

GOODLY WORDS

Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that
I would keep Thy words. (Psa. 119. 57.)

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GOODLY WORDS.

“HENCEFORTH.”

WE are living in days of growing unreality, especially in the things of God. The great christian profession is very definitely marked by the features seen in the final phase of the church in Laodicea. (Rev. 3. 14.) That is, there is much outward adornment, but *no place for Christ*. The Lord Jesus constantly appeals to His church, seeking to bring them to repentance, and thus stop the terrible onrush to apostasy.

If we glance at some of the passages where the word “henceforth” occurs it might help us to see some of the effects of personal dealings with the Lord. It indicates a complete change in our course, so that we act, speak and walk quite differently from other people.

This is what is greatly needed in days of highly superficial Christianity, without any power of life to affect others. It is intensely sad that so-called Christians are mixing with unbelievers every day, and many of these unbelievers do not see any difference at all from themselves.

The first instance I would draw our readers’ attention to is as to

OUR LIFE.

This clearly should be quite different from what it was before we were converted. If you will read 2 Corinthians 5. 15, 16, the word “henceforth” occurs

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three times, and is therefore a most striking passage. It says in verse 14 that if Christ died for all, then were all dead. Then in verse 15 it gives the reason for His death. Now as most of those who read this book are Christians you cannot be indifferent as to *why* the One you trust and love had to die. The reason given in this passage is, "That they which live should not *henceforth* live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." Does not this search you? It does not speak of living in sin, but living for self. Man naturally is self-centred, and will go any lengths to gratify his passions and lusts. Alas, too, many Christians are just living to please themselves! Yet our verse says that we should not *henceforth* live thus, but unto Him who has done so much for us. Such an appeal should have its own effect on us. Let us not seek to shirk it, but test our own hearts as before the Lord as to whether we are wholly living to Him. This would make a very great change in our lives, and others would be sure to notice and be affected by it.

OUR WALK.

This occurs in Ephesians 4. 17, "That ye *henceforth* walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened; being alienated from the life of God." The above passage refers more to what can be seen and taken account of by others, whereas the first scripture, as to our life, refers to the inward spring and motive that governs our walk. It is very definite in the passage just quoted, that a believer's walk should be quite different from those around, who are governed by vanity and darkness. The Book of Ecclesiastes shews us that what

marks this world is vanity. *All* is vanity. (Ver. 2.) The next expression is worse still, for it says their understanding is darkened. How terrible if a Christian is still walking in vanity and darkness ! We are exhorted in Romans 13. 12 to cast off the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light. Let us then see to it *from henceforth* that we walk not as the unsaved around us, but walk so manifestly different that we shall be found doing just the opposite to them. For according to 1 John 2. 6 we should walk just as Jesus walked.

OUR RESOURCES.

The Christian's resources are clearly set out in Ephesians 4. 8-14. The Lord Jesus has ascended up on high as the mighty victor and is the great Head of His church. We need no other, in fact any attempt to set up a man as head, even though he is a true believer, is a serious sin, such being a rival to Christ. Then, too, in these verses we read that He has given gifts to men, and verse 11 enumerates some of them. It is not educated men gifted with worldly wisdom and knowledge, but definite spiritual gifts from Christ the ascended Head of the church. And what is all this endowment for ? Verse 14 gives the answer, “That we *henceforth* be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” We are living in days when the wind of doctrine is blowing a perfect hurricane, shaking the faith of many unestablished souls, and scattering shoals of pamphlets and books reeking with evil and with a heat that comes from nowhere less than hell itself. But if we just simply take account of our mighty resources from heaven, we shall be able to weather every storm,

learning from Christ our Head, and taught too by the various spiritual gifts given by Him. If any should read this who are imbibing these pernicious doctrines, let this pull them up before they make shipwreck in the storm.

OUR SERVICE.

Simon Peter discovered in the presence of Jesus in Luke 5. 8 that he was full of sin. And although the Lord had said he was to be a spiritual stone (see John 1. 42), Peter feels he is totally unfit to be in the company of such a holy Person as the Lord Jesus. But how sweet the answer to him in verse 10. It was enough that Peter had confessed his sinful state. Jesus had come to die that he and all who believe might be delivered, so he says, "Fear not, from *henceforth* thou shalt catch men." Here is the secret of effective service for the Lord. If we have not really bottomed the fact of our own utter ruin and sinfulness, we shall not be of much use in service, for we shall seek to attach importance and glory to ourselves. Peter made many mistakes and often failed, but the Lord's words were fulfilled as the opening of Acts shews. Oh, how much fishers of men are needed to-day! Thousands are rushing on towards the awful rapids of God's judgment. We have to move amongst them every day, and perhaps are too timid to speak to them of these momentous issues. Or it may even be that our life is such that if we were to speak, they would condemn us at once as being no different from them.

May the Lord use this paper to bring us all to an "henceforth." That is, a definite issue as to our life, walk, resources and service, so that the short time that remains before His coming may see a definite

change in our course, and that we might be as clearly distinguished from the world as light from darkness.

W. J. WHITE.

THE SECRET THINGS AND THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE REVEALED.

“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God : but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deut. 29. 29.)

IT was asked of old, “Canst thou by searching find out God ; canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ? ”

God is “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords ; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto ; whom no man hath seen nor can see : to whom be honour and power everlasting.” We must accept and realise the limitations of the creature in his apprehension of God. How can the finite compass the Infinite ? Who can find out “the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God ” ?

The secret things of eternity cannot be discovered by any human means of research. They belong to the Lord our God and we bow reverently in the acknowledgment that they are His alone. He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth cannot be grasped by the intellect of the finite and fallen mind of man. “To whom then will ye liken God ? or what likeness will ye compare unto him ? ”

Therefore to attempt to explore the secret things is both futile and harmful, for it leads to men becoming as those described in Romans 1, who are “vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools.”

How damaging must any speculation or controversy be upon the things which are hidden ; for “the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.”

But the earnest consideration of “those things which are revealed” cannot be too strongly urged ; for “they belong unto us and to our children for ever” as a sacred heritage. The scriptures unfold them, and for this reason should be prayerfully read, considered and explored, as bringing to light our treasured possessions, for “now we have received . . . the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

If we consider CREATION we “lift up our eyes, on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number : he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power.”

The consideration of the heavens, the work of God’s fingers, the moon and stars which He has ordained, must impress us with the greatness of God and of our own littleness and insignificance. While the vastness of the universe is greater than the mind can grasp or apprehend, yet the things that are made are witnesses to “His eternal power and Godhead.”

The greatest of all “those things which are revealed” is disclosed in the words, “Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.”

These words of Jesus Himself indicated

THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER.

God has given light concerning the revelation of Himself in the past by many marvellous titles, each having its own peculiar import and power for the

THE SECRET THINGS.

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adoring consideration of the creature. None of these divine titles can lapse. He is still God, *the Creator* of the ends of the earth ; He is *Almighty God* of whose infinite power it is said, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice." He is still *JEHOVAH*, the existing One who has been pleased to make covenants with His people. His august title *The Most High God* remains and will be displayed in the glory of that "world to come of which we speak." So, too, *The God of Heaven* is entitled ever to command the subjection of men on earth. But when the "Son of the Father in truth and love" was here He was the Revealer of the Father, and He alone could make God known in this the most intimate yet holy name of Father. It is not the great philosophers, nor the wise men of the earth that enjoy these things that are revealed ; for the Lord said when He was here, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto *babes*." Even the babes in the family of God could be addressed, "I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father." So perfect was this great unveiling that Jesus could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

But this precious heritage cannot be apprehended by any natural ability. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man

THE THINGS WHICH GOD HATH PREPARED FOR
THEM THAT LOVE HIM.

But God hath *revealed* them unto us by his Spirit." Now, we have received not the spirit of the world, but

the Spirit which is of God that we might know "the things that are freely given to us of God." There are therefore the divine resources of God the Holy Spirit, to enable believers in Jesus to apprehend that which the love of God has prepared for them. What a vast territory to explore ! How vast is the wealth of those great provisions !

The consideration of the things which are revealed would be incomplete without a reference to

THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

of Jesus Christ, "which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass."

It is a book which is greatly misunderstood and sadly neglected. Many think of it as a sealed book because symbolical language is so greatly used, but it is the one book in the Bible of which it is promised, "Blessed is he that *readeth*," and even if any one cannot read, "they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand."

It uncovers or reveals the things which John saw ; the things which are and the things which shall be hereafter. It is therefore of untold value to all who would be in the secret of God. It is of great importance that every believer should be familiar with its wonderful unfoldings, shewing, as it does, the end of all things, and the ultimate eternal results of the death of Christ and the ways of God. It indicates clearly the final issues of the great questions of good and evil ; the end of this present evil world, and anticipates the day when

THE GLORY OF THE LORD

THE POTTER'S CLAY.

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shall be revealed—"the glory which shall be revealed in us ; for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

F. S. MARSH.

THE POTTER'S CLAY.

(JER. 18. 1-3 ; ISA. 64. 8.)

AT the end of a day at the kiln, with the various results of firing and moulding before me, the following reflections passed through my mind, and now seem worthy of commendation to the people of God who may be passing through experiences which may be somewhat perplexing.

During dark hours of discipline one is inclined to look at others and wonder why some may apparently escape, whilst others are most severely tested, and why a godly man may be singled out for very rigorous treatment under the fires of affliction. "The word that came to Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. And I went down to the potter's house ; and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels." (Jer. 18. 1-3.)

In turning to Isaiah 64. 8, we see that the prophet says, "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father ; we are the clay, and thou our potter ; and we all are the work of thy hands." In this type of craftsmanship, which is still practised, there is real moral teaching. A shapeless heap of clay more or less responsive is placed upon the revolving wheel. By finger and thumb the shape evolves ; a little pressure here and there, and a rough contour appears, cuplike, but thick and ungainly. The work proceeds upon the ever-turning wheel,

becoming more refined and delicate, until finally, as answering to the shape and design in the potter's mind, it is placed aside as satisfactory. Often the clay is not in condition, and the craftsman cannot produce what he has before him. The irregular, inconsistent vase is ungainly and useless, and the craftsman reduces it all to its first shapeless condition and commences again.

Is this not full of teaching for us? Was not Israel, for example, the most ill-conditioned clay ever put upon the wheel of God? Were they not shaped again and again, and yet they have never been truly serviceable to God, nor have they ever answered in beauty and grace to the design that God had in mind for them. With us the handiwork of God continues. The potter's wheel, so to speak, is still working, and each one of us subjected to the attention and workmanship of God; often in discipline, ever in patience and grace, is being brought to answer to the form and design which is before Him. Often and often ill-conditioned as we are, like the badly mixed clay, we are unresponsive to that divine touch, and are made to pass through the process again and again, "Till we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, at the full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ."

But a perfectly shaped vessel, lovely and charming as it may appear, is useless as it is. *It must pass through the firing*; and here I must mention that the degree of heat in the kiln must vary to suit the type of clay used. There is a gradation from an exceedingly high temperature to a comparatively low one. The clays which produce the most delicate vessels and objects are subjected to the fiercest of temperatures, whilst

the common red clays only require a low heat. An experienced craftsman knows his material and how to regulate his kiln.

Now, one cannot but think of the discipline of God in all this, and I am sure that it will answer the heart questions of some who look upon the light affliction of others and groan under their own heavy sorrows, who, so to speak, are amazed at the high temperature of their own furnace of affliction. The finer the clay, the greater the heat, and the temperature varies, but all are partakers of it.

"We are the clay, and thou our potter." He takes each vessel, knowing its nature, how much heat it can bear, and how much is necessary to complete it. Too much heat will reduce it to a heap of shattered useless pieces ; too little will leave it imperfect. But He whose eye is ever on the furnace knows when to increase the heat and when to reduce it. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (1 Peter 4. 12.)

It is very instructive to us to think of ourselves as placed upon the potter's wheel, and so formed after the pattern in the mind of God. Ezekiel saw wheels, which I suppose represented the ways of God, "they turned not when they went." In those immutable ways of His, God pursues His purposes, even His government being formative and educational. The potter's wheel, however, brings us very intimately under His own direct touch, "We are the work of thy hand."

Then as to the fire, the kiln. It burned at an exceedingly high temperature at Smyrna and was maintained for ten days. The divine Potter knew how

much to apply and exactly when to reduce it, but they who had gone down to the Potter's house heard His words, "I will give thee a crown of life." In regard to the precious metals, the fire is essential, both to bring out the preciousness and remove the dross, whilst at the same time rendering them malleable. But there is no dross in the potter's kiln. The idea there is to *perpetuate* what has been fashioned, and to make the formed vessel suitable for service or for adornment. Without the fire of the furnace this could not be done.

May I again say, the temperature varies according to the type of clay. It was tremendous for the saints in Smyrna, but to Thyatira, to "the rest" there, He says, "I will put upon you none other burden." They were in such a state, clay of such composition, that they could not bear it. May the Lord use this very simple thought to cheer many.

H. R. WILKINSON.

HUNTING, ROASTING, FEEDING !

"The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting ; but the substance of a diligent man is precious." (Prov. 12. 27.)

THERE seems to be plenty of hunting amongst the saints. They gather in to the meetings in scores and hundreds, for which one is truly thankful. Some may not attend in the seeking spirit, but as a matter of outward form and orthodoxy, but such are the exceptions. Yet, beloved brethren, there may be the hunting spirit without the after exercise figured by the roasting. So that after the ministry both talk and thought may be of anything and everything but

of that which the Lord has graciously ministered. The hunter may not be slothful in hunting, but punctual and wide-awake and on the *qui vive*—on the alert ! But the outward energy may exhaust the inward and spiritual, if, indeed, it is there at all. The energy manifested in the hunting must be maintained ! The exercise—the hunting—should surely quicken the appetite, and incite us to take home and *roast* what we “took.”

Let us do it, too, in the old-fashioned way. Speaking in figures, let us run the spit of *remembrance* through it (that is, Luke 24)—through what we have got, be it much or little. Let us put it on the toasting jack of *meditation*, and let it turn round and round before a *burning heart*—a heart all aflame with the ministry and the love of Jesus. (Luke 24. 32.) Thus shall we prove that “the *substance* of a *diligent* man is *precious*” ; for what we have taken in hunting we have with holy care and prayer prepared. Its precious substance we shall then be able to feast upon, enjoy and assimilate into our moral being, and thus it will become livingly *developed in us*, and *displayed by us*.

S. J. B. CARTER.

SEPARATION.

THIS is a vital subject. Those who *try* to “make the best of both worlds” lose them both, that is, as to present enjoyment. God will only give you the real deep joy of His world now on condition that you are prepared to give up this world with its pleasures and lusts. Light and darkness cannot go on together. No one, however, can truly give up this world unless he sees that God’s world is better ; otherwise it would

be sheer monkishness. Monks go into monasteries, but in doing so they carry the world in with them in their hearts. Christ is the living centre and theme of God's world.

THE ORIGIN OF THIS WORLD.

It says that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and builded a city. (Gen. 4. 16, 17.) Then he called the city after the name of his son Enoch. That is, man morally away from God has stamped his name and character on this world's system. Everything in man's world is intended to glorify man. Man's inventions, man's achievements, his wealth and wisdom and learning, have all combined to build up that great system which we see all around us to-day.

ITS CHARACTER.

God sums it all up in two words—lust and pride. He says, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2. 16.) Hence we are exhorted to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

ITS PRINCE AND ITS END.

We are not left in doubt who the prince of this world is. We are plainly told in Luke 4. 5–7 that it was the devil who took the Lord Jesus up into an exceeding high mountain and shewed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine." But Jesus answered, "Get thee behind me, Satan." This

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shews clearly that in an unseen way Satan wields the power of the kingdoms of this world, and is therefore the prince of this world. (See Matt. 4. 8, 10 ; also John 14. 30.)

We are also told of the final overthrow of the world system and the doom of its prince. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "Now is the judgment of this world, and now shall the prince of this world be cast out." That is, in the heart of the believer the world is *already* a judged thing, because it says "now." Soon it will be actually judged and destroyed. (See Rev. 18 and 19.)

Dear fellow believer, you and I do not belong to this world—then why cling to it? Our commonwealth is in heaven, which necessarily implies that we are strangers here, but with the most precious promises of God's care and protection. It says, "*Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*" (2 Cor. 6. 17, 18.) How precious to be daily under the care of One who will undertake for us in every detail of everyday life. You can trust Him as a child trusts his father.

There can be no real spiritual prosperity and growth apart from separation. Alas, how many we see who are babes, stunted in growth spiritually, because they have never accepted the true path of separation!

H. W. ELLIS.

THE END OF DISCIPLINE.

(PSA. 51.)

IT is very blessed to see how this psalm, which is a deep and full confession of sin, brings into view at the end that which is positive, that which is acceptable and pleasurable to God. In verse 17 we read of *brokenness*, and in the next *building*. We read of the city that is going to be displayed in the coming day, that it has a "wall great and high." God would teach us to appreciate this feature of the city now, and to learn the truth of it in our soul history, that "nothing that defileth" can enter in. In this wonderful psalm we see this clearly set forth. Here we have one who is moved to the very depths of his being by the sense of what sin is in the sight of God ; there is a full confession of it, as seen and judged in God's own light. Then, with chastened and broken spirit he casts himself *entirely upon God*. How intense his desires: "Wash me . . . cleanse me . . . purge me . . . create in me . . . restore unto me . . . deliver me . . . open *thou* my lips." And now he turns from praying for himself and prays for Jerusalem: "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

How we are made to learn what we are, and to thank God that not one bit of the flesh can have part or place in that which God is constructing for His eternal pleasure ! The soul, as restored, and in communion, prays for that work to go on, and delights in the contemplation of its construction. And He who has power to build that glorious structure has power to deal with all that opposes. May we each become more and more subdued to Him upon whom we are so de-

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

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pendent ; the breaking and the building are both in His hands, and there will be no flaw in His work. May there be with us the brokenness *now*, that the building may go on in our souls. Soon there will be the breaking up of all that opposes. "Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind." (Psa. 48. 7.) "He . . . shall break in pieces the oppressor." (Psa. 72. 4.) Nothing will stand that is in opposition to God's blessed will. He would deal with us now in the wisdom of His love, that there may be the subduing of our wills under His strong yet gentle hand in order to make us truly happy in relation to Himself. "Make me to hear joy and gladness ; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

May we each learn to appreciate more and more the love behind divine discipline, and to realise that true happiness lies in self-judgment and subjection of heart to Him who works in us "to will and to do of his good pleasure."

