woman is the greatest help and blessing to a man; whereas an indiscreet woman has quite the reverse effect. The training of each generation is more in the mother's hands than the father's, for she, naturally, has more to do with her offspring than her husband, though he is assigned the position of head of the house, filling the place of authority and rule. A virtuous Christian mother, living according to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, is the sweetest and most ennobling influence to be found on earth. Where homes are blest with such, and where a nation's womanhood is truly womanly and modest, then we look for nothing else than the best results.

In the light of our Lord's prediction that the last days would resemble the times of Lot (Luke 17:28), we can expect to see the breakdown of all moral restrictions and good standards in society, with an awful retrograde movement among women generally. Debase them, move them out of the place God has assigned them, then look for the complete corruption of the whole earth and the inevitable righteous judgment of God.

Since the Great War there has been a definite and dreadful move in this direction, so that conditions to-day are tolerated which would have shocked everybody in 1914. Look at the indecent attire, the smoking and drinking and bad language among young women, the painted and powdered faces, the cropped hair, the wearing of slacks, the mixed bathing on the beaches, lying in the sun almost nude to the public gaze: in short, a hideous familiarity with that which is fast and indelicate, arousing all the viler passions of men.

"Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2) is a clear command from Heaven; and "Women adorn yourselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety" (1 Tim. 2:9), is another charge just as plain.

## Preaching of Hell.

THERE is a widespread revolt against the doctrine of hell. It is generally excluded from the modern pulpit and platform and the religious press: very few people believe in it now. Howbeit the Son of God, during His public ministry on earth, preached hell fire and the everlasting punishment of all who disbelieve the Gospel. His words are awful. He speaks of "hell fire" (Matt. 5:22), "whole body cast into hell" (ver. 29), "a furnace of fire" (chap. 13:42), "the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:45). He well knew what He was saying! He taught the people in parables; but when interpreting to the disciples about the tares recorded in Matt. 13, the plain words "fire" and "furnace" are used, words He knew they would understand clearly.

The denial of the eternal punishment of the unbeliever is a matter of great moment; for like the keystone in an arch, if it falls so will the rest of it fall. The atonement of Christ and the infinite nature of sin, lose their character when hell is thrust aside. Satan is directing a vigorous attack against this doctrine of hell; and how awfully sad to see hoary-headed professors of theological colleges being used by him to discredit the solemn truth. But where the Devil cannot get in his lie of "no hell," then he gets in the thin end of the wedge of doubt, suggesting that hell fire must not be understood as literal fire, it is "symbolical" language! Yet a symbol never comes fully up to the thing it symbolises, it cannot; so, from this showing, eternal fire is a worse form of fire than the fire we are acquainted with. When fire assumes a mystical, not-understandable something or other, then it is a thing no longer alarming. The cry of fire! fire! thrills the sinful soul and makes the hypocrites to tremble.

It has been well said that "the Word of God should be read on the principle that if the plain and obvious sense make good sense we should seek no other sense." This principle is as sound as it is simple. Luther and the Reformers who shook Europe, used plainness of speech. Knox, Fox, Whitfield, Wesley, ranked high

among God's mighty men, and they scorned to use language of double meaning. Spurgeon, whose words have been blessed to the ends of the earth, preached the fire of hell in its literal awfulness, so that no person could mistake his meaning. This man was very unsparing of fanciful interpreters of Scripture, convinced that the Bible is meant to be understood by plain people in a plain way.

By all means let our preaching be equally balanced—God's love and everlasting salvation; man's ruin and eternal doom. Nothing but this will do. Keep to Scriptural terms, however plain; do not search for smother words than God uses in expressing His solemn truths, for drowsy souls need something far different than velvet-tongued preaching.

Whilst bearing in mind all we have written, we wish it to be understood that we should abhor a heartless, glib way of speaking of hell, it is so serious. While not to be faithful about it must be regarded as worthy of censure, yet the subject should never be referred to except under deep conviction of its solemn and momentous nature.

## The Unequal Yoke.

THERE is one form of the unequal yoke to which we would draw attention, especially for the consideration of young believers, namely, the unequal yoke of marriage.