C. DEAYTON.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

(EZEK. 48. 30-35.)

WE now arrive at the three gates of the city on the south side. In Psalm 75 we read that promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, which suggests that it is from the cold winds of adversity and exercise that exaltation comes to us, as Elihu said to Job, "From the north cometh gold." (Job 37. 22.) The truth of this was surely exemplified in the gates of Reuben, Judah and Levi. Then from the east, the place of the sun-rising, fulness of blessing comes to us, as set forth in Joseph, Ben-

jamin and Dan. The south side would suggest being in the full enjoyment of the sunshine.

The first of the gates on the south is

THE GATE OF SIMEON.

His name means hearing, and certain happenings in the history of the tribe bring before us the import of his name. We read in Joshua 18 that the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon was within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah—how the fact that this was so would cause Simeon to be continually hearing the promptings of an unjealous spirit which would enable him to dwell in brotherly relations with Judah. Then in Judges 1 the test of brotherly fellowship came, and he heard it and responded to it, for we are told, “So Simeon went with him.” How we should ever be prepared to hear the call of an unjealous spirit which would help us to share things with our brother, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” When the call comes to meet our common enemy there will be the hearing of the call and the brotherly response to it.

Again, when God's anointed King was in reproach and moral courage was needed, seven thousand one hundred mighty men of valour from Simeon rallied to David and came to Ziklag. God's Anointed is in rejection and in reproach, and the call comes to us to go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Have we heard this call, and having heard it, what has been our response?

If there is response, when the Lord comes into His rights we shall have a place in His retinue. Even as a representative of Simeon was found amongst the princes of the tribes when David came to the throne.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

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Affection of heart for our absent and rejected Lord will alone cause us to hear His voice and to go to Him to Ziklag. This thought takes us to

THE GATE OF ISSACHAR.

Leah said when Issachar was born, "God hath given me my hire," or reward. There is certain reward in hearing and responding to the claims the Lord has to our willing-hearted allegiance. We will see how this works out in Issachar. In a day of much weakness in Israel's history we find in Judges 5 that the princes of Issachar were with Deborah in her stand against Jabin and Sisera, and in the song of Deborah and Barak their presence with Deborah is celebrated; what a reward this would be for faithfulness. In a later day how the Apostle Paul delights to record the names of those who in a moment of stress and trial were prepared to stand with him, the honoured vessel of the testimony, at that moment.

In Judges 10 another of the tribe is brought before us who is worth a moment's consideration. We read that "there arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir." It is interesting to notice that there is no record of any warlike activities on the part of Tola, which would suggest that he governed Israel in the power of his moral character. What a reward for uprightness and integrity this would be. He was evidently marked out by his parentage as Timothy in a later day. We are also told he dwelt in and was buried in Shamir. Shamir means approved; a man of moral worth in life and in death would have

a sense of being approved of God. May our exercise lead us to arise as a *man* of Issachar, for God is looking for *men*, those who are marked by spiritual maturity and moral power.

Later in the days of David the sons of Issachar are spoken of as valiant men of might, and in 1 Chronicles 12 among the companies that rallied to David in Ziklag were those of the children of Issachar that had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do, and they were evidently men of moral worth and character, for we read that all their brethren were at their command. This is what God is looking for to-day, men who can be trusted and have spiritual perception, so that they *know* what the Israel of God ought to do, and the Lord will see to the rest, that their brethren are available to them.

J. R. TITHECOTT.

"THE STRINGED INSTRUMENTS."

(ISA. 38. 20.)

THE Chief Musician made the melody,
It was His piercèd hand that struck the chord ;
My ears, they heard the heavenly harmony,
I whispered joyfully, " It is my Lord."

All jarring sounds are hushed, *He* strikes the keys,
Fain would I listen to the lovely strains ;
Earth's music dies away upon the breeze,
I hear instead those heavenly sweet refrains.

O blessed Master-hand ! still music bring,
Tune Thou the instrument in Thine own way ;
Thy tender care will never break a string,
But only wondrous skill and love display.

C. G. FULLER.

(Adapted and suggested by an address at Portsmouth by S.J.B.C.)

“UNTIL I WENT INTO THE SANCTUARY.”

GOD is light, therefore the first effect of coming into the presence of God is *exposure*. We are made to know that all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. We never find our true measure until we have been brought consciously into the presence of God. How many there are in whom there is a measure of the work of God, truly converted souls, in whom there is a measure of faith, yet who have never come directly into the presence of God! They may be able to say like Job, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear.” They have had to do with God at a distance. They have even received a measure of grace through believing the word, but they are not established in their relation with God; there are still unsettled questions with them; they lack liberty with God. There are deeper questions to be raised and settled; not now the question of their sins, but the character of *the man* that committed the sins, that is, the true knowledge of *themselves*. “O wretched *man* that *I am*.” Sooner or later the truth has to be faced in the presence of God. True repentance involves not only the judgment of our sins, but the judgment of *ourselves*.

God said of Job that he was “an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.” His conduct was *unimpeachable*. (Job. 1. 8.) Yet he had to go through a long period of discipline to bring him to a real knowledge of *himself*, and with that a true knowledge of God, for the two things go together. In the end he makes his confession, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye *seeth thee*, where-

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fore *I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42. 5, 6.) Then his captivity was ended, and God blessed him. This was the end of the Lord. (James 5. 11.)

So with David when he went into the sanctuary, he had to confess, "I was as *a beast* before thee," but then he could say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." God is known in a fuller way, and becomes the portion and joy of his heart. Thus we come to learn that God must be the only source and cause of all our blessing. Then we are on solid ground. God becomes our *Rock*.

Then again, in the case of Isaiah the prophet, before he is fit to be sent forth as God's messenger, he must learn the same lessons. He sees the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, with the seraphim crying before Him and saying, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts." Then he makes his confession and said, "Woe is me! for *I am undone*; for I am a man of *unclean lips*." That is, he discovers that morally he was a *leper*, unfit to stand before the Lord. Then flew one of the seraphim with a live coal taken from off the altar and said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged [expiated]." The fire of the altar which had satisfied the claims of the throne, now cleansed the leper. (Isa. 6.)

With Peter, when he found himself in the presence of One who could command the fishes of the sea, he fell down at His feet saying, "Depart from me; for I am a *sinful man*, O Lord." (Luke 5.) It was not a question of his conduct, but what he was as a man. Peter had a further lesson to learn as to himself, not only the sinfulness of the flesh, but the *weakness* of the flesh. All this was preparation for his future service.

“UNTIL I WENT INTO THE SANCTUARY.” 23

No one is effective as a servant until he is brought to have no confidence in flesh, a lesson we are slow to learn.

In the case of Saul of Tarsus we have a man who had much to glory in as a natural man (Phil. 3. 4-6), full of religious zeal, and self-righteousness, attaining to a great reputation in the religious world. But when he found himself in the presence of the glory of the Lord, all his glory was withered up in a moment and all his righteousness became as filthy rags. He discovered that he was *the chief of sinners*. He had to say, “O wretched man that *I am*” ! “In me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth *no good thing*.”

Even the favoured disciple John, who had enjoyed much intimacy with the Lord, when he saw Him in His judicial character, as the Ancient of Days, he fell at His feet as *dead* ; he could not stand before Him.

This self-knowledge brings us truly to appreciate the cross of Christ. We are thankful to know that our old man has been crucified with Him, and thus for ever removed from the sight of God. So that it is our privilege to turn away from ourselves, to delight in the perfections of the second Man, in whom we live before God. We bless God for the grace in which He has taken us up and blessed us in Christ. All that we are as saints we derive *from Him*. All that we possess, we possess *in Him*. And ultimately we shall in every way be *conformed to Him*, for the pleasure and glory of God.

It is in the sanctuary we must all find our true measure. We do not make a fair start in life until we begin from the bottom. *Reduction* precedes enlargement. “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” And no one is efficient as a servant until he has found

his true measure in the presence of God. Otherwise there will be more or less confidence in the flesh, and the adoption of human methods and means. Having started on this line we need to be maintained in it. The Lord will discipline us to this end. As the apostle said, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead." Again, "we are alway delivered unto death. . . . So then death worketh in us, but life in you." (See 2 Cor. 4. 5-12.)

We have to find all our resource in the Lord. "Rejoice in the Lord alway." "Be strong in the Lord, and in the might of his strength."

F. H. BODMAN.

"COMPETENT MINISTERS."

IT has often been said that the Second Epistle to the Corinthians unfolds truth to that assembly of the greatest import, which could not be imparted to them in the first epistle. The reason was that their moral condition had improved by way of repentance and godly clearing.

But it is not always seen by what means this blessed truth of the new covenant reconciliation and new creation is given. The apostle had been attacked as a minister. Sinister motives had been suggested as a reason for his activities, which he felt most keenly, and proceeds, as every minister should, to give his answer to such charges by unfolding ministry which was unique, and especially entrusted to him by God, both as a minister and an ambassador. Thus it came about that no one else could unfold what the Apostle Paul did.

This letter involves a rebuke to the assembly for refusing to take what God sovereignly chose should be given by Paul only, and incidentally to shew what they had missed through despising the servant of God. A truth we might take to heart to-day !

Chapter 1 shews the apostle to be accused of vacillation, and there he tells us that his word was not yea and nay, but that his preaching of the Son of God was in regard to the confirmation of all God's promises, whatever their number, and was indeed in the stability of promise and fulfilment a means of promoting the glory of God as a *performer* of His promises.

Chapter 2 shews how God in Christ sets His seal on His servant's work by heading the triumphant procession which marked the taking of spoil from the enemy in the persons of all who were converted to God by *his* preaching, and at the same time waves the sweet incense of God's saving grace in every place, and marks out the *preachers* as a fragrance of Christ in both those who are saved and those who perish.

Chapter 3. So far from arrogating to themselves service in the gospel, he informs them it is God who made them (that is, the preachers) competent ministers, unlike others who are mere hucksters of the word of God, trading corruptly, and what is most important of all is that the ministry so graciously entrusted to the apostle, with others, is to be the sole letter of commendation as the results of such ministry are worked out, and to shew that the power was of God and not of us.

Chapter 4 definitely unfolds that that *fragile vessel* survived the afflictions and brutality, the dashing to the ground, the stoning by stones, that Paul as such

was subjected to, and remained intact to the end, till such time as Paul himself said, I have finished my course and am ready for sacrifice.

In chapter 5 he says, graciously including his fellow-workers, "We then as ambassadors for Christ." Such they were by special appointment, no one else being sent from heaven to God's enemies to appeal to the world to be reconciled to God, but then our privilege is to continue to set forth God's attitude, which was indeed first divulged by the Apostle Paul and his colleagues.

Then as to personal conduct chapter 6 shews that they, the apostles, gave no offence whatever, lest the blame came upon the ministry, not the minister ; but, as he shews, if there is not the living out of the ministry the latter suffers.

When the Corinthians read this letter they would be prepared to admit the choice of God in service, and it would come home to them that they were indebted to the apostle in God's hands for the building of their local assembly—undoubtedly an apostle to them, for the seal of that communion were they in the Lord.

Moreover, they were after their conversion the letter of Christ entrusted to the apostle's care (2 Cor. 3. 3), the word "ministered" being the same as "cared for" (that is, ministered to Him of their substance), and as such Paul valued that epistle or letter with such a loving care as to say, I "abundantly love you," and as a key to all his exercises for them he says, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy ; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

W. TURNER.

MERCY.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT COLUMBUS, OHIO,
13/7/31 (REVISED).

(JOHN 5. 1, 2 ; 19. 13, 17, 19 ; ACTS 26. 13, 14.)

MY thought, dear friends, is to say a few words to you about mercy. I think we shall find the development of mercy in the scriptures we have read. But before speaking of these scriptures I would like to make a few remarks upon the languages of men. It has been said of people who have acquired a language other than their own, that when they experience a shock, caused by fright or danger, they will express themselves in their native tongue ; and one can understand that, for our native language is part of ourselves. Now to shew you how God takes account of the value of communication in our own tongue, He caused the testimony at Pentecost to go forth in every man's own tongue in which they were born ; the pious Jews who heard the preaching were from every nation of those under heaven ; and it says they heard the speaking each in his own *dialect*. As you know, the English language is spoken in every part of the world ; but it is in Great Britain where many dialects are spoken ; and those who speak in dialects find it a means of heart to heart contact. So that when the gospel was first preached by the Holy Spirit come down, every man heard his own dialect. It was as if God would say, I will bring Myself as near as is possible to the heart of man in grace. God had confounded the people's language, in Genesis 11, and scattered them world-wide, making barriers thereby, and very real barriers they are.

But at Pentecost God in mercy threw every

barrier down so that men might hear the precious gospel in their own dialect. It has often been remarked that at Babel when men exalted and centralised themselves, God brought them down, confused their tongue and scattered them. But when God exalted Christ, who had humbled Himself to the death of the cross, He brought men together and broke down the barriers of language by causing every man to hear in the very dialect in which he was born "the great things of God." (Acts 2.) Now some languages serve purposes which others do not. If you want exactitude, fineness of distinction and flexibility, you would go to the Greek. For that reason God caused the New Testament to be written in the Greek language. But if you wanted expression of heart, in deep, full emotion which would affect other hearts, you would go to the Hebrew. Hence the Old Testament is written largely in Hebrew. It is said to be a very expressive language, one that would touch the *heart*.

Our first scripture says, "Now there is in Jerusalem, at the sheepgate, a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches." (John 5. 2.) This Hebrew name Bethesda suggests what is effusive ; it is really God's heart pouring itself out in the exercise of mercy. In sum it is the house of mercy. There is more than what was found at the pool in the heart of God. You could not limit His mercy to a house of that kind. But here was an expression of it. A pool having five porches ; the pool and the porches were an expression of mercy. Now in these porches lay a multitude of sufferers. They are incurable, composed of sick, blind, lame and withered. The doctors of that day were unable to help them. These sufferers describe the incurable condition of man through *sin*. There

were the sick and the blind. Who can give sight to the blind ? Only God, the initial work in view of sight being new birth ; for a man must be born again to see God's kingdom. There were the lame ; we read, "The legs of the lame hang loose." (Prov. 26. 7.) What could meet such a case but the power of God, causing one to run in the way of God's commandments. (Psa. 119. 32.) Lastly, there were those withered, as we are, by the ravages of sin. These conditions really describe what we are as needing mercy. Mercy is not causative in us, but sovereign in God. On the one side there is the entire helplessness of man, and on the other God acting from Himself. Hence God visited the pool in mercy at certain seasons. It does not say when, or how often, for the waiting was meant to test their faith and patience. The angel descended and troubled the water. Whoever first went in after the troubling of the water was healed. What a mark of mercy ! Mercy is sovereign ; my very necessity draws out what God is. Now the Lord saw an infirm man lying there and says, "Wouldest thou become well ?" (Ver. 6.) It is a question of willingness. "*Wouldest* thou become well ?" Is there any one here who would like to be made whole ? The Lord would administer mercy right here. It is a matter of willingness on our part. The man was willing, but had to own, "while I am coming another descends before me." (Ver. 7.) It was therefore a limited mercy, for it required effort to get into the pool and apparently only one got healed at each season. The Lord says, "Arise, take up thy couch and walk." (Ver. 8.) Here we see that mercy is identified with the Person of Christ. You cannot have it without the Person. So that the expression of mercy was in Jesus who spoke

the word in power so that the man became well, took up his couch and walked.

I pass on to speak of chapter 19. The chief priests and officers bring Jesus to Pilate and desire that Pilate should crucify Him. What you are impressed with in that scene is this: that the Person who is there is infinitely greater than Pilate the governor. Pilate was the judge, but there was a greater Judge than Pilate could be. Jesus "the Judge of Israel" was there (Micah 5. 1), whom those Roman soldiers smote upon the cheek. Earlier Jesus had said, "As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is righteous." (John 5. 30.) That is the kind of Judge that stood before Pilate.

I think Pilate was in a quandary. He was never so perplexed in all his life as now. He is going out to the Jews and coming back to Jesus. He is in a perfect dilemma. What shall he do with this case? Here are the Jews thirsting for His blood. And here is a judge knowing in himself that this is no ordinary Person, and that He is not guilty of one of the charges laid against Him. At this point he led Jesus out and sat down upon the judgment-seat. In the Greek it is called Pavement, evidently meaning something of a side-walk character, but in the Hebrew it is Gabbatha, which has reference to something high and elevated. And this is where Pilate was, as above the ordinary level. But where was Jesus? He was standing below. But what a contrast was this! The Judge of Israel, Jesus, was standing at the bar, whereas the one who was really the criminal was on the judge's seat! What could Pilate do? He could have released Jesus, but he *unrighteously* condemned Him to death, as consenting to the Jews, who insisted that He should be crucified. It would have been quite

righteous for Jesus to have arisen as Judge, to have condemned His enemies and swept them away in judgment. But He says, "I am not come that I might judge the world, but that I might save the world." (John 12. 47.) So that the most unrighteous transaction was surrounded with mercy; undeserving as it was, which explains what mercy means. In the forbearance of God they were not destroyed. Long-suffering mercy waited on Pilate and on the Jews to give them one more chance before the door of mercy closed upon them for ever.

Now we come to the place where Jesus was crucified called place of a skull, but in Hebrew Golgotha, which allows for it to mean a place of skulls. But whether one or many, it should convey to the Jewish mind its own meaning. Peter explains that meaning, I think, when he says, in preaching to the Jews, "I know that ye did it in ignorance, as also your rulers." (Acts 3. 17.) The crucifixion of Jesus on the part of the Jews and their rulers is attributed to their ignorance. But what was behind that? Mercy. They boasted in their ancient religion and assumed ability to judge Jesus, yet it was all an empty skull, for they condemned and crucified Him by the hand of lawless men. Then in regard to the princes of this world, men like Pilate and Herod, the apostle says of them, speaking of God's wisdom being known, "for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. 2. 8.) Think of these princes, men in responsibility, putting Jesus to death. The chief priests had said to Pilate, "If this man were not an evildoer, we should not have delivered him up to thee." (John 18. 30.) But what had He done? He had brought God near to men in grace. He had raised the dead. He

had gone about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil. Yet they branded Him as an evil-doer and a blasphemer. Does it not shew how man can be blinded, can be energised by a power outside of himself as against God ; by the power of the devil ? so that the princes of this world and the heads of the Jewish nation were reduced in their ignorance to an empty skull ! What mercy that God took account of these things ; because on the ground of their ignorance and unbelief, mercy was shewn in a fresh way to the Jew and in turn to the Gentiles.

But what about the inscription in Hebrew, Greek and Latin ? In Luke's gospel the Hebrew is mentioned last. But in this gospel the Hebrew writing is mentioned first, and the inscription most complete : "Jesus the Nazarean, the king of the Jews." (Ver. 19.) How it should have appealed to the Jews as exposing their guilt and folly, for many of them read it, including the chief priests. They, however, were unaffected by it, and desired Pilate to alter it to agree with their miserable unbelief. Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." (Ver. 22.) I have no doubt that Pilate was convinced that after all He was actually the King of the Jews, even though the Jews were not. Again I say, mercy is marvellously active, for it goes infinitely beyond all that it had ever gone before in that the King of the Jews was crucified ! When God gave instructions for making the tabernacle, the first thing to be made was the ark. It was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Then a mercy-seat of gold was made and placed above upon the ark. It is a beautiful word, mercy-seat. All the communications of God to Israel were made from between the two cherubim, from off the mercy-

seat. The King of the Jews was antitypically that mercy-seat. All God's thoughts centred in Him; and all that He had to communicate to man was expressed by Him. As some one has said, In Jesus God speaks volumes. So that despite what the Jews had done—misjudged, unrighteously condemned and crucified Him, it becomes the occasion for God to display, to the fullest possible extent, His mercy. There was the dark background of our sin. But in the foreground the brightness of His mercy—mercy so rich, so full, so free! Are you a subject of that mercy? If so you have proved that "Mercy glories over judgment" (James 2. 13); which judgment you and I deserved.

A. F. MOORE.

(To be continued.)

THE QUEST FOR SATISFACTION.

SATISFACTION is not reached by *sinning* for the Word of God clearly states that "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." Intoxication or self-gratification must never be confused with satisfaction. Moreover, it is not found in this present evil world, for all its *pleasures* end in "vanity and vexation of spirit." Nor is it bought with *money*, for the inspired writer says, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase; this is also vanity."

It is also certain that *seeing* and *hearing* do not satisfy the heart of man, for "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing."

Every one who has discovered that "in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing," will not expect to find satisfaction by looking within, for "the heart

is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ; who can know it ? ” Every effort to secure satisfaction by reformation or self-improvement must also prove in vain, for “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Well might the prophet cry, “Wherefore do ye . . . labour for that which satisfieth not ? ”

But satisfaction *is* found in CHRIST, for He said, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst [for ever].” He alone is the Giver of living water, and God says, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” The love of Christ *does* satisfy the hearts of those who know Him. The apostle prayed that ye may “know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be *filled* with all the fulness of God.”

Satisfaction *is* found in the house of God, for the Psalmist said, “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house ; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.” It *is* enjoyed now by the power of the Spirit of God, for God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying, “Abba, Father,” that we may respond to Himself with joy.

There are beautiful instances recorded in the scriptures of those who tasted satisfaction.

King David touched it as he “sat before the Lord,” for he said, “Thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like THEE ! ”

Mary of Bethany was satisfied as she also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.

John, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” was filled as he was leaning on Jesus’ bosom.

THE VEIL.

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The bride in the Song of Songs was fully satisfied when she could say, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

So every lover of Christ would sing—

"Whom have we, LORD, but THEE,
Soul-thirst to satisfy ?
Exhaustless spring ! The waters free !
All other streams are dry."

F. S. MARSH.

THE VEIL.

IF the ark of the covenant gives us the personal greatness and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as man, the effulgence of God's glory and the expression of His substance (Heb. 1), the veil presents to us the moral features of Christ, those beauties and perfections and graces which found their expression in Him. The veil, "that is to say, his flesh," was that which hid the greatness and glory of the ark from view, and presented for the admiration of God's people that which was precious, beautiful and attractive. In addition to seeing these outward beauties, faith could view what was behind the veil, the glory of His Person, "A glory as of an only-begotten with a father, full of grace and truth." (John 1.)

The veil of the tabernacle was composed of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, made of artistic work ("the work of a designer") with cherubim.

The blue would shew to us the manifestation of all that was heavenly, here upon earth, the appearing of "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward

man," the generous dispensing of mercy and blessing to "the unthankful and the evil." How beautifully the blue shone in the Lord Jesus and His wondrous activities. Every movement of grace was made artistic by the colour of heaven, men wondering at "the words of grace" which proceeded out of his mouth," and witnessing to the fact that "God had visited his people."

Purple is another colour of great richness, and belonged to people of wealth and position. It would speak of the richness of what has been expressed in the Lord Jesus Christ as man. He was (and is) a "mighty man of wealth," "who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." One who, except when forsaken at Calvary, enjoyed the riches of the favour of God and delighted to bring "the poor and the maimed and the blind" into the enjoyment of His possessions. What a beautiful contrast to the man of Luke 16, who "was a rich man and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, making good cheer in splendour every day" (New Trans.), and yet letting a poor man, Lazarus, languish at his gate, "full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table." Even the dogs—see the incident of the Syro-phœnician woman—were given of the bounty of the Lord Jesus.

Scarlet, it would appear from scripture, depicts that which is distinguishing and distinctive. It would suggest the moral grandeur and glory of Christ, as One who was distinct and distinguished from every other man. We view Him in His pathway here, and are compelled to say, "Never man spake like this man." His coming up from the waters of baptism ; the mount

of transfiguration ; Pilate's hall ; these particularly shew the scarlet ; presenting a man marked off from every one else, beautiful and outstanding in His own solitary dignity. Peter, James and John looked upon that colour as, "lifting up their eyes they saw no one, but Jesus only." Peter says they were "eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory : This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight." (2 Peter 1. 16, 17.)

We now come to the fine twined linen, that which formed the substance of the veil, a beautiful suggestion of that righteousness, or those righteousnesses, which were woven into the whole of the life of the Lord Jesus, and formed the very substance of His moral beauties and activities. One would gather that the fine twined linen was a material of excellent texture, and would stand for the uniqueness and surpassing excellence of the righteousness of Christ. Fine linen is mentioned in other connections, but the fine *twined* linen of the veil presents a material of superlative worth, suggesting a purity and righteousness and beauty upon which the eyes of God could rest with delight and satisfaction. Those holy eyes could look down upon the Lord Jesus and find nothing that was contrary to Himself. The centurion, viewing His death upon the cross, was compelled to exclaim, "Truly this was a righteous man."

The whole veil was of artistic work, literally, "the work of a designer," with cherubim, and typified what fully answered to the mind of God. All that God in eternity designed that man should be, all that He would look for in man, found its abiding expression in that blessed Holy One, who is presented to us in the

veil. As man He was completely in harmony with the mind and heart of God, absolutely in the hands of the Holy Spirit, and so there was the unfolding in Him of all those righteousnesses, graces and perfections, which had their figurative representation in the veil. How artistic was everything that came out in Him. How completely the thoughts of the Designer found their answer in Him.

His friends, His enemies, the subjects of His grace, all came face to face with moral splendour, whether they recognised that splendour or not. Mary of Bethany was so under the power of its attractions that she esteemed it more precious than that which was very precious. Pilate admitted its perfectness in the words, "I find no fault in him," whilst the people at large, convinced, even if not understanding, said, "He has done all things well."

Finally, the cherubim come before us as a witness that all the attributes of God found their rest and their expression in the Lord Jesus. The cherubim were the holy guardians of what was of God, but in the Lord Jesus they discovered everything for God completely secured, every attribute mingling harmoniously in One of whom it could be said, "Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Nor is this all. The veil had its reproduction in the curtains, of the same material, colours, and features ; beautiful figure of the assembly of God in tabernacle character as, through redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit, she gives expression to the moral glories of Christ, her Beloved.

H. J. MILES.

THE GATES OF THE CITY

(EZEK. 48. 30-35.)

THE GATE OF ZEBULUN

completes those on the south side of the city. Zebulun was the last of the sons of Leah and the significance of his name appears to be the idea of dwelling. The south land is where sunshine is to be found, and abiding in the warmth of the love of God and of the love of Christ we are in a place where we hear His voice and have a spiritual understanding, and dwelling there we are available for whatever call the Lord may make upon us. This is seen with Zebulun. Deborah speaks of those out of Zebulun who could handle the pen of the writer, or as another version puts it, they that handled the staff of the ruler. The qualification for rule would surely be found in dwelling in the warmth of the love of God, and such are prepared to regard not their lives as dear unto themselves, for Zebulun is a people that jeopardized their lives unto death for the maintenance of that which was precious to God, the preservation of His people from the power of the enemy. What faithfulness and devotedness is here, reminding one of those of Smyrna in Revelation 2, who were prepared to put their lives in jeopardy in their devotion to the interests of Christ down here, and they had from the Lord Himself the word, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Again we find that amongst those whose hearts were set upon making David king were some fifty thousand of Zebulun. What a company they were! all armed for war with all weapons of war, a company that would carry consternation into the ranks of the

enemy as they stood their ground for David, and what a conflict it was, but how fully equipped they were. It is said concerning us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against authorities, against the universal lords of this darkness, against spiritual powers of wickedness in the heavenlies. Is the conflict an unequal one? Surely not, for on account of the character of the enemies arrayed against us, we take unto ourselves the whole armour of God that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having accomplished all things to stand. This is victory, as with those who thus rallied to David, they kept rank without double heart. May we be amongst those whose ranks are unbroken and whose affections are undivided, and are maintained in the consciousness of victory.

J. R. TITHECOTT.

FRAGMENTS.

BY S. J. B. C.

WAIT.

Not so in haste, my heart ;
Have faith in God, and wait ;
Although He linger long,
He never comes too late.

Until He cometh, rest,
Nor grudge the hours that roll ;
The feet that wait for God
Are soonest at the goal !

✻ ✻ ✻

A noble heart, like the sun, showeth its greatest countenance in its lowest estate.

✻ ✻ ✻

When God is carving your rough block into the image of His Son, do not mourn over the chips.

SALVATION, WARFARE, AND TESTIMONY

(1 TIM. 1. 2.)

I THINK that young believers are generally attracted by Paul's Epistles to Timothy. I remember reading these epistles with great interest soon after my conversion, and I expect others have done likewise. There is something very remarkable and touching in the bond that subsisted between Paul and Timothy. The apostle in his closing years seems to have had no other in whom he could confide in quite the same way as he could in his child in the faith, Timothy. There is great encouragement in this for those who are young. Youth is no barrier to godliness, for one who was comparatively speaking a young man was so spiritually matured that he was the bosom friend of the apostle to whom was committed the declaration of the whole counsel of God.

If our hearts are simple and devoted to Christ we may have that place to-day. We have the apostle's own inspired words, and in that way we are directly linked with them. Every young believer has the privilege of a personal link with Peter and John and Paul. If we entered more into this we should better understand what it is to be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

There are three things in the scripture before us about which I wish to say a few words--salvation, warfare and testimony.

I think you will notice that believers who are bright in their souls always retain a deep sense of the grace by which they are saved. Paul certainly had a vivid

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consciousness of the grace that had been so abundant to him. He could not mention the glad tidings of the glory of the blessed God which was committed to his trust without speaking of himself as the crowning trophy of the triumphs of grace. It is a profitable thing to remember what we were in time past (Eph. 2. 11, 12), that our appreciation of grace may thereby be enhanced.

A blasphemer, a persecutor, an insolent overbearing man, the chief of sinners, has become a blessed trophy and witness of divine grace. There was everything in Saul of Tarsus that was most offensive to God—religious pride, self-righteousness, hatred of Christ, and cruelty to the saints. His sin was great, but he found something greater still: “The grace of our Lord surpassingly over-abounded.” If we remember what we were, it is not to dwell upon it, but that it may be a background to show off the lustre and glory of the grace of our God—grace that not only provides an Object for faith, but bestows faith itself. Faith as well as love is the gift of abounding grace. (1 Tim. 1. 14.)

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Nothing could give greater assurance than this; nothing could make blessing more certain; nothing could more effectually remove every doubt and misgiving in an exercised heart than this great and divine fact. The One in whom all God’s counsels have centred from eternity came into the world to take up our liabilities, and to glorify God in our condition of flesh and blood, and under our judgment, so that He might “save sinners.”

“Christ Jesus” is a name of the Saviour which is almost peculiar to Paul, and it indicates the Man of

God's counsel and purpose. (See Eph. 3. 11.) So that to get a full idea of salvation we must go back into eternity. God "hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel." (2 Tim 1. 9, 10.)

God has had from eternity a resource equal to all His blessed thoughts of love and grace. What wonderful things *men* would do if they had resources equal to their thoughts ! Men sometimes think they have resources, but some unexpected obstacle turns up, and, having begun to build, they are not able to finish. But God's resource is more than equal to everything that could arise. *Sin* did not prove too much for God's resource, nor did it alter His purpose. Nay ! it is sin that has brought out the fulness and blessedness of God's resource.

Before Adam was created God had a Man before His heart in purpose—the Man Christ Jesus—and it was God's pleasure that we should be before Him in the condition and acceptance of that Man for ever. If you get a thought of God's *purpose* you will understand the immensity of His *grace*. For what could be more contrary to God's purpose than our condition as children of Adam ? Fallen, corrupted by lust, alienated from God, guilty, and under death and judgment as the righteous consequence of our sin, how could *we* ever be with God in the condition and acceptance of the Beloved ? Ah ! this is where GRACE comes in !

We may put that one blessed word, GRACE, over against everything that is true of us as children of Adam. If we have many sins, there is "forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his GRACE." (Eph. 1. 7.) If we are far away from God and lost, "the GRACE of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared." (Titus 2. 11.) If we are helpless like the poor man who was left wounded and half dead in the parable of Luke 10, there is all the GRACE of the good Samaritan for us. If we are under death and judgment, Jesus, "by the GRACE of God," tasted death for every man. The more we prove our utter ruin, the more we shew ourselves to be proper subjects for GRACE. Our wretched and guilty condition brought the Man of God's counsel into the world to die, that He might "save sinners." If we could put all the sin there ever was in the world in one scale, and the death of Christ in the other, we should see that "where sin abounded, GRACE did much more abound."

The "salvation which is in Christ Jesus" is a *present* salvation. That is, it carries with it present deliverance from sin, the world, and Satan. Not only are the believer's sins forgiven, but he receives the gift of the Holy Ghost, so that the love of God may be shed abroad in his heart, and he may come under the teaching of grace. As he walks in the Spirit he is delivered from the dominion of sin, and does not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. The love of God known in his heart preserves him from loving the world. He is thus practically delivered from the power of evil and darkness.

Then as to the future, the "salvation which is in Christ Jesus" necessarily carries with it "eternal glory." (2 Tim. 2. 10.) The Man of God's counsel has

become “the first-born among many brethren,” and God will bring all the “many sons” to the same glory which He has entered as Man. The completeness of the “salvation which is in Christ Jesus” is set forth in Him—the risen and glorified Man—and we shall not be in the completeness of it until we are with Him and like Him in eternal glory.

Before leaving this I may remark that the Apostle Paul is put before us here as an object lesson. The true character of divine mercy and grace has been fully shewn in connection with him. He had a deep experience of sin, and he entered into grace in a wonderful way. We may have had a comparatively mild and feeble experience both of sin and grace, but the grace which was expressed towards him is the grace that has come to us. We may learn in him what sin is, and the surpassing over-abundance of grace, even though we may not have proved it so fully in our own experience. Who can wonder that the chief of sinners—saved by sovereign mercy and grace—breaks out in this ascription of honour and glory to the blessed God who reigns in such wondrous grace? “Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

C. A. COATES.

(To be continued.)

“THE FAITH.”

IT should be a matter of great interest to every one who has confessed the Lord Jesus, and who is thus by profession a Christian, to have a clear outline of the Christian faith. Many times in the New Testament the expression, “the faith,” occurs referring to

living Christianity expressed in the Person of Christ and to the whole range of christian doctrine in contradistinction to every other faith. It is to be distinguished from "faith" as the state of soul of any individual believer.