Marriage is God's institution for the propagation of the race (Gen. 1:28): also it is His wise and gracious provision that man shall have a help meet for him, and this is found in marrying a woman (Gen. 2:18). The Scriptures state, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord" (Prov. 18:22). There have been, and are exceptions to this institution, and quite allowable; yet marriage remains as the general rule for all of us.

For the people of God in an evil and hostile world, there is laid down a very important principle for their guidance—on no account must they enter into an unequal yoke; there must be no linking together of diverse

things whether in business partnerships, the social circle, the religious sphere, or the marriage state. In the beginning God divided between the light and the darkness (Gen. 1:4), and that division, in its varied aspects, goes right through to the end of time. In the New Testament we have a most definite command, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14-18). The whole passage should be carefully considered. Any diverse union is wrong for a child of God; yet the most serious is the matrimonial one, for this reason—you cannot get out of it until death breaks the tie; in every other case you can draw out, though it may cost much to do so.

Let us consider some of the things involved in a believer marrying an unbeliever. Two utterly diverse persons are inseparably joined for the term of their natural life: one is a child of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, bound for Heaven; the other by nature is a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3), the spirit of Satan working in the heart (Eph. 2:2), and on the broad way to destruction (Matt. 7:13). What a monstrous thing to join two such persons together in the most intimate relationship known upon earth! What must the Holy Spirit, indwelling the saved one, feel over such a union! In this union you cannot read the Word and commune with God together; tastes and desires are not the same; spiritually there is nothing in common. Should children come of the marriage, what difficulties will arise! How will this division between father and mother affect the young mind?

The believer's hope is the coming of the Lord at any time now. What would then happen? The saved partner is released, by Divine grace, from this sad yoke and taken to Heaven; the other partner is left and goes on to eternal judgment.

In the case of a man and woman married while both are unconverted, and one of the two afterward saved, the case bears a different aspect and does not come under the same Divine displeasure. The grace of God in saving the one may also reach the other; but the believer in this instance did not enter into an unequal yoke, and is not required to separate from the other. See 1 Cor. 7:12-16, which applies in this case.

## Not Knowing the Truth.

IN the early part of last century many of the Lord's people were led to see from the Word the simple and Scriptural way of how Christians ought to meet for worship and testimony, free from all human traditions. God and the Word of His grace was seen to be all they needed (Acts 20:32). It was no small matter to leave old associations and break many tender ties; but the truths they had learned had become so precious that they were prepared to suffer the loss of all things for Christ, and for the excellency of the knowledge of Him (Phil. 3:8).

A new generation has arisen among us who have not had the same exercise of heart, as their fathers; many of them have a shallow conception of the truth of their Church position, and are unable to give a satisfactory reason for where they are. Their parents were connected with the Assembly and they, as a matter of course, attended until God revealed Christ to them as their Saviour, and they took their place with His saints. Very likely the step cost them nothing. Others are among us because they like the way of gathering, or because they were saved at the Gospel meeting.

But if the question is asked as to what Scriptural reasons have they for being in the Assembly, how few can give a proper answer. Though this may be the case, we are, however, thankful to God to see them all where they are, and hope they will be happy in the Lord and in the fellowship of His people; yet we would very much like to see an apprehension of the truth which gathers us to the peerless Name.

There is need for clear ministry of the Word bearing upon our Church position, equally with the truth of our condition as saints. Such teaching is plainly before us in the Word, and can be so presented as not to foster in the heart a feeling of self-complacency, saying, "We are the people!" Nay, rather will the thought of the worthiness of Christ beget in the heart a devotion which surrenders all names for His Name, and will foster a humility of mind at the grace of God in leading us into His truth.



## Eternal Security.

THE whole work that saves the soul was fully accomplished when Christ suffered and died for our sins upon the Cross, making complete satisfaction to God for all our guilt; His precious blood laying a basis on which a Holy God can be "just and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus." There is, therefore, a full acquittal from all sins, with a guarantee of eternal salvation.

A most conclusive statement is found in Heb. 10:14, "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Seeing that the sins of the believer will God remember no more (verse 17), there is no more offering for sin (verse 18). The sacrifice Christ made on the Cross was once for all, therefore the one who trusts in Him is for ever saved. God cannot righteously demand satisfaction first at our Surety's hands, and then again at ours.

The most emphatic passage of Scripture concerning eternal security is this, from the Good Shepherd Himself: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."