The first mention of it is the record in Acts 6. 7 that "a great company of the priests were

"OBEDIENT TO THE FAITH."

What a work of God lay behind this statement! Of those priests who had so recently cried, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him," there was a great company who, now converted to God and believing in Jesus and the resurrection, could be thus spoken of.

They had been of the Jewish faith, but by their baptism they had renounced this and had become obedient to the faith of Christ.

What a triumph for God and an answer to the prayer of Jesus on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was evidenced by those who now embraced the faith of Jesus.

It was very fitting that soon after the work of God by the gospel had been so remarkably witnessed and many had been added to the Lord that the apostles were heard exhorting the disciples to

CONTINUE IN THE FAITH

(Acts 14. 22), for long before the apostolic days were ended there were many who "departed from the faith." In the present days of apostasy, when the love of many is waxing cold, we all need the word of exhortation to continue "stedfast in the faith."

Christianity is founded upon the Godhead and

“ THE FAITH.”

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incarnation of Christ, His atoning death, His resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of God, and upon the gift of the Holy Spirit of God, by whose power the gospel is preached. There is nothing unstable or changing in the christian faith, so it is of great moment that all believers should be preserved in the faith, grounded and settled.

After this, as christian assemblies were formed in many places, those who were concerned for their prosperity moved about amongst them in order that the Christians should be

“ ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH ”

(Acts 16. 5), for God's assembly is not founded on human doctrines but on the revealed will of God, as disclosed in His word.

Hence it is most necessary that every believer should be instructed in the foundation truths of the christian faith. Thus will the local assemblies be composed of those who are confirmed in it and who are intelligent as to its pure and holy principles and the conduct that becomes those who are of “the faith.”

The great servant of Christ, Paul the apostle, whose writings are the inspired delineation of the christian faith, was called before Felix and before Drusilla, his wife, and there he made a bold, clear

CONFESSION OF THE FAITH

of Christ, as he “reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come.”

Believers are left here to be living confessors of the faith so that men may be compelled to acknowledge

its living power to accomplish marvellous transformations in the lives of the disciples of Christ.

Moreover, it has been entrusted to His followers to

“CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH

once delivered to the saints.” (Jude 3.) This does not mean entering into bitter arguments and controversy, but as standard bearers who will not surrender the colours, the Christians cling with a personal, living trust in God to every truth that is comprised in “the faith.”

He states that it was once delivered to the saints, as the colours were once presented to the regiment to be cherished, fought for, and retained at all cost.

The darker the day the more need there is for fidelity ; the greater the departure from the faith, the greater the call for faithful men and women who will cherish every word of the living God ; every truth that is unfolded in the pages of His holy word and every glory of Christ and of His work that forms a part of the faith. Elijah at Carmel in 1 Kings 18 contended earnestly for the faith when he repaired the altar of the Lord and recovered the people to the true God.

It is not sufficient, however, to be purely on the defensive against the enemy ; it is equally necessary to be mutually edifying one another, as Jude also says,

“BUILDING UP YOURSELVES IN YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH.”

This constructional work is beautifully typified in the building of the altar, the temple and the wall, as described in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, when the remnant returned from captivity to Zion.

So, too, the work of ministry, the edifying of the

body of Christ, goes on with the definite object in view that we may all come to

THE UNITY OF THE FAITH.

There is "one faith," even as there is "one Lord," but each one has to be brought by the gracious activities of the Lord, to apprehend and enjoy it.

Surely every true heart longs that at the end of life's journey, when a retrospect is made, it may be possible to say with Paul, in simple sincerity and thanksgiving to God, by whose power alone any one can be preserved, "I have finished my course : I have

"KEPT THE FAITH."

The Lord, the righteous Judge, will assuredly give the crown of righteousness to such, and He would encourage every heart to be found to the end among those who "love his appearing."

F. S. MARSH.

MERCY.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT COLUMBUS, OHIO,
13/7/31 (REVISED).

(JOHN 5. 1, 2 ; 19. 13, 17, 19 ; ACTS 26. 13, 14.)

WE have been looking at mercy as shown in the life and in the death of Jesus. It is Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day and for ever. His present attitude in mercy is that shown towards Saul of Tarsus. If any man was acquainted with Hebrew it was Saul. He knew Greek, for he wrote and spoke in that language, but his mother-tongue, I am assured, was the Hebrew.

Through coming under the power of Satan, Saul be-

came an inveterate hater of Christ. No one hated Christ more than he. Now that Christ was removed from the earth he would exterminate every expression and trace of Him as seen in the people of God. The lowliness and meekness of Jesus seen in the saints aroused his anger and caused him to threaten to exterminate what was Christ's body on earth. With authority to pursue this murderous course, he goes beyond his own land, and journeys near to Damascus. To arrest Saul, then in the height of his destructive career, the Lord Jesus came down into the air and shone upon him ! Jesus sits on the throne of God. He is there to-night. He occupies and adorns that exalted place at the right hand of God. But He left that place for the moment and came near to Saul of Tarsus. Saul saw the Lord Jesus as He shone upon him in grace ; the effect of which caused him to fall to the ground ! He could say later, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord ?" (1 Cor. 9. 1.) Now I ask, Was not that a marvellous overture of mercy ? Was such mercy ever shewn to a man before or after ? Never. I would that our hearts might be touched with such mercy to-night ! Did He speak to Saul in Greek ? No, it was in the Hebrew tongue. The voice of Jesus reached his very *heart*, not exactly his conscience. No doubt it was wounded. But the Lord reached his heart ! He says, "Saul," not once, but twice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? it is hard for thee to kick against goads ?" (Acts 26. 14.) Oh, how that penetrated the heart of Saul ! What armies of heaven could have done that ? Supposing the Lord had swept Saul from the earth into hades, would his heart have been changed. Never. It would still have been steeled against Christ. But this voice (oh, the

charm of it, and the forcefulness of it) in the Hebrew tongue brought him down, a willing subject to the One who thus spoke to him. The Lord says, "It is hard for *thee*," as if to say, Saul, your sinful course is making it the harder for yourself. The Lord was feeling it too, for who could touch the saints of God without touching the Lord Himself? They were His body! Saul might have said, I did not know that; I did it ignorantly. It was indeed because of this he obtained mercy. And so later Saul, now Paul, says, I am the *first* sinner. He says, "Faithful is the word, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom *I* am the first" (1 Tim. 1. 15); adding, that "for this reason mercy was shewn me, that in me, the first, Jesus Christ might display the whole long-suffering, for a delineation of those about to believe on him to life eternal." (Ver. 16.) So that in this remarkable overture of the Lord's to Saul, not only was he personally reached and everlastingly blessed, but the Lord made him a pattern for others, so that no one might say, I am too bad to be saved; or, I have gone too far for mercy to reach me. In ignorance, in unbelief Paul had blasphemed and persecuted, but mercy was shewn that in him Jesus Christ might display the whole long-suffering of God, to "those about to believe on him to life eternal." What a triumph for God it all was! Saul was no longer an unbeliever. He would say forthwith, Most heartily do I believe; I did not know that Jesus the Nazaræan was the Son of God, glorified in heaven; but now I "believe on him to life eternal." Can you say, Yes, I am a believer. If so you are a believer to life everlasting. That is the position. Life everlasting is given to those who were worthy only of death.

Now one brief word from Romans 11. This is a fine epistle to read, especially for young believers. Romans 9 to 11 is very little read and understood, but if you want to know something of God's ways with Israel based on sovereignty, read chapters 9 to 11. It is poor business to skip from chapter 8 to chapter 12; in doing so you miss the beautiful outline of sovereignty and mercy. I am not speaking of their application to the elect simply, but would shew that the Jew has lost his position of privilege at the present time, and now the Gentile has come into favour. Some of the natural branches have been broken out of the olive tree, that is, the Jews, that the wild olive tree might be grafted in. The Gentiles stand through faith in the place of privilege; but not abiding in goodness, they will be cut away, and the Jew will be grafted in again. So that Paul arrives at this great conclusion, "God hath shut up together *all* in unbelief, in order that he might shew mercy to *all*." (Chap. 11. 32.) God delights in mercy and dispenses it to all. Any one, whether Jew or Gentile, may now have mercy, and so be a vessel of mercy. It is largely the Gentiles who are subjects of mercy to-day, but it is offered equally to the Jew as to the Gentile. So that you have Jews coming in, not *en masse*, but individually.

This great theme of mercy causes Paul to utter that remarkable doxology in verses 33 to 36: "O depth of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and untraceable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? or who has first given to him, and it shall be rendered to him? For of him, and through him, and for him are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen." So that

as our souls take in the wondrousness of the mercy of God, we are lost in the contemplation of it ; and the answer to that is doxologies in our measure to Him ; even as Paul in Romans 11 and in 1 Timothy 1. 17 thus expressed himself so beautifully. “God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love wherewith he loved us.” (Eph. 2.)

A. F. MOORE.

THE BIBLE.

(AMOS. 3, 4 AND 5.)

CHAPTERS 3, 4 and 5 of this prophecy are obviously linked together. The other chapters are more complete in themselves.

Chapter 3 opens with a solemn charge to the whole family of the children of Israel that God had brought up from the land of Egypt. They only had He known in this near relationship, therefore He would in an especial way recognise their failures. An important principle is here brought before us. 1 Peter 4. 17 tells us that judgment begins at the house of God. In Ezekiel 9. 6 we read that the men with the destroying weapons in their hands were to begin their work of judgment at the sanctuary. “Then they began at the elders who were before the house.” Our place and relationship with God involve corresponding responsibilities ; and if these are not answered to by us, our judgment is the more severe. Not that any true believer could ever be finally lost. No, indeed ; for the work of Christ has procured infinite and eternal blessing for him. In the case of one who is really the Lord’s, discipline comes in ; but if it be only a professed relationship the loss is eternal ; and the nearness of

his position means a severer judgment. (Luke 12. 47.) God sometimes chastens His own people for things which one in the world might do with impunity: "You only have I known, therefore will I punish you." He cannot allow in us what is unlike Himself, therefore He chastens us that we should *not* be condemned with the world.

"Can two walk together unless they are agreed ? " How frequently this is overlooked by young believers, alas, by old ones too ! If we assume to walk with God, what *He* is must be recognised. So, too, it is morally impossible for a believer and an unbeliever to go on together. If attempted it invariably means that the believer drops to the level of his worldly companions. It is similar if one in a path of separation from the world makes a companion of one who is not in that path. They are not agreed and usually the agreement is reached by the path of separation being more or less given up by the one who was in it. If such links are formed, it means that the one in the path of separation either has been untrue to the path or has not understood what the path was.

God's judgment must come upon such a course. God cannot deny Himself, and if we are untrue He must discipline us. If God disciplines us, or judges us, there is a reason for it. There was in Israel's day, as we see in this chapter. A lion does not roar unless there is prey. And if God warns, if a trumpet be blown, should it not be heeded ? God is full of mercy and warns. God had spoken and the prophet *must* prophesy. The unholy condition was the reason why the enemy was coming. Their strength should be brought down. Yet even thus, God would spare a remnant ; but it would be the merest fragment, as if a shepherd took

from the mouth of a lion two legs or a piece of an ear. Their sins would result in being in the lion's mouth. God's mercy only could save, and even so, it would be as if two legs or a piece of an ear were recovered. The unfaithfulness of the church has been the repetition of history. All seems gone of the church's original unity, chastity and order ; but in His sovereign mercy God again spares the merest fragment. Happy if but an ear is saved to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, and "two legs," so to speak, are recovered to walk once more in the path of the will of God.

The reference to the altars of Bethel recall to our minds 1 Kings 13. 14. Of all evil, spiritual wickedness is most obnoxious to God. A profane luxury evidenced the insensible condition of the people of God generally. Orthodoxy by itself is no security for right conduct ; but heterodoxy *never* secures it. Worldly conduct is invariably the accompaniment of departure from the truth. God would come in and judge all such self-indulgence. (Ver. 15.) This reminds us of the passage in Philippians 3, "whose end is destruction." The repeated references in the prophecy of Amos to luxury and the disregard of the poor, shew that these features are often found with spiritual decline. Spirituality considers the weak and the poor. "The same which I also was forward to do," the apostle says in Galatians 2. 10. The same principle is seen in Romans 15: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Luxury and self-indulgence are the reverse of this.

The "kine of Bashan" (chap. 4. 1-3) oppressed the poor. The expression "kine of Bashan" would refer to those living in luxury ; Bashan being a fertile district to the east of Jordan, whose rich pastures

offered abundance to herds. It was not, properly speaking, the land of Canaan. Og, king of Bashan, in an earlier day typifies this same feature of the flesh, indulgence, with his bedstead of iron. (Deut. 3. 11.) Let us be warned !

In addition to these features of self-gratification there were also those of the minutest religious observance, but yet for self-pleasing. The passage (chap. 4. 4-6) in its character recalls Colossians 2. 23, where the apostle denounces the religiousness of man and mere religious formalities, the observance of which was but to the "satisfaction of the flesh."

The remainder of chapter 4 tells of the repeated actions of discipline on God's part, but with the reiterated statement, "Yet ye have not returned to me." All had been to no real result. Consequently God calls upon His people to meet Him, for His judgment would be such that Israel would not rise again ; that is to say, there would be no recovery again, as there had previously been. They were beyond human aid.

Hence chapter 5 opens with the lamentation, "The virgin of Israel has fallen ; she shall no more rise." Yet it still remained that they could seek *God* and they should live. Bethel and Gilgal were but names. Their power and truth had gone. Full of meaning once, these places of the most holy association had been corrupted by man's wickedness. To seek *God* was the only hope. How necessary again in our day ; for history has verily repeated itself. The holiest outward elements of Christianity, baptism and the Lord's supper itself, have been corrupted in their meaning, indeed the latter made idolatrous by the mind of man in his iniquity. Are not many turning to the so-called "sacraments" as Israel was turning to Bethel and

Gilgal ? And is there not as serious degradation and idolatry in this day as in that ? God knows the “ manifold transgressions ” of His people in this day as in that. Very probably, too, he that rebuketh and speaketh uprightly is as much hated in this day as in that.

Note again how the heartless disregard of the poor is referred to. Spiritual departure and worldly self-indulgence go together. Worldliness may often conceal false teaching.

There is, however, no gain in the mere occupation with evil. We are to “ seek good and not evil.” We must have a judgment of evil, for we are told to hate evil and love the good. We have to name things. But we are not to seek evil. “ Seek good . . . that ye may live.” God is with us on that line. A flesh-eating bird is an unclean one. The prudent keep silence. How often harm is done by unnecessary talking about evil. It may result in evil speaking or backbiting. This does not prevent a godly concern with regard to evil and counsel in the fear of God as to it, and a definite judgment. We are to *hate* it ; hate it because God hates evil.

It is remarkable that in such circumstances the day of the Lord could be desired. Sometimes we are apt to do this when we do not rightly judge things and do not act according to God. With a spiritual negligence we may leave things which ought to be judged and say, “ Well, when the Lord comes He will put things right.” But what would that mean ? I should suffer loss. We may now get the *present gain* of the day of the Lord. We may be manifest unto God now. But this means going over things with God, and getting down to the roots of our actions, tracing back, possibly,

years to find the first movements that have led to a course or action dishonouring to God. The flesh can never do this. We must get to God to do it. We are morally with God as we do ; for He is with the contrite.

What were feast days and solemn assemblies when righteousness was absent ? God hated and despised them. Righteousness is the essential foundation of all relationship with God. Nothing can be right without it.

Verse 25 is most remarkable. God traces the evil right back to the beginning. It is the only right way of dealing with it. The flagrant and abominable form of idolatry exhibited during the closing period of Israel's history had its roots and beginning in their history in the wilderness. The solemn words of Stephen traces back the sad course of Israel's history in a similar manner. "As your fathers did, so do ye." It is this manner of judging evil which tests us. To judge an action is not sufficient. It is necessary indeed ; but it is not enough. If we judge sin's beginning or roots we shall be saved its bitter fruits. But if the fruits are there it is not enough to condemn them. What were their roots ? When did the course begin ? It needed a prophet's voice to lay bare the deep roots of the beginning of Israel's departure. Hundreds of years had rolled on, abominations during Jeroboam's and Ahab's reigns had stained the history of the unhappy people. But God goes back to the beginning. Beneath the formal acts of Israel in the wilderness there was this deadly root working. The disease at last brought them into captivity beyond Damascus.

What lessons for us in all this, dear reader. May we ever trace back to the roots, the beginnings. How many questions we have to ask our deceitful hearts

to get at the roots. We may need great heart searchings to find the beginning ; but sin is not judged in reality unless we do. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness." The serpent, mark. That lifted-up serpent of brass foreshadowed a greater, a more wonderful lifting up. The Son of man was lifted up. Sin in its root was judged there. Not in us, indeed. No. But in our blessed Substitute Jesus. Worthy be His name for ever !

M. W. BIGGS.

A PRAYER IN THE NIGHT.

TWO boys were invited by a servant of the Lord to accompany him to a little country village where he was to preach one Lord's day evening. They arrived safely at their destination, and after having tea together all went to the preaching with the friends who had entertained them.

After the meeting preparations were being made for returning home, when it began to rain. A terrific storm soon followed, which made it impossible to leave the house. Their friends accommodated themselves to the unexpected circumstances, and quickly made preparations for the three to stay for the night.

An old ostler, a hearty and faithful Christian, who was employed on the premises, took advantage of the presence of the two lads to speak to them about their souls.