Who can snatch even the feeblest believer from the almighty grasp of both the Father and the Son? No man, demon or Satan can, for we are perfectly secure. Under no consideration whatever will the Shepherd permit the loss of one lamb or sheep of His flock; for so is His Father's will (John 6:37-39). When at last all the flock are gathered in the Heavenly fold, the Great Shepherd will be able to give the full tally. Praise His name! And not only have we a Saviour, we have a Keeper too (1 Pet. 1:5); so it is not a question of us striving to keep something, or to hold on; the saving and keeping are both alike in His hands.

To satisfy still further our doubting soul, God has not only given us His Word that we are eternally secure, but He has sworn by Himself that He will perform it. Read attentively Heb. 6:16-20. By these two immutable (unchangeable) things, His Word and His oath, we have a strong consolation, as an anchor of the soul. Anchors go overboard and fasten on what is outside the ship, for no sailors cast anchor down the vessel's hold. The soul's rest and security is not found within its own bosom, but outside of itself altogether, resting safely and peacefully in Christ alone, and He can never fail.

Finally, in overwhelming assurance, we have the testimony of the Epistle to the Romans, chap. 8, verses 29-39, where everything in time and eternity is brought under review, and the definite conclusion is thus stated: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## What should we do?

THIS age—politically, socially, commercially, morally, religiously—is fast heading to utter destruction. Great and subtle powers are at work undermining the old foundations of humanity, and working for the corruption of everything under the sun. Behind it all is the mighty power of an unseen master-hand planning and controlling. He is "the god of this world," Satan, the adversary of God and man.

What should Christians do in the light of such things? Should we act excitedly, rushing round to all and sundry as if we saw a fearful danger impending, and do all sorts of extraordinary things? No, not at all. Let the Word guide us. Our Lord tells us that the end will be as the days of Noah (Luke 17:26); what is mentioned of him and his times will give us the indication how we should act.

In Genesis 6 we find a condition of unrestrained wickedness, violence and corruption; so advanced indeed that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." The inter-marriage of the righteous seed with the evil, had resulted in all flesh being debased; yet the union produced "mighty men," and "men of renown," and "giants"; but unregenerate. In all this we see history repeating itself as the world is nearing its close.

In the midst of that corrupt antediluvian scene there arose a man like unto ourselves. His name was Noah. He was a subject of the grace of God, a poor sinner saved to be a witness for the Lord. He began to live in separation from the wickedness around him, for he "walked with God." That walk marvellously altered his whole behaviour, making him, as intended, a contrast to and a testimony against the lawlessness rampant on every side. Divine grace made him a "just" man among the unjust; "perfect" among the crooked; "blameless" (margin) among the transgressors; "righteous" among the unrighteous; obedient (Gen. 6:22) among the disobedient; a man of faith among unbelievers; one "moved with fear" (Heb. 11) among the indifferent; a "preacher" for God among all the people; and through him the Holy Spirit strove with men (1 Pet. 3:18-20). His godliness was the condemnation of the sinners of that time.

The call to-day is for men of like stamp. To walk with God and live godly is the true answer to the question, "What should we do?" It is the quiet, steady, persistent and consistent daily striving, in the energy of the Holy Spirit within us, to live justly, uprightly, blamelessly, righteously, obediently, full of faith, preaching and testifying, and habitually walking with God. To act so will have its due effect. Christ will be glorified, sinners will be saved; of the rest our testimony and godly lives will be their eternal condemnation, just as Noah condemned the people of his day.

## Speaking up.

A WORD of exhortation on this subject is really needed; for many dear brethren have fallen into the way of speaking so low, and indistinctly, that much of what they say is unheard and lost upon the listeners. The speech may be good and what we wish to hear, but through faintness it fails largely to benefit. By a little thought and practice this defect can be corrected, to the relief and profit of all.

When one rises to take part in a meeting, he should remember that he is not now engaged in a personal conversation, therefore he must raise his voice louder. The correct thing is to always address the person furthest off in the company; make sure they hear, then all the rest will. This is the chief consideration in speaking. The next is to clearly pronounce the words, and do not drop the end of sentences to a whisper. Every word should have its full sound.