Bed-time came. The visitors were shewn to their rooms. The two boys slept together in a room quite near to the old ostler. At four o'clock in the morning one of the lads was aroused by a queer noise which he could not understand. Awaking his friend, they

listened and whispered, wondering what it could be. At length they discovered that the old man was praying. As they listened more intently they found he was crying to God to bless the two lads in the next room. This so affected the boy that was first aroused that it was the means of him deciding for Christ.

Not long after the old ostler's body was laid in the churchyard of that same village, he having gone to be with the Lord.

Many years have rolled away, and the lad above referred to is now an old man himself. A relative recently asked him if there was any particular place he would like to go to. If so, he was prepared to drive him there in his car. "Yes!" he replied, "take me to —— village."

This was not to see if there were any surviving relatives of the friends who had so kindly entertained him many years ago. Neither was it to refresh his memory of what he heard at the preaching, good as that may have been. It was just to stand at the grave of the dear old ostler who had poured out his heart to God in the darkness of night, and whose prayer had been the means of the saving of his soul. Although but his dust lay there, the old man took off his hat and looked up to God in deep thankfulness for His saving grace in his youth.

How important is the "praying" as well as the "preaching."

A. H. CHILDS.

SALVATION, WARFARE, AND TESTIMONY:

(1 TIM. 1, 2.)

(Continued.)

SOULS often go through many exercises before they learn the blessedness of God's salvation ; they are often harassed by doubts and fears under the oppression of the enemy. And it is sometimes supposed that these exercises are the proper warfare of the believer. But this is not the case. The salvation of God must be known as a blessed reality before christian warfare begins. The children of Israel had no warfare until they had passed through the Red Sea. On the contrary, the word to them was, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord . . . the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (Exo. 14. 13, 14.) But they had not been long in the wilderness before they came in conflict with Amalek.

It is of the greatest importance that we should know what is the object of christian warfare, and it is plainly declared in the scripture before us. "That thou by them mightest war a good warfare ; holding faith, and a good conscience ; which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck." The "good warfare" is for the maintainance of "faith, and a good conscience." In the world nations go to war to maintain their supposed rights. Now "faith, and a good conscience" are the rights of a Christian. Every believer is entitled to maintain "faith, and a good conscience," and under no circumstances whatever is it right for him to surrender these two things.

We must not put a good conscience before faith. Some will contend earnestly for their crochets and

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whims under plea of much talk about their consciences. Faith must come first—the condition of soul that recognises God, and that makes His will supreme in the heart. Two things are essential to faith; the soul must be in the light of God's revelation of Himself, and it must be in continual dependence upon Him. Timothy was left at Ephesus by Paul that sound doctrine might be maintained amongst the saints “according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God.” This is the first thing that faith takes account of—that the glory of the blessed God has shone forth for men. Faith is in the light of the glory of the blessed God, and cannot settle down with anything that is inconsistent with God, or unsuitable for Him. Then faith continually turns to God to know His pleasure, and is maintained in dependence and confiding intercourse with God. Hence the apostle says, “I will therefore that men pray everywhere.”

It is this that we have to maintain, and for which we “war a good warfare.” The one who beguiled Eve by his subtlety is ever seeking to divert our souls from that blessed revelation of God in the glory of grace which has shone upon us in the glad tidings. And he is ever seeking to remove us from that personal and confiding intercourse with God in prayer which is essential to faith. We have to maintain faith. Christians are looked at as depositories of the faith—as entrusted with the maintenance of what is of God in this world. The house of God is this collectively, but the house is made up of individuals. If we make shipwreck of faith the deposit is lost so far as we are concerned. (See 2 Tim. 1. 14.)

“Faith, and a good conscience” must go together. If we neglect to do something which we know we ought

to do, or hold back from some step which we know we ought to take, or if we go on with what we know is contrary to God, we get a bad conscience. A man with a bad conscience is spiritually powerless. He is not going on with God, nor with that which God has wrought in him. He becomes unstable in all his ways. He is in the condition of a ship which does not answer her helm ; he is at the mercy of the wind and waves. Whichever way the wind and tide are running he will drift, and presently he will get on to the rocks. What a solemn word—"concerning faith have made shipwreck" ! This is what any of us are liable to if we put away a good conscience.

It may be asked, What is it to make shipwreck as to faith ? Well, the scripture before us speaks of two men who got so far from God as to become blasphemers. Have you not known men who once seemed bright and happy in divine things who are now gone quite away from the Lord and His saints, and are immersed in business and the things of the world ? They have made shipwreck as to faith. We cannot tell whether they ever were really converted or not ; God only knows. Instead of going on their course richly freighted with the "good deposit," they have made shipwreck. This awful spectacle is presented to us that we may see the solemn necessity of warring the good warfare, for the maintenance of "faith, and a good conscience."

The history of Jehoshaphat presents a solemn picture of a saint who failed to maintain faith and a good conscience. This is the more sad, because in his early days "he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim ; but sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel. There-

fore the Lord stablished the kingdom in his hand ; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents ; and he had riches and honour in abundance. And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord." (2 Chron. 17. 3-6.) But in the next chapter we read that he "joined affinity with Ahab." That is, he allowed his son to marry a daughter of Ahab. Then "he went down to Ahab" ; and when Ahab said, "Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead ? " he answered, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people ; and we will be with thee in the war."

Where was faith in all this ? If the light granted to him by God had been controlling him, such an alliance, and such associations with the wicked and idolatrous Ahab would have been an impossibility. And, indeed, he was conscious that God was not with him in it, for *after* he had decided his course, he said, "Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to day." If *faith* was given up, *conscience* still retained some activity. He had acted without God, and yet his conscience would fain have some divine sanction. How often is it so with us ! We take a course that is quite inconsistent with the light in which God has made Himself known to us, and we take it without any reference to His mind and pleasure, and then we cast about for something which our deceived hearts can regard as divine sanction and encouragement !

Jehoshaphat only escaped death by special divine mercy (chap. 18. 31), and when he returned to his house at Jerusalem "Jehu, the son of Hanani the seer, went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord ? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord." (Chap. 19 2.) He had thus a distinct

testimony that his course had been displeasing to the Lord. Yet "after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly. And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Ezion-gaber." (Chap. 20. 35, 36.) There can be no doubt that in this matter Jehoshaphat failed to maintain a good conscience. He did that which he knew was displeasing to the Lord. And the result was shipwreck. "Eliezer, the son of Dodavah of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish." (Chap. 20. 37.)

The knowledge of salvation, and the maintenance of faith and a good conscience, would inevitably result in *testimony*. In 1 Timothy 2 we find the testimony of grace that properly stands connected with the house of God. It finds expression in prayers, preaching, and behaviour. God's attitude towards men as a Saviour God, and all that is suitable in those who are called to know Him in His grace, finds expression in His saints. They pray for all men, because God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." And they rejoice to render the testimony that "God is one, and the mediator of God and men one, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."

As to behaviour, the men are to be characterised by dependence, holiness, and the simplicity of confidence in God, which excludes "wrath and doubting." The women are to be marked by modesty in deportment and dress, by good works, and by quietness and subjection. These are the characteristics which re-

spectively mark men and women who have come under the influence of the knowledge of God in grace.

There is moral order in the three things we have looked at together. We have first to learn the blessedness and completeness of SALVATION. Then comes WARFARE for the maintenance of faith and a good conscience. The practical result of warring this good warfare is that we become characterised by what is of God, and what is suitable to Him, and thus we are found in TESTIMONY for God in this world.

C. A. COATES.

REVERENCE.

AMIDST the profanity and irreverence of the godless world, the children of God have a distinguishing feature in the evident reverence which marks them. The observance of ritual and formal religion are not necessarily reverence according to God, and may even be irreverent, but every one who has the fear of God in the heart will reveal a soul-attitude of deep and subdued veneration for God, whose he is and whom he serves.

To revere is to regard with fear mingled with respect and affection, and it is delightful to observe the unconscious reverence with which the name of Jesus is spoken, and the holy things of God are referred to, by those who know and love Him, and have an appreciation of His Person and glories. Affectation and mere sentimentality are to be deprecated as the product of religious flesh, and it requires wisdom to discern between reality and unreality.

The believer has respect to the word that "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints,

and to be had in *reverence* of all them that are about him," and also that "holy and reverend is his name," for twice God says, "Ye shall reverence my sanctuary, I am the Lord." There are holy themes which can never rightly be the subjects of controversy or argument. Truths which are beyond the range of human intelligence (though discerned by the power of the Holy Spirit) demand the deepest reverence in the way in which they are spoken.

The glories of the Person of Christ, and all that is revealed concerning Him, can only be contemplated with reverence. Even as God spoke to Moses at the burning bush, "Draw not nigh hither . . . the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Since the scriptures unfold the titles of Christ in their completeness, expressive of His deity, His sonship, His manhood, and His various glories, the true spirit of reverence would shrink from the application of any title to Him which is not found in the word. To add to the scriptures or to take therefrom is irreverent, and is emphatically condemned.

It is irreverent to speak to God with undue familiarity. What an example of reverence the Lord Jesus set us, when as a dependent Man here He prayed! and in teaching His disciples the manner of prayer He instructed them to say "Hallowed be thy name." So, too, when He spoke to His Father in John 17, He "lifted up his eyes to heaven," thus indicating a suitable attitude, and said, "Father . . . holy Father . . . righteous Father." All these expressions should deeply impress His own as to the manner and spirit in which to address our God and Father.

This would avoid the thoughtless repetition of the name of God or of the Lord Jesus in prayer, or care-

lessness of attitude when addressing divine Persons, which is unsuitable behaviour in the house of God. How greatly the exhortation is needed to-day, "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God, for God is in heaven and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. Fear thou God."

Solemn instances of irreverence are recorded in scripture to express God's displeasure with those who were guilty of it.

The men of Beth-shemesh were smitten because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, and they said, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"

King Uzziah transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense, and the Lord smote him with leprosy.

Belshazzar brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God and drank wine in them. In that night he was slain.

On the other hand, how encouragingly the scriptures record the pleasure of God in those who approached Him in true reverence.

The publican went up into the temple reverentially, for "standing afar off, he would not lift so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." And he went to his house justified.

The prodigal came with reverence when he said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before

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thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son," and he received the father's kiss.

Saul of Tarsus expressed true reverence when for the first time he said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and the Lord made him His greatest servant.

Thomas was bowed in holy reverence in the presence of Jesus when he said, "My Lord, and my God," and he found his place in the worshipping company.

Mary was filled with reverential adoration when she responded to the voice of Jesus, saying, "Mary," for she turned herself and saith unto Him, "Rabboni."

It is recorded of *the disciples* when Jesus first appeared to them after His resurrection, that "when they saw him, they worshipped him."

Thus while God's children are encouraged to draw near to Him with holy boldness, it is necessary to maintain spiritual balance so that the approach is with due reverence. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the exhortations are given, "Let us therefore come *boldly* to the throne of grace," and "Having therefore, brethren, *boldness* to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," but in the same epistle the exhortation is found :

"LET US HAVE GRACE WHEREBY WE MAY SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY, WITH REVERENCE AND GODLY FEAR : FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE."

F. S. MARSH.

GOD IS A REWARDER OF THEM THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.

MORE than a hundred years ago there lived in an Indian prince's state a lad about sixteen years of age. From early youth he became conscious of his sinful condition and his utter unsuitability for the presence of God. The Spirit of God working in his soul gave him to realise his lost condition and the load of his sins became heavier from day to day. Being a son of parents who followed the Brahmanic religion and never having heard of the Lord Jesus the Saviour of sinners, he thought he might be able to obtain peace with God by becoming a good Brahmanist. As he grew to manhood, therefore, he sought to fulfil the moral as well as the ceremonial law enjoined in Brahmanism. He worshipped regularly at temples, built new temples, visited holy places, gave alms, made donations to charities, and lived a life of the strictest morality.

He was now a householder and was looked upon as a man who had reached the top of the ladder—rich, respected, religious and successful in all matters. But the burden of sin did not go ; the load on the other hand weighed more heavily upon him than before, and he realised that in spite of all his attainments he was a sinner before God and that it was impossible for him to stand in judgment before the holy God. He, however, did not flee from his exercises. He decided to try another expedient, namely, prayer, hoping that the merciful God might take pity upon the sinner and forgive him his sins.

He did not wish to depend any more upon priests and temples, but like Cornelius in Acts 10. 2 he engaged

himself in constant prayer. It is not known how long this exercise lasted, but one evening while he was in solitude, deep in prayer, he felt a comforting hand laid upon his shoulder and a voice came distinctly to his ear, "I shall shew thee the truth." He turned round to see who it was, but saw no man. This circumstance was a great encouragment to him and he felt God was not inattentive to his cry.

Not long after he heard that about a hundred and fifty miles from his village there was a man preaching a new faith. He decided to go to him, and with a few attendants on horseback he made his journey. There was an interview and the man announced to him the glad tidings of Jesus. The word of God fell into a soil prepared of God. Details of the conversation between the two men are not known, but this persistent seeker after truth believed in Jesus and confessed Him as his Saviour. In faith he saw that the Lord Jesus was wounded for his transgressions and bruised for his iniquities; his soul received in simple faith the truth that the chastisement of his peace was upon the Lord Jesus and that with His stripes he was healed, God having laid on Jesus, the Lamb of God, all his sins. The load of his sins vanished: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (Isa. 43. 25.) "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Róm. 5. 1.) The confession of Christ by this seeker after truth is another chapter in the triumphs of divine grace, and I shall not speak of it here.

How is it with you, reader? Are you at peace with God? Neither your religious practices nor your race, nationality, citizenship, or culture, which may be your

boast, can ever atone for your sins. This Indian seeker after truth belonged to a race and culture that human history holds to be one of the noblest and highest in the world, but these could not save him. The Lord Jesus is the Saviour, "I came not to call the righteous," He said, "but sinners to repentance." (Matt. 9. 13.)

It is a very serious thing to die in one's sins, nothing can be more serious. If you die in unbelief, rejecting the salvation that God offers in His Son, do you know what God will judge you for? You will be judged and condemned not because you are a sinful being, but for one sin, namely, because you did not believe in the Lord Jesus (John 16. 9), who is being presented to you now as the Saviour of sinners. How solemn to reject God's offer! You have the opportunity now of "being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood . . . to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. 3. 24-26.)

The Lord Jesus has already "made peace through the blood of his cross." (Col. 1. 20.) It is open to you to be reconciled to God now. Come to Jesus; it does not matter what part of the world you belong to; God's grace and God's salvation are not limited by geographical conditions. It does not matter what you are, coloured or discoloured, black or brown or pale—God makes no distinction. He is a God of love. The Lord Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2. 6.) He has been presented to you as a living Saviour; it is not necessary for you to seek after salvation by prayer. When this Indian heard of the glad tidings

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of Jesus he believed in Him and thanked and praised God for His free gift. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10. 9.)

W. S. DESAI.

GLEANING AND REAPING.

THESE two expressions occur in the second chapter of the Book of Ruth, and illustrate two very important, yet totally different exercises. Ruth had been moved by God to follow Naomi out of the country of Moab to Bethlehem. They had both known the deep sorrow of widowhood, but through it God had turned their hearts to Himself and His people.

For Ruth this is an entirely new experience. She had been living in an idolatrous country, but now she is to prove to the full the meaning of the expressions she had used in chapter 1. 16, "thy God" and "thy people."

At the beginning of chapter 2 she goes forth to glean some ears of corn for food for Naomi and herself, and she happened to come to the field of Boaz, a mighty man of wealth. What a figure for us to ponder, suggesting something of the immense spiritual wealth that is in the hands of the Lord Jesus. For it says in John 3. 35, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." Who can tell what "all things" convey. How great the wealth indeed in the blessed and bountiful hands of Christ.

Now let us see illustrated in this chapter of Ruth how He dispenses it. Boaz quickly notices this new-comer as she enters his fields, and at once inquires

who she is. Are we on the look out for newcomers in this way? And notice too there is one of his servants who can tell him all about this woman. He knows where she had come from and just how long she had been in the field. What an interesting circle the Lord's people are. If one should read these lines who is hesitating whether to definitely identify themselves with them, let me urge you, in the light of this scripture, to delay no longer. Much failure and shortcoming exist in individuals, but I am conscious, from practical experience, that this spirit of care and interest is still active among them. This servant in one aspect typifies the work of the Holy Spirit among the saints of God, but he also shews us clearly the interest and encouragement we should express to any that may be moving perhaps timidly among the saints.

Ruth is encouraged to glean, and now Boaz adds a further word in verse 8, "Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence." Oh, dear young believer, have you not sometimes been tempted to go outside the circle of the saints and seek for pleasure and satisfaction elsewhere! The Lord knows the sorrow this will cause you, hence He would desire you to keep fast by the saints, and thus get the full reward mentioned in verse 12. This involves the wondrous relationship between Christ and His church, as for Ruth it meant becoming the wife of Boaz.

Boaz adds a still further encouraging word for Ruth to continue gleaning in verses 15 and 16, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall some handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not." I would remark here that in the case of Ruth, and also ourselves, gleaning is necessary for our sus-

tenance and food. There is abundance for us if we are diligent and willing to gather it. Each day we need some fresh thoughts of Christ to feed our souls. Not only must there be the gathering, but the beating out as in verse 17. Ruth was only concerned about the golden grain. It is possible in our meetings, where in a special way much can be gleaned, to be occupied with critical points, and miss the vital food entirely.

Now just a few words about reaping. To make it clear I would remark simply that gleaning is for ourselves and reaping is for Christ. The reapers in the fields of Boaz were reaping for him. They had abundance of food, but their real concern was to further the reaping for the good of their bountiful master. Do we go to the meetings just to get something for ourselves, or are we exercised that the Lord should get His full portion? There is a special appeal to Ruth by Boaz himself in verse 14, "At mealtime, come thou hither and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar." This occasion seems to answer very much to the sweet privilege of the Lord's supper, when the gleaner and the reapers, the young men and maidens, and Boaz himself all sit down together, typifying the mutual joy of this blessed occasion, when all distinctions cease and the Lord Himself is supreme.

May the Lord stir up all our hearts, that we may be diligent gleaners in the company of those who love Him, and also that we might be much concerned as to reaping for Him, that He might get His full portion from us, for is He not worthy!

W. J. WHITE.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

(EZEK. 48. 31-35.)

WE now have the last three gates in view, those on the west, the first being

THE GATE OF GAD.

In Genesis 49 we read concerning Gad that “a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.” This would seem to suggest the thought of the overcomer in connection with Gad. The thought of the overcomer and the idea of overcoming constantly meets us in the pages of scripture. What an encouragement to our hearts is to be found in the blessings of the one who overcomes, as brought before us in Revelation 2 and 3. His is the privilege, the present privilege, of eating of the tree of life; of being given the crown of life; of having the hidden manna and the white stone; of having the morning star; of being clothed in white garments; being made a pillar in the temple of God and of sitting with the Lord on His throne. Much might be said about these seven things, but our purpose is to draw attention to the position of the overcomer. And in chapter 21 of the same book we are told, “He that overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be to him God, and he shall be to me son.” Can there be greater blessedness than this? May we each possess the characteristic feature of the young men in John’s epistle where they are credited with having overcome the wicked one, and again in chapter 5 we read, “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world,

our faith." The portion and path of the overcomer is indeed victory.

But to return to Gad. In the blessing of Moses he speaks of the enlargement of Gad and of his dwelling as a lion, it is an overcomer who knows what it is to be enlarged and also what it is to maintain the position in quiet power.

Ramoth in Gilead was in the territory of Gad, this suggests a place of moral elevation. Ramoth in Gilead is ours. How this reminds us of the words of the apostle to the Corinthians, when he says, "All things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's," and to the Colossians, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." What a position of moral elevation and superiority this assures to us.

We are told in 1 Chronicles 5 that the children of Gad dwelt in the land of Bashan (fruitfulness) and in all the pasture lands of Sharon, and later in the same book (chap. 27) it speaks of the herds that feed in Sharon. So there is not only the thought of moral elevation but that of fruitfulness in the land of abundant pasture. In 1 Chronicles 12 attention is drawn to a company—Gadites—who separated themselves to David, mighty men of valour, men fit for the service of war, armed with shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and who were swift as the gazelles upon the mountains. What marks of an overcomer they bore ! in the first place marked by affection for God's anointed in that they separated themselves to David. Has the same affection for Christ been a conspicuous feature with us, leading us to separate ourselves to Him and in that way break every link with those who would oppose His rights ? Then they were marked by valour. Devotion to the interests of

Christ would cause us to be marked by the same quality, and we should prove our fitness for any service of war under such a Captain. They were also equipped with shield and spear, defensive and offensive armour, as in Ephesians 6—the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit. Their faces shewed no sign of fear and they were swift in the execution of their tasks. No wonder their names are recorded.

Then we are told of further features of an overcomer. They went over Jordan in the first month, when it overflows all its banks, allowing no difficulty to stand in their way, so that it is no surprise, finally to read that they put to flight all them of the valleys. May the example of these valiant and devoted Gadites be a great incentive to us, so that we, like them, may be shewing in every conflict with the enemy of God's anointed a holy boldness and single-minded devotion, and thus be enjoying here and now the overcomer's portion.

J. R. TITHECOTT.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

(ISA. 28. 23–29, NEW TRANS.)

I SUPPOSE the force of this very interesting passage is that God will carry on His work to the very end, and all in order.

Ploughing (which does not go on for ever), then *levelling*, *sowing*, *threshing* (which also does not go on for ever), and lastly *crushing*. The instruments to accomplish these various processes are different: plough, threshing instruments, cart wheels, horses, staff and rod, according to the great wisdom of the Operator.

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But is not the last process—the crushing—very interesting? I have often wondered why the Lord's beloved people so often get their severest chastening at the end of life, when one would naturally think they would have an easier time. The histories of Abraham, Jacob, Paul, besides many one has observed in one's own time, seem to exemplify this, but the thought in verse 26 appears to offer an explanation. The threshing may go on throughout life, and the wheat thus be separated from the chaff, and I *had* looked upon this rather as the end of God's dealings with His children, but does not the *crushing* come in *after* this? So that the wheat may be made to yield the *fine flour*, that thus there might be material for a *meat offering*, that which shall answer to Christ Himself as the meat offering.

Would you not say that Paul underwent *the crushing* at the close of his life in the prison? Did not the fine flour come to light then? So that he could say, "I am now ready to be offered." Jacob certainly came in for the crushing process at the end of his life.

It is interesting that it is "*bread corn*" that is crushed (ver. 28), that which will yield food for God. "This also cometh forth."

 THE SHEEP MARK.

(JOHN 13. 35.)

I WAS greatly touched at hearing of an old shepherd—a backslider restored—praying: "O Lord, I went astray, wandered far, got among the briers which tore the sheep mark off; but, Lord, *make the mark fresh again.*"

S. J. B. C

"HE SATISFIETH THE LONGING SOUL."

(A TRUE INCIDENT.)

TOM was a carter, but always happy in his lowly and daily work—always ready to tell others his joy in the Lord that they might share it with him.

The other day he returned to a large warehouse with his empty cases to be filled again. Longing, while waiting, for a quiet word with the Lord, longing far more for it than the other carters around did for a smoke, he turned into a shed, and had a few minutes alone with God.

"What were you doing in our shed?" asked the foreman suspiciously as Tom came out.

Tom was silent for a moment. "Come now," said the foreman, "what were you doing?"

"Taking back my empties, sir," said Tom.

"What do you mean?" queried the mystified foreman.

"Just this," replied Tom, "my Lord and Saviour filled me full with His love this morning before I went to work, but I've been giving it out to others so much that when I got here I felt quite empty, as empty as those unloaded cases I've brought to you to fill again. So I got away alone that Jesus might fill me again with joy and blessing; and He has done it."

The foreman said no more, but he thought, There must be something real in Tom's religion.

So Tom thought, too, as he went out of the yard with his empty cases full again, and murmuring to himself the word he had got in the shed, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and *full* with the blessing of the Lord." (Deut. 33. 23.)

S. J. B. CARTER.

DEPARTURE.

TIDINGS of the sudden home call of beloved Dr. F. H. B., who was a frequent contributor to GOODLY WORDS, have just been received. His long pathway of unswerving interest in, and fidelity to the testimony, bears witness to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ having been upon him in great measure, and his example is one of which those who are young may well take account. He was in active service to the end—spiritually alert to all the movements of the testimony, and vitally interested in all that concerned the glory of our Lord Jesus. His departure was a christian departure in its proper meaning. He finished as a warrior.

The thought of departure is a sobering reflection.

The Lord's departure was by love's sacrificial way. He came from God and went to God. He went out of the world to the Father. This is a fragrant thought. The consummation of a pathway of perfect love. It stands alone in unique and precious glory.

Simeon's was a peaceful departure. The aged man embraced the One who was God's salvation, and in blissful contentment he could count on the fulfilment of God's word—"according to thy word." The incoming of Christ meant the settlement of every problem—Peace.

The departure of Stephen was a martyr outgoing. The setting sun of Israel's day of special privilege and glory, and the rising rays of the glorious christian position, are seen in relation to this devoted servant. Seen glory shone in his countenance, but greater still was the moral glory which radiated from him when he prayed for his murderers. It was a glorious martyr

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departure. Not yet was the christian position fully clarified, for devout men made great lamentation over him. The light of the rapture had not yet been given. In this light it would not be suitable to make great lamentation, but rather that a song of triumph should be raised, and that comfort to one another should be ministered.

The departure of the Apostle Paul is the proper christian release. He went out as a warrior, calm, intrepid, providing for the continuance of the testimony, and in full spiritual power—ready to be offered. He had “fought,” “finished,” “kept.” The outstanding warrior of the present dispensation is released from his arduous labours, and he departs with serene and undefeated spirit to be “with Christ, which is far better.”

May many be encouraged to take up the conflict, to finish the course, and may grace be given at all costs to “keep the faith.” The example of the Apostle Paul—the greatest soldier who ever wielded the sword of the Spirit in the cause of his absent Lord—should stimulate every devoted heart, and in these last days the worthy example of such as dear Dr. F. H. B. is an incentive to consider such, and seeing “the issue of their conversation, imitate their faith.”

E. B. GRIFFITHS.

THE PRESENT SERVICE OF CHRIST.

HOW marvellous are the living activities of our Lord Jesus Christ, as He sits at the right hand of God !

Whether it is the *power* by which His disciples are enabled to continue in faithfulness during His absence ;

or the *support* of His servants in their preaching and service in His name ; or the *joy* in which the worshippers of God are sustained in the holy service of His house ; or the *peace* that rests upon His own as they are together, with Himself in their midst—all are consequent upon the present grace of our risen and ascended Lord.

Because He loved His own which are in the world, and loves them unto the end, He continues to serve them unfailingly. The effect of His present ministry is witnessed, too, in the continuous supply of spiritual food by which the children of God are sustained and in the succour which is afforded to them in their trials, sorrows and afflictions.

It is significant that at the end of each of the [four gospels there is a definite indication, consistent with the gospel, of a distinctive feature of this living service.

Very encouraging is the beautiful scene described in MATTHEW, as the risen Lord meets His disciples in Galilee on a mountain where He had appointed them. "When they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Thus the

MINISTRY OF POWER

is ensured to the people of God to-day, for He said, "Lo, I am with you alway [that is, all the days]." That power is not yet being exercised to establish the kingdom of God publicly, but to maintain His own in the path of discipleship, in the face of opposition and the power of evil.

The throne of God is prominent in this gospel, for His authority must be recognised. The apostles were

to teach all the disciples to observe all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded them. Obedience and subjection are enjoined as the basis upon which His power is vouchsafed.

The great need of power to-day is evident, but in the Lord's present service there is an abundant source for every contingency of the path. Therefore let us be of good courage, and "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees."

The closing words of the Gospel of MARK conduct us into heaven where the Lord is seen sitting "at the right hand of God." His redemption work is finished, and He is therefore seated, but from that glorious position He is active in the

MINISTRY OF SUPPORT

of His servants. "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord *working* with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

Service without the Lord's support must be unavailing. Peter proved the marvellous effect of the Lord's support on the day of Pentecost when three thousand were converted. Paul experienced it when he stood alone before Nero, for he said, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me ; that by me the preaching might be fully known." Every one who serves God to-day realises that the support of the Lord is indispensable if there are to be results ; for He said, "Without me ye can do nothing." Let every one who loves Him and desires to serve Him be invigorated by the thought that His living service to His servants continues in all its power and grace ; for He who wore the girdle of service so per-

THE PRESENT SERVICE OF CHRIST.

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fectly is supporting those who are willing to wear it to-day.

The closing impression of the Gospel of LUKE is the gracious service indicated by the uplifted hands of Jesus. It is the

MINISTRY OF BLESSING,

and it is ours to record that those hands have never ceased in this wonderful activity. The Blessor "was carried up into heaven," but the blessing continues to descend. Even as the word of the Lord to Aaron was, "on this wise ye shall bless," so our risen Lord has fulfilled the promise, "I will bless them." (Num. vi. 27.) He is now our great High Priest "that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," and as the result of His blessing, the worshippers, filled with great joy, are continually praising and blessing God. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace."

The last two chapters of the Gospel of JOHN present the Son of God in resurrection life, engaged in living activities. Among the many beautiful features of His service, the

MINISTRY OF PEACE

is most in evidence there. The first word that Jesus said to His disciples as He came and stood in the midst was "Peace," and having shewed them His hands and His side, He said to them again, "Peace." Then eight days after when Jesus came and stood in their midst He again said, "Peace."

This character of service is very appropriate in this

day of unrest and disquietude. How could the joy of the Lord's presence be known if He were not to minister peace to His own ? The turmoil of this present world, the confusion of Christendom, the pressure of circumstances, all combine to distract and disturb His people, but the Son of God continues this living service, and thus peace is enjoyed ; for "in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

Thus Christ, who loved the church and gave Himself for it, continues these services of love, sanctifying, cleansing, nourishing and cherishing it, in view of the day when He will "present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." To Him be all the praise !

F. S. MARSH.

A NEW COMMANDMENT.

(JOHN 13. 34.)

JOHN chose the place of nearness. He refers to himself as leaning on Jesus' bosom. Like David's mighty men, he desired to know the heart-longings of his Lord and Master. This place need not have been peculiar to John ; it was open to all the disciples, and John writes in order to bring every lover of Jesus into holy intimacy with Him. He would have every one of us consciously in the enjoyment of His love, as he himself was, for he alludes to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

John was a Jew, and as a Jew he knew the law. He knew the rigour of the law ; he knew the commandments to be grievous. With what joy he must have received the new commandment from the lips

of Jesus ! It laid hold of him, and it sank deep down into his heart. There can be no doubt that the command of Jesus found answer in that loyal heart, for, from that lonely isle called Patmos he writes as a brother. John is essentially a brother. Born for adversity, he writes in the last time, he helps us in our day. He knew the Father, and he loved the One who lay in the bosom of the Father. He knew Jesus as the One who came forth from the Father, in order to make Him known, and established a new relationship with Him. John delights to dwell upon divine love, it is his theme. There could be no greater theme, it is exhaustless. John's heart was so filled with the greatness of his subject that at the end he must exclaim, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

It was the Lord's desire that His own should be knit together in love, and so He gave them this new commandment, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

It is a simple request, not a demand, to be fulfilled in response to His own deep love. They were not without example : "as I have loved you." Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God, He had laid aside His garments, taken a towel, and girded Himself, and having poured water into a basin, had washed the feet of His disciples. What grace ! What lowliness ! that in love He could stoop so low to serve His own. What a lovely picture, as one by one He took His disciples' feet and began to wash them and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. He comes to Peter, who cannot understand

this wondrous way of love, and who would restrain the gracious work of Jesus, but love always triumphs, and Peter's feet are washed that he might have part with the ascended Man.

It says, "Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end." In spite of all their failure and ignorance, and lack of appreciation of Him, He loved them unto the end. How He must have felt the remark of Nathanael, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and the question of Philip, when He gave answer, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known *me*, Philip?" and the denial by Peter that he was one of His disciples; and the doubting of Thomas, to whom He had to say, "Be not faithless, but believing." None of these things could alter the love of Jesus. He loved them unto the end. How patient He was with them, how longsuffering and kind! His love never failed.

It is on this line that He would have us love one another, inasmuch as we have appreciated how He has loved us. The result will be most effective, for He continues, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

So then, it is not knowledge, nor faith, which is our measure, but rather our ability to love. We need to be formed in love and to have greater family feelings.

Love was sadly lacking at Corinth, although they came behind in no gift. They were puffed up with knowledge, and Paul must needs bring before them the more excellent way. It is love's way.

There has been the greatest failure on this line. If we appreciated more the family relationship, we would not bring in anything to disturb nor destroy the wonderful peace and calm which is enjoyed in

MOVEMENT.

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that holy, heavenly circle, where we know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren.

The Lord repeats this commandment over and over again, and it is the burden of His servant John in his first epistle. It is interesting to notice how he refers to the commandment which is old, which is from the beginning, and yet which is ever new. He points out that it is only as loving God that we can truly love our brother. Yea, the proof that we love God is that we love our brother.

May we ever have this commandment before us, and be found here, loving, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and truth.

C. A. ABRAHAM.

MOVEMENT.

I HAVE been impressed with the movements recorded in Luke 22. The first is that of Judas. It says, "he went away." His movements were so characterised, his footsteps led him away. The energy behind his movements was of Satan (ver. 3), and thus they were absolutely contrary to heaven and diametrically opposed to Christ. Yet, solemn fact, they were in accord with the hearts and wishes of the religious men, yea, his ways caused them to rejoice, and they were prepared to express their value of his movements by money. Alas, the end was perdition!

In verse 39 we have the record of the movements of Jesus. "He went according to his custom." How blessed is that! This was not a new path to the Lord; it was the one habitually trodden by His blessed feet. His disciples followed Him. He would associate them with Him as far as they could go ("Let *us* go hence"),

but a point is reached from which He moves apart from them. How blessed His movements, how entirely in accord with the mind of God. "Not my will, but thine be done." What infinite cost to Himself to tread that path, *all* to be surrendered to His Father's will! The religious world gladdened by the movements of Judas would dispense to him, but heaven is moved by the pathway of Jesus, and He is strengthened by "an angel from heaven."

In the middle of the chapter we get the "movements of the disciples." It is important to see that they moved, as indeed "disciples" ever should, at the command of the Lord. He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go," and "having gone" they found His word true. He would indicate a pathway to them which would eventuate in a spot to which He Himself would come, and there reveal His love to their hearts in a wonderfully blessed way, a way, beloved, which one ventures to think is of peculiar preciousness to His own heart. This pathway remains. There are still those who, led on in enmity as energised by Satan, would pursue the way of hatred to Christ—it is all around us. But He has indicated a pathway which is sweet to His own heart, and sweet to His lovers. His own pathway of devotion led through death to the glory, and from that glory He spoke to one who previously had moved in hatred to His blessed name, and to him the Lord would again indicate the movements which He delights to see in His own, movements prompted by love to Himself, taking us outside the region where He is unappreciated, and bringing us to a spot to which the Lord delights to come, and there unfold to hearts enraptured by Himself the fulness and preciousness of the "Father's things," calling forth

that spontaneous praise which is so pleasurable to the ear of God.