If taking part in prayer audibly, to do it quietly as if kneeling at the bedside is not the way. A whisper is sufficient for the ear of God; but in public prayer we are leading all present to the throne in Heaven, and that all may say, Amen; therefore we must speak up. When a hymn is given out, or a chapter from the Word, let number and reference be very distinctly uttered. When reading letters of commendation, the names of the visitors should be given very clearly; and Assembly intimations should likewise be made distinctly. Letters from missionaries are not always read as clearly as interested people would like to hear, causing them to say, "I do wish he would speak up!"

To sum up: speak and pray that the person furthest off may hear quite well, and pronounce your words clearly.

These remarks are not intended for beloved brethren who through age and infirmity cannot be heard very well; but are meant for all in health who could improve by a little thought and practice. "Cry aloud . . . lift up thy voice" (Isa. 58:1). "So they read . . . distinctly" (Neh. 8:8).

## Christian Weddings.

THERE are two scriptures that come before our mind in connection with the arrangements at weddings: (1) "Be not conformed to this world," and (2) "Be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 12:2; 8:29). It will be readily conceded by spiritually-minded believers that the world cannot give the cue for what arrangements Christians should make for their marriage. It is an "evil world," whose God is Satan, and whose attitude toward the Father and His beloved Son is one of hatred (Gal. 1:4; 2 Cor. 4:4; John 15:24). Surely our unerring guide in all matters is the Word of God; also the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, in that He always did those things that pleased the Father.

There are marriages "solemnised" among us that are inconsistent with a testimony of separation unto God from the world; some even ranking with society displays, followed by a detailed description in the newspaper of the dresses and attire. What are we coming to! Sobriety and restraint should mark Christian weddings, in contradistinction to worldly display. How frequently does the Holy Spirit exhort us in the Word to behave as becometh saints, not worldlings. Let us not grieve the Spirit, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). To go contrary to the fashion of the world brings reproach, and we are considered as peculiar; this is more than the pride of our hearts can sometimes endure. But, if borne for Christ's sake, it insures His approval, which, after all, is the only thing worth having. The natural desires must be curbed, if we would walk not as other Gentiles walk (Eph. 4:17). To dress neatly and becomingly for a wedding is right, avoiding costly attire or showiness. "Modest apparel" is the Scriptural mode (1 Tim. 2:9), and the true adornment is found in Colossians 3:12-14.

As the Lord and His disciples attended a marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, it is usually considered a mark of good fellowship to have what is called the "wedding breakfast." No exception need be taken to this; for a

wedding is a time of rejoicing, provided that all is ordered "as becometh saints." Should one and another wish to make a few remarks suitable to so happy an occasion, then let them eschew all foolish talk and jesting, which the Word declare is "not convenient"; but rather speak words that will edify and minister grace to the hearers (Eph. 5:4; 4:29). Good wishes and wise counsel, based on the Word, is both appropriate and acceptable. Toasting or drinking the health of bride and bridegroom is so worldly and pagan a custom as to need no comment.

Weddings are truly "solemnised" when the arrangements are such as coincide with the mind of God and such as leave behind the sense of the Lord's blessing "which maketh rich" (Prov. 10:22).

## How to Pray.

"PRAYING always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints, and for me" (Eph. 6:18-19).

The Season of Prayer—"praying always." Most of us have set times for prayer, morning and evening, and perhaps at noon; some may arise even in the night, when all is still. But we should also pray hourly through each day, as matters arise, in a simple and brief lifting of the heart to Heaven; it may be only a sentence; thus we live in the attitude of prayer, we are "praying always."

The Manner of Prayer—"with all prayer and supplication." That is, with every kind of prayer—earnest, believing, thankful, joyful, importunate, agonised; and any other kind of prayer befitting our state of soul, or the thing prayed for. "All" prayer implies a zeal of the suppliant that leaves nothing untried to obtain the gracious answer of our God.

The Power of Prayer—"in the Spirit." To thus pray is to pray in deep fellowship with the Lord, with an

indwelling and ungrieved Holy Spirit leading forth our supplication, "according to the will of God" (Rom. 8: 26-27); then freely and blessedly "in the Spirit" do we feel our hearts praying with a liberty which otherwise could not be possible.