May our feet, as impelled by hearts attached to Himself, find such a pathway increasingly attractive—"till he come."

F. A. HUGHES.

THE VALLEY OF ELAH.

WHAT a wonderful history is connected with this place, the valley of Elah, where David, having smitten the giant Goliath, cut off his head with the giant's own sword. It is one of the best known exploits recorded in the word of God, and yet how comparatively few realise the significance of it ; indeed the Israelites themselves little understood the tremendous issues that would be fought out on that field of battle.

Let us look at the situation so portrayed in 1 Samuel 17. 3. "And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side : and there was a valley between them."

Who are these people ? Why are they there ? The Israelites, who are they ? They are the people of God, of Jehovah, the Almighty God, a nation, as it were, born in a day, and delivered by Jehovah, who had chosen them for Himself, from the bondage under which they lay. God who had seen the affliction of His people in Egypt had come down to deliver them, and He brought them out of Egypt, carried them through the wilderness, where for forty years they had proved His power to sustain them, and then had brought them into the land which He had promised them. He then commissioned them to take possession, saying he would

deliver into their hand seven nations greater and mightier than they were, and that they were to smite them and utterly destroy them, and to dwell in the land as a separated and holy people unto the Lord their God, who would care for, protect and sustain them as long as they obeyed His voice.

The Philistines, who are they? A people who lived on the border of this land, and were idolaters, and therefore living in enmity against God, and were the persistent enemies of the Israelites, and availed themselves of every opportunity to molest them and to ravage the country their God had given them.

The foregoing brings us to another question. Why does God, with whom is all might and power, allow these wicked Philistines to intimidate His chosen people and overrun the country He had given them? For an answer to this we must turn back to the history of their behaviour after they had taken possession of the land. From Judges 10 and 13 we find that they continually departed from God and did evil in His sight, serving Baalim and Ashtaroath, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of the Philistines. In this instance what appears to be the true reason for this particular conflict in the valley of Elah is found in 1 Samuel 8, where they desire a king to judge them like the nations around. Samuel points out to them that this was giving up God (He was really their King), who had come in for them so wonderfully in the previous chapter; but in spite of the words of Samuel they say, "Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and *fight our battles.*"

I now come to the reason for which this paper is

written. The issue decided in the valley of Elah is of supreme importance.

On the one hand there are the people of God, and on the other hand a people bent upon their destruction, and who were defying the armies of the living God.

What is the issue ? Israel or the Philistines ? Nay ; not wholly, or indeed primarily so. It was in reality a question of the living God and His King versus the world and its king. The Israelites had been brought up in Egypt, nursed in the wilderness, and had reached man's estate in the land. In the land they had given up the privileges that were theirs as the people of God, and chosen to fight for themselves under one who was admittedly head and shoulders above every other man. How solemn ! How like some of us who, when we reached years of understanding, went forth to take up responsibilities. Has Joshua's cry challenged us, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" ? If so, have we, by the grace of God, been able to say, "Christ for me" ? The question is *always* cropping up, Are we trusting God and looking to *Him* for instruction and help for *all* things of *this life*, as well as for that which is to come, or are we trusting in our own strength and the powers He may have endowed us with, which may enable us to rise head and shoulders above our companions ? Where was Israel's strength in the valley of Elah ? Where was Saul their king, the arm of flesh they had chosen ? Cowering in his tent even as the weakest soldier amongst them. Was there *no* help for them ? Had God forsaken them, or would He, as in the previous chapter, thunder upon the Philistines ? Nay ; but He would prove the truth of the words found in Romans 8. 31, "If God be for us, who *can* be against us ?" So David comes upon the scene and faces the

challenger with the words, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts"—and in the power of that name he *overcame*. May we know what it is to overcome in that name whatever the difficulties we may be faced with, whether in the world, in business, the home, or even amongst the Lord's people. The Lord surely included every aspect of the world when He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The words, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" holds good for every one of the people of God to-day, but let us be on our guard against trusting to an arm of flesh, whether our own or those who may be in high places, for all will surely fail when most needed. The encouragement given to Joshua holds good for every one of the people of God to-day, "Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

B. A. HARRIS.

THE JOURNEY TO CANAAN.

IT has often been said that the wilderness journey is part of the ways of God, but one wonders if we have rightly considered what God's mind was for the people in the wilderness.

The remark is common that the journey from Egypt to Canaan was eleven days; but that is an error.

The journey of eleven days was from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea (Deut. 1), a very long way from Egypt. Even so, I think it can safely be said that it was the mind of God that Israel should stay at least

thirteen months in the wilderness for very necessary reasons.

They were actually fourteen months before able to definitely set off for the land, the extra month being accounted for by the defection of the golden calf, Moses having to go up again into the mount of God to renew the tables.

The period under review would have been to God's glory, for it would have been normal. The thirty-nine years was abnormal, and little is chronicled during that time, for there was nothing but grief for God and loss to the people, for the flesh, that evil principle, must be judged and entirely wasted.

When Moses went to Pharaoh at the outset he took this message, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." This feast no doubt was to be the annual passover, and did in fact take place.

Again, it would be unthinkable that a vast people who came out of the Egypt world should go into the seat of idolatry in Canaan without a moral standard, and that moral standard was the whole tabernacle system. The object of the tabernacle was that God might dwell among them in a provisional way, and that the ark of God should go before them to seek out a place of rest, and then the temple would take its place as a permanent dwelling.

Now the tabernacle was not erected till the first month of the second year, and thus it becomes obvious that Israel could not have gone in sooner.

The tabernacle and all its appurtenances, as we know, was all evolved out of raw material. Time was given for the careful working out of the pattern or plans given to Moses on the mount. The skilful work in

gold and wood, etc., by God's specially appointed workman commands our greatest consideration, shewing that He allotted every man as his work should be. And the embellishment and embroidery work was for the eye of God, as setting forth the glories and virtues of His beloved Son. No feverish rush of to-day must intrude into this work. And when it was finished it needed no alteration, for every pattern that God gave to Moses finds its objective in Christ. His fruitfulness to God in the pomegranate work, the careful blending of the heavenly with the perfect humanity of Jesus in the veil, and so on, shews how God regarded this erection of His tent of testimony.

After the approval of God was secured by the tabernacle being filled with His glory, and the people subdued in the presence of that great manifestation "that was made glorious" (2 Cor. 3. 10), there was moral condition for the keeping of the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month of the second year that they came out of Egypt. And in the good of the remembrance of the great power and redemption of the people by Jehovah, their faces could truly be set towards the promised land.

Consequently, every man was put into relation to the tabernacle. The fighting forces, the Levites, and the priestly family, all must regard their place of circumference in relation to the Centre, that is, the sanctuary of Jehovah.

Moreover, in the presents of the princes (Num. 7) every one is seen to have the same conception of the greatness of Christ, and the great work that was necessary to carry on the service of the tabernacle suitable to God.

Eventually the tabernacle is taken down, and the

march to Canaan commences in all its dignity and perfect order, for God is not the Author of confusion—Christ figuratively at the head as the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth, with a view to universal blessing.

Eleven days should see them at the edge of the Jordan ready to cross in virtue of the true ark going into judgment of the body of the flesh, so that what was spirit might go in conquering and to conquer.

The moral code ordained by angels in the hands of Moses was to be that which would measure everything for Israel and for the Canaanites. "To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8. 20.)

We see then how necessary it was that there should be a law worthy of God that would allow of no compromise, affiliation, or allying themselves with the enemies of God. And how could the nations learn God except through Israel? who was to be the display of a righteous and holy God through the Mosaic system.

Then as to how it would refer to us to-day. How could we attempt to walk and please God in the midst of a hostile world except we were able to see how Christ walked! How perfectly the law was in His heart, so much so that He was able to set forth in a life here how man could be for God! Concurrently He also revealed God, whom no one had seen, and also the Father, the latter shewing the affections that would stimulate us as we move normally in the wilderness with hearts in the land, as Joshua and Caleb of old.

Joshua shews us what is normal for every believer. He did the journey at its shortest, and the reason of

that was he had God before him from the beginning. He listened to the apostle, Moses, who was over God's house, and in a day of defection it is said that he departed *not* from the tabernacle.

This must not be confounded with the tabernacle, as we have seen, erected a year after leaving Egypt. Joshua could have no part in that, not being of the tribe of Levi, but the truth is that he took the path of separation from evil when Moses pitched the provisional tent *outside* the camp and remained so as one who purged himself from vessels of dishonour and became meet for the master's use. And afterwards he was qualified to be the captain of salvation (under the Lord), a figure of Christ in Hebrews 2. 10.

He was true in the period of waiting and learned with God, whilst others learned the hard way of transgressors. It is well, I think, to come to the truth that God has now a plan ; He does not leave us to our own resources, and if we read the Epistle to the Hebrews in the light of Jesus being Son over God's house, then we must consider Him as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. There we find the standard of God for us as the great supersessor of all figures, and the body or substance of the shadows gone before. (Col. 2. 17.) We shall find ourselves in the sanctuary, on the march, and outside the camp, and we shall give earnest heed to things He speaks, lest they slip away from us. We shall move diligently towards the rest of God, and find in spirit we have *come* to Zion, and the commandments of Jesus (not Moses) will be our desire.

W. TURNER.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

(EZEK. 48. 31-35.)

THE experience of an overcomer (Gad) will enable us to enjoy the significance of

THE GATE OF ASHER.

The meaning of Asher is undoubtedly "happy." Who so happy as an overcomer? We may ponder the experiences of the man marked by happiness. What Jacob predicated of Asher was that his bread should be fat and that he should give royal dainties. What a portion! satisfaction with the fatness of his God-given portion, and the additional happiness of being himself a giver of royal dainties. Furthermore, Moses says of him that he should be blessed with sons; happiness is never barren but ever fruitful. He would be acceptable to his brethren, a happy portion which was seen in Mordecai, for we read in Esther 10 that he was accepted of the multitude of his brethren.

Next he would dip his foot in oil; his walk would be in the power and energy of the Holy Ghost. Firmness and rest would also mark him, a portion indeed which would greatly minister to the happiness of its possessor. In the days of Hezekiah some of the sons of Asher are found who respond to the king's invitation to come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. When the posts went throughout the whole of Israel and Judah, whilst some laughed to scorn the messengers and mocked them, there were divers of Asher who humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem, and found such happiness in obedience and rendering to the Lord that which was His due, that they desired another seven days of celebration, and found the

celebration to be better than wine, for it led to gladness and rejoicing in the Lord. We can well understand, as the scripture says, that there was such joy in Jerusalem the like of which had not been seen since the time of Solomon, the Son of David. Anna in Luke 2 is a very fine example of what one of the tribe of Asher should be. She was far advanced in years, but found her supreme joy in making God's centre her dwelling-place—she did not depart from the temple, and filled her time night and day with fastings and prayers, and, above all, gave praise to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who waited for redemption in Israel. There is no greater happiness than in having the heart occupied with and satisfied by Christ.

How suggestive are the six psalms known as the Asherite psalms. Psalm 1 says blessed (or happy) is the man who found his happiness in walking in the pathway of the will of God; in Psalm 32 the knowledge of forgiveness is that which brings forth the new song of the next psalm; in Psalm 41 we learn that consideration of the poor means the experimental knowledge of God as deliverer, as preserver, and as the One who maintains us in life; Psalm 119 unfolds to us the blessedness of those marked by godly sincerity; Psalm 128 is the happiness of the man who fears the Lord; and, finally, in Psalm 144 there is the happiness of the one who has found the Lord to be everything to and for him. J. R. TITHECOTT.

NOTE.

1931 Vol., page 206, line 20, etc., read:—"a similar combine, though possibly connected with a later attack, is vividly brought before us in Ezekiel 38 and 39."

“THE EYES OF THE LORD.”

EARNEST attention is called to this remarkable expression, which must be of great significance seeing that it occurs repeatedly throughout scripture. It would ever give a solemn reminder that every detail of life is under the observation of the omniscient God, for “all things are naked and opened unto the *eyes* of him with whom we have to do.”

Yet, in this day of grace, God is not presented as looking down in order to pour out His judgment upon men, but as the Psalmist expressed it, “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God.”

It is solemnly true as the prophet said, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity,” but it is also blessedly true that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”

How beautifully this was expressed in that wonderful parable in Luke 15, in which Jesus told of the prodigal, that “when he was yet a great way off, his father *saw* him, and had compassion”; and again of that half-dead man on the Jericho road in Luke 10, that the certain Samaritan “came where he was: and when he *saw* him, he had compassion on him.” The gospel thus presents the eyes of the Lord upon men in

COMPASSION.

Even in the day that is past God had said of His people in Egypt, “I have surely *seen* the affliction of

my people . . . I know their sorrows ; and I am come down to deliver them.” When they were delivered and about to enter the land of promise Moses described it as “a land which the Lord thy God careth for : the *eyes* of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.” This would encourage God’s people to-day, that they dwell where the care of God is unceasing, and that His eyes rest upon them in continual

BLESSING.

Solomon recognised the exceeding value of the eyes of the Lord when he prayed at the dedication of the temple, “that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there.” God’s immediate reply is full of grace, as He said, “Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.”

This has an important and encouraging application to believers to-day, as forming God’s house. What power and confidence would mark the prayers and praises which ascend from this spiritual house as there is the consciousness that His eyes and His heart are towards His people, and that it is with

DELIGHT

that He looks upon them and causes them to enjoy the favour of His countenance.

Perhaps the most touching instance of the effect of the eyes of the Lord was that memorable night when Peter denied Him. What wondrous meaning there must have been in His eyes when “the Lord

“THE EYES OF THE LORD.”

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turned and *looked* upon Peter.” While carrying conviction to Peter’s conscience, that look also conveyed to his heart that the Lord loved him still and desired his recovery. “And Peter remembered the word of the Lord . . . and went out, and wept bitterly.” The heart of Christ is just the same to-day as He makes an erring one realise the gravity of the failure, and yet the unchanging love that is ever desirous to effect his complete

RECOVERY.

There is, however, one exceedingly solemn presentation of the eyes of the Lord, which is thrice repeated in the Book of Revelation, that “His eyes are like unto a flame of fire.” What searching power, what discrimination and unerring judgment do those eyes express, as with

DISCERNMENT

He sees all that is found in the assemblies on earth. It is His pleasure to express His approval of all He sees that is commendable, but in faithfulness, holiness and truth He unsparingly judges all that is contrary to His mind and displeasing to God. He loves His assembly too well to allow that which is unholy to remain undiscerned or unjudged, while He would ever encourage the overcomer to be true to Him, that he may walk with Him in white.

If the consciousness of being under His eyes were maintained, what jealous care would be exercised and self-judgment developed among those who desire to be pleasing to Him; ever remembering that “if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”

May the Lord preserve His own in the constant

realisation that His eyes are upon them, and encourage them by the assurance that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous," and by His promise, "I will guide thee, with mine eye upon thee."

F. S. MARSH.

THE BIBLE.

(Amos 6-8.)

A FURTHER reference in chapter 6. 1-7 to luxury may well warn us that such features are often the accompaniment of decline. It has been so in the history of nations ; it is especially so in the history of the assembly spiritually. Those who are so marked are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. They are, moreover, the first to go into captivity. (Ver. 7.) The Apostle Paul speaks of such as enemies of the cross of Christ, and tells us that their end is destruction.

If we kindle a fire on the sabbath day (Exo. 35. 3), that is to say, if we consider for our own comfort, we shall be unfitted to take up matters relating to the interests of Christ on earth, of which the tabernacle was a type. Those referred to in Amos 6 are said to have invented *to themselves* instruments of music like David. David's music was for God, however, not for himself. The application of this in principle to present day practices is too obvious to need remark. Advertisements on so-called religious buildings as to musical festivals and the like, only too plainly prove how the gratification of the ear of man is considered by professing Christians, instead of what is pleasing to God. The "breach of Joseph" apparently is of little concern to such. The most unsparing judgment came upon Israel on account of these traits of luxurious indulgence

and consequent indifference as to God's interests and the poor. A like judgment will come upon those who dwell on earth—"earth dwellers"—in this day. (See Book of Revelation.)

The increasing tendency to luxury among believers to-day should be a matter of very great concern. The amount of monetary expenditure on luxury habits is a fact which may well make us hide our faces with shame. Do not let us try and spiritualise everything and thus rob scripture of its edge. Luxury has been the downfall of great nations. Luxury is now marking the world. Is it also to mark believers? Are the followers of a rejected Jesus of Nazareth, He who was cradled in a manger, who had not where to lay His head, who died on the cross—are the followers of Jesus, I repeat, to be marked by luxury and self-indulgence? To be so marked is a sign of spiritual decline. We are apt to get so accustomed to the way things are done in the world that our sensibilities become dulled and we fail to realise our own condition. Luxury and indifference to the needs of men go together. Habits of self-indulgence and spiritual death are solemnly inseparable. Devotedness and self-denial are companions. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion and are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph! As I have remarked, the most unsparing judgment would fall as a result of these features of self-consideration.

In chapters 7 and 8 the prophet is *shewn* certain things. The fact of being shewn them gives additional emphasis to what is to be conveyed. The first two signs (vers. 1-3 and 4-6) shew how reluctant God was to judge His people, and how ready to stay His hand on the prophet's intercession. The third sign, the Lord standing on a wall made by a plumb-line, as explained

by the scripture itself, shewed that judgment would have to fall after all ; and we know Israel was carried away by the king of Assyria, as we may read in 2 Kings 15. Judgment could no longer be delayed.