The Guarding of Prayer—"and watching thereunto." We "watch" as well as pray; for easily Satan may steal the time that should be given, and we are robbed of "mercy" and "grace to help" when in need. Prayer keeps open the channel from above, and strengthens the encircling fence of God's protecting care.

The Continuance of Prayer—"with all perseverance." It must be "without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17), that is, continue until heard. We ask a petition for a week, a month, a year; then we tire for want of "patient continuance," forgetting that delays are not denials, but tests to faith. Do we really desire the things we ask for? Can we hold on to God till He shall answer? Though the answer tarry a long while, yet it shall come when patience has done her perfect work.

The Subjects of Prayer—"for all saints." This will keep us fully and blessedly occupied when upon our knees. Is there a felt lack of what to pray for when the usual petitions are being made? Then let us name, one by one, saints known personally; this enlarges the heart and greatly widens our interests and sympathies. The range is as wide as the Church of God.

The Individuality of Prayer—"and for me." In these words are expressed that deep personal sense of needing the prayers of fellow-saints; and if an inspired Apostle like Paul solicited such a personal interest, how much rather should we desire this benefit, who come so far below the high spiritual attainment he reached.



## Servants of God.

**“BUT** now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. 6:22).

In relationship we are children of God through faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ; in work we are servants to God. Let no one suppose that this title is reserved for prominent Christians only. Every believer can be a servant as truly as Luther, Wesley, Spurgeon, Muller, Chapman, or any other. We have the privilege of turning into service for the Lord whatever the hand finds to do (Col. 3:23-24). We may sweep a floor, prepare a meal, milk a cow, paint a house, and do it as much to the glory of God as though we were preaching in darkest Africa, or caring for the fatherless and destitute. Whatever honest calling we are in, let us therein abide with God, so working as if He had specially placed us there, saying, “Serve Me in this place, doing this work for Me.” This ennobles common duties, and takes away all feeling of drudgery. The angel Gabriel would glorify God as truly in sweeping a street crossing (if such were the Divine will) as in flying on the errands of his Creator. Do each daily task as unto the Lord; so will it become service to God, and the reward will be sure.

The believer has been made free from sin, that he may serve God. This is not freedom from the possibility of sinning, but from sin as a master, quite another thing. There was a time when we were “sold under sin” (Rom. 7:14) and could not free ourselves. We groaned under our bondage and cried, “Who shall deliver me?” Thank God, deliverance has come through the Lord Jesus Christ by His death on the Cross. Now we take up His words with joy, “If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed” (John 8:36).

We now have our fruit unto holiness. Since his conversion the apostle Paul could say of the Lord, “Whose I am, and Whom I serve” (Acts 27:23), regarding himself as the Lord’s in spirit, soul and body; consequently his life yielded, in abundant measure, the “peaceable



fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11). In like manner our lives also should be producing "much fruit," for herein is our heavenly Father glorified (John 15:8).

The life of service here below will not be for ever; death or the coming of the Lord will end it. Opportunities are becoming fewer as the days quickly pass, therefore it is our wisdom to make the best use of the time that remains. Yet, how blessed! the end will be everlasting life—a life in Heaven never to end. Here we toil and labour under difficulties; yonder is our rest and sure reward.

## The Home-Coming.

HOW we long for the day when we shall make the acquaintance of all the redeemed family of God, amid the splendours of the Father's Home. We eagerly speak of the raptures awaiting us, the soul-stirring song we shall sing, the harps and crowns of gold and the rewards awaiting for faithful service. All this fills us with a strange delight; yet everything else is eclipsed by the longing desire to see the Son of God, who "humbled Himself" in leaving the glory He had with the Father, and becoming of "no reputation," descending to Calvary's depth of woe for us. Oh, for a sight of that lovely face, once "marred more than any man" on our account! (Phil. 2:7-8; Isa. 52:14). To see Him now in all His resurrection glory, and to be like Him, and with Him, and that for ever and ever! (1 John 3:2). Oh, weary heart, look up. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37).

Presently we shall shout "Farewell mortality, welcome eternity!" All Heaven, with great expectancy, awaits our home-coming. The triumphal entry into glory of the way-worn pilgrims will be surpassingly grand. Methinks above the "gates of pearl" will shine the words, Welcome Home! Earth's sighs will give place to hallelujahs; groans will burst into praises; tears

will be changed to smiles; sorrow will make way for joy; the heavy heart, the care, the burden will for ever remain on the outer side of those "everlasting doors"; while within, all Heaven is there—all joy. Loved ones whom death parted are restored in a blessed embrace; bosoms heave and eyes gleam with joy!

But who is He that moves in the midst of the vast throng, His face the expression of exceeding joy, and upon whom all eyes are rivetted? He bears in His glorified body the imprint of nails in His hands and feet, and a spear mark in the side.

" 'Tis the Lord! O wondrous story!  
'Tis the Lord, the King of Glory!"

The blood-bought hosts of saints crowd around Him; they fall in adoring worship and lay their crowns at His feet; unanimously they declare Him as the only worthy One; "Worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing"; for, say they, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." And the harpers harp, and the angels praise, and the Courts of Heaven ring again with the outbursts of joy (Rev. 5). Then shall be fulfilled the words of Isa. 53:11, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied!"

Oh, weary heart, look up. The prospect is grand. "A little while" and He shall have us all, and for ever!

## What is Fellowship?

IT is quite a common thing to say that such and such a Christian is "in fellowship." The thought is that they belong to a certain Assembly of saints, and are "breaking bread" with them. But is this all that "fellowship" really implies? By no means. It is fellowship as far as it goes, but it falls far short of the full import of the truth.

Fellowship is partnership, the sharing of things in common; that is, there is a sharing in common of all

that pertains to an Assembly—its privileges, its testimony, and its responsibilities. And this is a far different thing to the prevalent but inadequate idea of the Scriptural conception of fellowship.

To be welcomed among a company of saints who gather in the Lord's Name alone, owning the Lordship of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, having no creed or constitution but the Word of God; this is a wonderful privilege and should never be lightly esteemed. Fellowship embraces all the Assembly stands for. We are helpers together of one another in maintaining and strengthening all that we have been taught of God, and hold dear. There is a fellowship on the Lord's day morning in the "breaking of bread" in loving remembrance of the Lord's death, till He comes; a fellowship in the evening in the Assembly's Gospel testimony; a fellowship in the weekly prayer-meeting, and in the weekly Bible-reading or gathering for ministry; a fellowship in all the Assembly's activities, its gifts and expenses.

Do we merely "break bread," or are we really "in fellowship"? Do we realise both our privilege and responsibility concerning the Assembly in all its bearings? Look where we will, we can find nothing better and more in accord with New Testament principles than what we hold; and this is true even in the face of confessed weakness and failure in giving expression to Divine truths. "To whom shall we go?" (John 6:68).

There is a serious leakage in Assemblies: young life that ought to be present is drifting elsewhere. This drift might be stemmed by teachers and elders themselves holding more firmly to the truths we have learned; in giving more of their presence, time and help in the meetings, in the building up of the believers in their "most holy faith," feeding the flock with food convenient.

Let us do all we can to maintain a collective testimony for our Lord, in a day when much of His will is rejected, distorted, or neglected; to be "watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die"; and in view of His coming quickly, to "hold fast that which we have, that no man take our crown" (Rev. 3:2, 8, 11).

## Preserving the Testimony.

**I**F the testimony to a Scriptural way of gathering is to be preserved, then brethren who teach in the meetings and minister at conferences will need to show more diligence in presenting from the Word the truths and principles of Church position and order. Truths which would liberate children of God from the bondage of organised systems of religion, and would set forth our holy and blessed privileges as saints, should be willingly and freely given. Truth, however, must be presented with grace (John 1:14); and herein some have failed and truth has been evil spoken of. The noble apostle Paul declared, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house"; and again, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Satan has been able to mar and distort, to a great extent, the divinely-given Church order and arrangement, so that Christendom to-day has become, in its religious systems, totally unlike the original apostolic manner. Though majorities have departed from primitive purity and simplicity, yet minorities (at times very small) have stuck to the Lord's testimonies (Psa. 119:31). This has been the case all down the centuries, and will be to the end. Because the Church, in its broad aspect, has failed to maintain a true testimony, and reformations have not come up to expectations; this is no justification whatever for ceasing to carry on and advocate Scriptural Church Principles, saying, "There can no longer be a collective testimony, for the Church is in pieces like a wrecked ship, and now every man for himself on bits of broken ecclesiastical wreckage, and God for us all!"

No, no! Divine principles are binding upon the saints unto the coming of the Lord, whatever may be the wreck and confusion around. Wherever are found but two or three believers, owning no gathering Name save the precious Name of God's beloved Son, worshipping

in spirit and in truth, seeking to observe whatsoever is commanded in the Word; such will have His approving testimony, "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My Word, and hast not denied My Name" (Rev. 3:8).

Undoubtedly there is a Scriptural way of meeting for the people of God, and most certainly it is possible now. In all parts of the world are found to-day companies of saints endeavouring to carry out, though often in weakness, Church order and arrangement as at the first, in realised fellowship with the Lórd. In order to maintain this testimony that it die not, there requires to be an all-round ministry from the Scriptures, embracing foundation Church principles.

## Family Worship.

THERE can be nothing of more importance in a Christian household than the daily reading of the Holy Scriptures, followed by prayer. Morning and evening seem to be the appropriate times. It is most suggestive that God ordained for His ancient people Israel the offering of two lambs of the first year, day by day continually, one to be offered in the morning and the other at evening. Likewise sweet incense was burned each morning and evening before the Lord (Exo. 29:38-39; 30:7-8). Incense is associated with the prayers of saints (Rev. 8:3). The lambs speak of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19). If we wish for "the days of heaven upon the earth," then let us give attention to family worship (Deut. 11:18-21). Nearly all the troubles and sorrows befalling families is traceable to the neglect of it.

The best time, generally, is immediately after breakfast and after tea, before anybody rises from the table. The reading need not, and should not be prolonged, lest it become irksome to the child and its interest is lost. The father should take the Book in hand and reverently read the allotted portion, make a few simple comments suited to the intelligence of the children, and afterwards pray, all kneeling down. The Lord should be spoken to in a way that becomes us in addressing One so holy and so great, yet so full of love to us—the Friend that is

above all others. Command attention and reverence, for in this brief while we are approaching God. Instil into the young minds that ourselves and all we do should be committed daily to Him, thus fixing in the heart "that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Family worship is the only true preparation of the child for the dangers, snares, difficulties and trials of life, that it may meet them successfully. "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6) is God's all-wise appointment. No one is justified in being too busy to take a short while in bringing before the mind spiritual realities. Time is not lost but saved thereby, and things will go well throughout the day.

Let Christian parents guard this key-stone of the family arch, and thus insure the future well-being of their sons and daughters. Looking round about on the community in general, the condition of the rising generation is clearly appalling; for they know not the restraining power of the Word of God, being brought up in ignorance of it. Into this atmosphere our families are daily thrown. Therefore maintain at all cost the family worship; once a day is better than not at all, but it seems to be the mind of God that it should be "morning and evening."

## Two Illustrations. .

NO. 1. Occasionally I go by a site whereon a house has stood, now destroyed by fire. Pausing for a moment to look over the place, I then pass on with reflective thoughts of a time when not houses but lives of Christians shall be "tried with fire."

I notice a brick chimney is left upright, standing securely on its solid stone foundation, the central figure in a picture of desolation. Strewn around are to be seen the pieces of indestructible materials "proved" by fire; not much of what once stood on the place. Some one will stand at last like this lone chimney (secure on Christ the Rock) in the midst of the ruins of a life which once

surrounded him. Shall you? Shall I? "Would that I had lived differently!" some one will say. Shall you? Shall I? Does the reader shrink back from the thought of such a possibility? The fiery ordeal will leave some scarce aught of their works to be commended: much "wood, hay and stubble" burned; and little "gold, silver, precious stones" left. Some will come through the test as a man is dragged from his burning residence. "What a mercy he is saved!" we exclaim. Yes, "saved, yet so as by (through) fire!" (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

No. 2. Let me illustrate how every saved one's life shall be looked at by-and-by. Let us say you have known the Lord for eighteen years. That day of your new birth you thought "the saints above could be hardly more favoured or blessed." For a season the once cold heart is now so filled with "redeeming love" that the thought of shame to speak for Jesus does not occur to mind. We will think of the eighteen years as a broad line drawn out eighteen feet across a wall. We will say the "fear of man" comes in by the year is out, followed by eight years you now think of with bowed head in shame, a time that appears barren and unfruitful. We will say the line is clearly marked for a foot; then a gap of eight feet—a void, lost. But here restoration takes place, and you go on well for a while and you bear fruit, with much personal blessing. In course of time efforts are again relaxed, and another empty space is seen in our line. We will say that to the end of the line there occurs here and there a blank, though with less frequency.

When the Lord rewards for the life lived, He takes out the blanks. What is there remaining? Perhaps a line eight feet in length, whereas it could have been eighteen. So I stand by and see the twelve-years-saved Christian who steadily went on the whole while for God, receiving a greater reward than I. Then I learn how some who are first can become last, and the last become first. Some lives may shrink up very small when Christ manifests them; while there will be surprise on the other hand at what was contained, to God's glory, in some shorter lives without blanks.

## Coming Events.

THE present marshalling of the forces of evil are ominous signs of this world's coming crisis. The great men, and the mighty of the earth, are viewing the scene with fear and grave apprehension that "something" is to happen that will shake all established order. What that "something" is they do not know; but we who believe the Scriptures know.

There is a power that restrains the tide of lawlessness, namely, the presence on earth of the Holy Spirit, who is taking out of it a people, the Bride of the Lamb. On the completion of His work, the Lord descends to the air to take to Himself all His own, and then all further Divine restraint of evil is removed. Picture the scene: wickedness at full tide!

The Kingdom of this world is to become the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 11:15, R.V.). The events that usher it in are without parallel since the world began.

First, there is the Lord's sudden coming to the air, the resurrection and changing of the saints, and their translation to Heaven (1 Thess. 4:13-17); to be followed by the solemn Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10); then the glorious Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).

During these heavenly events there will be great things transpiring on earth, such as the revival of the old Roman Empire in the form of a ten-kingdom confederation (Dan. 7:23; Rev. 13:1-10; 17:8-14); the revelation of the Antichrist in full Satanic power, with a complete apostacy from the faith (2 Thess. 2:3-12); the Jews back in their own land (Ezek. 20:33-34); the judgments of the "seals," "trumpets," and "vials" of Revelation 6, 8 and 16 will run their devastating course; and the "great tribulation" will try all flesh (Rev. 3:10).

At the end will Christ appear with His saints and mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on Antichrist, and on all enemies of God (2 Thess. 1:7-8; 2:8-12). He will save His ancient people Israel, threatened with utter destruction (Rev. 19:11-21); will judge the nations



(Matt. 25:31-46); and will set up His righteous and glorious Kingdom over all the earth, for a thousand years (Isa. 32; Rev. 20:4).

Afterward Satan is loosed from the bottomless pit and heads a great rebellion against the King Eternal; fire from God devours them, and Satan is cast for ever into the lake of fire; the Great White Throne is set up, Heaven and earth flee away, the wicked dead are judged and damned (Rev. 20). Then will appear the New Heaven and the New Earth, which is the Eternal State (Rev. 21)—perfection for ever!

## Be of Good Cheer.

SOME one has said, "God cannot forget His child. He cannot leave us to suffer, unsuccoured and alone. He runs to meet the prodigal, but He rides on a cherub and He flies on the wings of the wind to the sinking disciple."

Be of good cheer, dear brother, dear sister, whatever may be your adversities; for all these things are but so many occasions for the Lord to show Himself strong on your behalf. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5) is a buttress to the heart, against which all trials shall press in vain.

God is above you, dear soul, and under His wings you may trust (Psa. 91:4). He is beneath you, and the "everlasting arms" will not let you through (Deut. 33:27). God is before you, and the "pillar of cloud" will lead you the way across a trackless desert (Ex. 13:21). Besides this, He is behind you, placing an impassable barrier between you and all harm from the enemy (Ex. 14:9). Furthermore, He is round about you as a mountainous environment, immovable as His throne (Psa. 125:2). Also, He assures you that He is with you, even unto the end; consequently never lonely again (Matt. 28:20).

Thus our God is above, beneath, before, behind, round about and with you. He can be in no other position unless He enters into you. This He indeed has done. "Christ in you" (Col. 1:27). Now let it be, "Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!" (1 Pet. 1:8).