Such a definite testimony was by no means welcomed by the official priest of the time. Bethel was no longer in truth the house of God, but had become even professedly the *king's* sanctuary ! How little did either the king or Amaziah know that the prophet's intercession had more than once saved the nation. Amaziah's refusal of the testimony brings definite judgment upon him, and in no way delays or alters the rapidly approaching judgment. The prophet has something further shewn him. (Chap. 8. 1-3.) God would not pass by His people any more. (Chap. 7. 8 ; 8. 2.) Their works would never be forgotten. Again, we notice a reference to the disregard of the needs of the poor.

But a further judgment is to fall. Not only is that already foretold to take place, in addition to this there would be a famine, not for bread, and a thirst, not for water, but of hearing the words of God, "of Jehovah." To my mind this is consequent upon the proud refusal of the message by those in the place of responsibility, which was brought before us in chapter 7. 10-13. If man refuses God's word he will one day seek and *not* find. What a famine indeed when men will desire God's word and shall not have it. They *would* not have it when they *could* ; they shall not have it when they *would*. The light becomes darkness. (See also Rev. 16. 10, 11.)

M. W. BIGGS.

“WHAT SHALL WE SAY?”

(Let the young Bible student read, Bible in hand, please.)

FIVE times in the first great doctrinal section of Romans does the apostle ask this question. His stopping short and putting it, suggests his impartial and considerate mind toward any soul in exercise or difficulty about what he is enforcing. He joins himself with such a soul, and not only asks the question, but puts it into shape, which perhaps the perplexed one is not able to do.

The question is first asked in connection with

DIVINE VENGEANCE.

“*What shall we say ?*” (Rom. 3. 5.) “Is God unrighteous because he taketh vengeance ?”

No, for “then how shall God judge the world ?” Is an earthly judge charged with unrighteousness when he metes out righteous judgment to evil doers ? If not, why should God be thus charged ? (Psa. 51. 4.)

THE BELIEVER’S JUSTIFICATION.

“*What shall we say ?*” (Rom. 4. 1.) Was Abraham justified by faith or by works ? By works, doubtless, before men, but not before God. (Ver. 2.) Before men “he hath whereof to glory.” Before God he could not glory. None of us can. If we have nothing but our works, however good, to justify us when we appear before God, we shall be condemned. We are justified by faith in what *God has done for us*—then our works justify our faith and us. (James 2. 21–26.)

PRACTICAL HOLINESS.

“*What shall we say ?*” (Rom. 6. 1.) “Shall we continue in sin ?” The question is not, “Shall we continue

to sin ? ” That we get lower down in the chapter (ver. 15), and the answer is, No, we *ought not* to sin. (1 John 2. 1.) But here the question is, “Shall we continue *in sin* ? ” The answer is not, “We *ought not*,” but “We *cannot*” ! “How can we who have died to sin,” our old master, “*live any longer*” as under his sway ? Impossible !

DELIVERANCE FROM LAW AND SELF.

“*What shall we say ?*” (Rom. 7. 7.) “Is the law sin ? God forbid,” for “by the law is the *knowledge* of sin.” The law makes known to me that I am naturally dominated by a wicked principle, “*sin*,” that *reigns* in the world system *outside* and *dwells in me*. (Rom. 5. 21 ; 6. 12 ; 7. 17.) When the law revealed “sin in the flesh,” then the sin offering was revealed to meet it. The sin offering was never known before the law was given. Now I can look away from self to Christ on high (Rom. 7. 25) and say, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set *me* free.” (Rom. 8. 2.) Paul does not say, “*us*,” but “*me*.” The truth must be applied and experienced individually. (Rom. 8. 3, 4.)

Finally, the question is connected with

THE CHRISTIAN’S TRIUMPH AND BLESSINGS.

“*What shall we say ?*” (Rom. 8. 31.) Once more the question sounds forth. The magnitude of God’s free favour and love amazes the soul. We are the subjects of divine counsels ! Romans 8 has been well called “*The Christian’s inventory of gospel blessings*.” He is *foreknown—predestinated—called—justified—glorified*. What a chain of blessings linking two eternities together, and giving us full and sweet assurance !—

God for us (ver. 31)—no *accuser* (ver. 33)—no *judge* (ver. 33)—no *condemnation* (ver. 34)—no *separation* either from the love of Christ (ver. 35) or from the love of God. (Ver. 39.)

Beloved, "What shall *we* then say to these things ? "

S. J. B. CARTER.

MATTHEW AND LUKE.

(MATT. 2. 13 ; 28. 2-4 ; LUKE 2. 10, 11, 26 ; 24. 14, 15, 36.)

EACH gospel writer it is clear came to the apprehension and appreciation of Christ differently.

Matthew, as we know, apprehended Him as the royal child, as the One who had the right to reign, and therefore the power and dignity of His kingdom comes distinctly before us in this gospel.

In brief, I think it might be stated that in Matthew's gospel what is prominent is the power of the kingdom which will *restrain* every hostile element, while in Luke's gospel what is presented is the grace of the kingdom which will *support* every sympathetic element.

In chapter 2 of Matthew's gospel Herod pretends to be friendly (ver. 8), though in reality he is filled with murderous hatred against the "seed royal," as is seen in verse 16.

But God's power is seen in restraining this power of evil ; for first of all the wise men are warned in a dream not to return to Herod (ver. 12), and then Joseph is in turn likewise warned to take the young child and His mother and flee into Egypt and there remain until the death of Herod (ver. 13), so that every

hostile foe is defeated and the royal child is divinely protected and sheltered.

The same position arises at the end of the gospel. The rightful King being rejected, a combined attempt is made by the civil and religious powers to keep His body in the tomb. With what result? A mighty angel is sent to roll away the stone and to sit upon it, as though in utter contempt of man's boasted power, and the opposing forces are found fearful and trembling, and utterly helpless in the presence of only one representative of Christ's mighty kingdom.

Well might our Lord in complete triumph exclaim in chapter 28. 18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." No power of earth or hell can withstand the might of His glorious kingdom!

But in Luke grace is prominent! grace to support every element that is sympathetic to the lowly babe and to the divine movements in relation to Him. Thus Mary is greeted by the angel and encouraged, as we see in chapter 1. 30.

And again, she is encouraged by Elizabeth in verses 41 to 45.

Chapter 2 shews us the shepherds encouraged in their shepherd service, and their joyful response to the light vouchsafed to them by the angel. (Vers. 8-18.)

Then again, Simeon was supported by the promise that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. (Ver. 26.) And Anna was led at the right moment to the temple that her eyes might look upon this lowly vessel of grace, and speak of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. (Ver. 38.)

In chapter 7 the woman "who was a sinner" was

strengthened to pour out her love to Him in the presence of the opposition of Simon, and to hear from His lips the story of forgiveness, and of salvation, and of peace.

At the end of the gospel (chap. 24) the two going to Emmaus, who were sympathetic at heart with the One who had suffered, are again strengthened for a return night-journey, and led back again to the company of the eleven and them that were with them ; that in that sympathetic company they might again see the Lord, and be enlightened and instructed to pursue the pathway of grace trodden by the One who is so faithfully brought before us in this gospel. (Vers. 45-48.)

The support given to this company was not in vain, for a response was created which is pleasurable to God ; and they are found, as we are told, continually in the temple, praising and blessing God !

Wolverhampton.

H. ERNEST SARGENT.

WILDERNESS FAILURES.

ONE of the great lessons of the wilderness is learning the perverseness of the flesh. As it says in Deuteronomy 8. 2, "to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart."

I wish to call attention to the most outstanding of these, that we might seek help from the Lord to be kept near Himself, and thus ever judging the various movements of the flesh and the failure resulting from them. I am presenting them in the order in which they are recorded in the Books of Exodus and Numbers.

FEAR.

The first attempt of the enemy to stay the progress of God's people, having failed to keep them in Egypt, was to fill them with fear. (See Exo. 14. 10.) Pharaoh and his host were pursuing them, but the first word of God through Moses in verse 13 is "Fear not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." God wrought a mighty deliverance for His people, completely overthrowing the enemies, so *that* exercise is never repeated.

If one of our readers should fear to step out boldly for the Lord Jesus and confess Him before men, thus definitely leaving the world and its pursuits, let this encourage them, for God is just the same now.

MURMURING.

This is mentioned several times. In Exodus 15. 24 they murmur against Moses because there was no water. In chapter 16. 2 it is against Moses and Aaron on account of lack of food. Again, in chapter 17. 3 because there is no water. Also in the Book of Numbers there are several references to murmuring.

It may seem a very small thing to some people. We often hear the expression, "Not even a murmur." But in the instances recorded, the movements of a rebellious will are behind them; as Moses cries to God in Exodus 17. 4, "What shall I do? . . . they be almost ready to stone me." May the Lord help us then to judge this subtle evidence of failure, and all that it leads to.

TEMPTING GOD.

It is evident this is a very serious outbreak of rebellion on the part of God's people recorded in Exodus 17. 7, "They tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord

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among us, or not ? ” After all His signs and wonders and all He had done for them, yet they could question His presence among them. You will remember this is one of the three tests the Lord Jesus had to meet from Satan, when tempted to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. But how blessed His answer, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”

IDOLATRY.

No wonder after what we have considered above that the children of Israel should have definitely refused God and His servant Moses in Exodus 32. Satan is bent on this from the outset, to definitely displace God in our hearts and establish a rival. Hence in the epistle that tells us so much about God (1 John) it closes with the expression, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” But in Colossians 3. 5 and Ephesians 5. 5 we see that it begins in a very specious way, for *covetousness* is called idolatry. It seems to me the enemy would make us dissatisfied with our lot in some way. We begin to want something we have not got, and this lays us open to any and every suggestion of Satan. Oh, may we, as exhorted in James 4. 7, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” But this can only be as we do what precedes and what follows. The first is, “Submit yourselves therefore to God,” and the second is, “Draw nigh to God.”

COMPLAINING.

Oh, how easy it is to complain ! how natural, too, for these deceitful hearts of ours. It does not appear very wrong, perhaps, just to give vent in this way to our feelings. Yet if we recognise that the hand of God is over *all* our ways, to complain must be to grieve

Him. It may take the form of complaining about our health or about our business, or even about the weather. Then, too, we may have complaints about the brethren. If any of our readers have these, may I ask you to read Colossians 3. 13. The margin reads "complaint" for "quarrel," and we are exhorted to *forgive*, "*even as Christ forgave you.*" What about your complaints now, dear brother or sister, in the light of this verse? God punishes His people severely in Numbers 11. 1 for their complaining, and sent fire among them, and consumed many of them.

LUSTING.

This follows the complaining in Numbers 11. 4. It was the mixed multitude that fell a lusting. The appetite for the food of Egypt comes to light. They remember the fish, etc., that they ate, but do not refer to the bondage that went with it. The reason of this lusting after the world is seen in the following verses. They despised the manna, hence the sad results seen here. Does your soul begin to find the necessity for daily prayer and reading the word irksome. If so, beware, for this may be the beginning of a path where the grace of Christ will cease to charm you, and worldly pleasures find a place instead.

JEALOUSY.

This must not be confused with godly jealousy, as in 2 Corinthians 11. 2. For God Himself is called a jealous God. Intense love is the spring of godly jealousy. But in Numbers 12 and 16 we find horrible jealousy at work among the very leaders of God's people; seeking a place and importance, and finding fault with others whom God has sovereignly chosen

to fill these positions. In chapter 12 even Aaron and Miriam are the offenders. But God vindicates His choice in Moses and deals severely with those who resent it. In chapter 16 two hundred and fifty princes, men of renown, are caught in this subtil snare. What a baneful thing this is. Yet how often it is seen working among the saints of God. One of the marks of true love in 1 Corinthians 13 is that it envieth not, is not puffed up. "But jealousy is the rage of a man." (Prov. 6. 34.) And it says of such, "He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest him many gifts." (Ver. 35.)

UNBELIEF.

The phase of evil now before us shewed itself openly in Numbers 13 and 14, when the spies report on the land. In verse 11 of chapter 14 God says, "How long ere this people *believe* me?" They did not believe God was able to defeat the enemies in the land, and refused to go in. Hebrews 4 shews us the seriousness of unbelief on the part of God's people. He was wrath with them, and said they should not enter into His rest. Yet how easily the element of unbelief creeps in. We may fail to trust God absolutely in some way or another, and our whole spiritual course be blighted and our growth stunted. It is a very serious thing to distrust God in any way. Let us face it as it truly is, and call it by its proper name.

A man once said to a well-known preacher, "I can't believe." The answer of the preacher was, "Get on your knees and tell God you cannot believe Him." The man said he could not do that, and saw his position at once. We must not only begin as believers, but continue all the way as such.

FORNICATION.

There is nothing too horrible for the flesh to do, and this sin comes to light just before the Israelites enter the land in Numbers 25. Satan can work on these corrupt hearts of ours if we do not at all times turn to God and walk before Him. The terrible consequence of this sin is that twenty-four thousand people were slain by plague.

Oh, may the Lord keep us true to Himself the whole of our pathway here! Our resources in Him are bounteous, but without Him we must surely succumb to one or all of the failures we have briefly considered.

W. J. WHITE.

SELLING AND GIVING.

(JOHN 2.)

THE Lord in His action in casting out sellers of oxen, sheep and doves, and money-changers from the temple, develops a most important truth in regard to the understanding of the Gospel of John. He shews how incongruous and repugnant is the idea of selling that which represents appreciation of Himself that would be material for sacrifice or worship! The practical effect of the truth in the soul would be the consciousness of the greatness of the glory of the true Temple, in whom the light and truth of God abode, and from whence the glory of God is disseminated, and the consequent displacement of any thought that any spiritual wealth you may possess is for personal aggrandisement. In other words, you would shrink from desiring any place in the temple by your intelligence, or any importance by your ability to retail truth.

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You are, on the contrary, quick to value any appreciation of Christ that those who compose the temple are found to possess. In the temple you conform to the glory; you behold the glory, and become radiant. It is open to the youngest saint.

Nicodemus was only a babe in chapter 3, but in chapter 19 he had such an appreciation of Christ that he brought in connection with the fellowship of His death no less than a hundred pounds weight of myrrh and aloes, the very composition of the garments of God's King. (Psa. 45. 8.) Think of the acquisition that was to the glory in the temple! Suggest to Nicodemus that he might sell it! What did he do with his appreciation of Christ? *He gave it!* it is the very spirit of Christ reproduced, so precious to God. Only a Judas would sell the priceless ointment of pure nard that Mary *gave*. Nicodemus, Mary and others appreciated the action of the Son of God in the temple. In it every one says, "Glory." It is the response to glory revealed.

L. O. LABETT.

THE ASCENDING SCALE.

WORSHIPPING.	Philippians 3. 3.
PRAISING.	Acts 16. 25.
SINGING.	Colossians 3. 16.
THANKSGIVING.	1 Timothy 2. 1.
INTERCEDING.	Genesis 18. 23-33.
SUPPLICATING.	Daniel 9. 20.
PRAYING.	Ephesians 6. 18.
GROANING.	Romans 8. 23.
	F. S. MARSH.

AFFECTION FOR CHRIST.

IN a day of indifference such as the present, every true believer must desire a closer attachment in heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. Doctrines, though of great importance, are of no avail unless they are held in relation to Him. We must have real affection for the Person of Christ if they are to be a power in our souls.

On a certain occasion some infidels were seeking to undermine the faith of a young Christian who had only recently trusted in the Saviour. Many questions and arguments were raised by them, and she had to confess her inability to answer them; but she exclaimed from her heart, with deep emotion, "*Oh, I love Him!*"

Ah! that is the secret of spiritual power—affection for the Person of Christ.

This incident is cited with the desire that it may help any of our readers who may pass through similar experiences. We may be unable to reply to the arguments of those who are enemies of Christ, for Satan has clever agents. But our precious Saviour is greater; and whilst every word dishonouring to His sacred Person spoken in our hearing must sorely grieve us, yet He would use all such attacks to draw us still closer in affection to Him!

"Oh, by Thy love constrain us,
And fix our hearts on Thee;
Let nothing henceforth pain us,
But that which paineth Thee;
Our joy, our blest endeavour,
Through suffering, conflict, shame,
To serve Thee, gracious Saviour,
And magnify Thy name."

A. E. BIRD.

THE GATES OF THE CITY.

(EZEK. 48. 30-35.)

IN our consideration of the gates of the city we surely feel the danger to which we are exposed of failing to realise as a matter of practical experience the blessed things each several gate would suggest to our hearts. In Judges 1 we find that Naphtali had failed. It says that he had not taken possession of Beth-shemesh nor Beth-anath. Beth-shemesh means the house of the sun and Beth-anath the house of echo or response. This would tell us that Naphtali had failed to maintain the sense of relationship to Jehovah and abiding in the light of His countenance, and also that there was no response in affection to Jehovah—in short, that there had been no wrestling. We may gather from these preliminary remarks the importance of

THE GATE OF NAPHTALI.

Both Jacob and Moses have nothing but good to say of Naphtali; Jacob's commendation being that he is a hind let loose and giveth goodly words, and Moses says of the tribe that it is satisfied with favour and full of the blessing of Jehovah, and that it was to possess the west and the south, which we see from Joshua 19 they did. One of the worthies of Hebrews 11 was of the tribe of Naphtali. Deborah in Judges 4 called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kadesh-naphtali to go forth to meet Sisera, and he rallied others of the tribe, who like Zebulun jeopardised their lives unto death on the high places of the field. Another who was evidently full of the blessing of the Lord was Hiram, a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, who was full of wisdom and understanding and knowledge for making things for

the house of Jehovah under the hand of Solomon ; he was one who was available for every service in fashioning material for the temple, and in 1 Chronicles 12 we find that a thousand captains rallied to David. This suggests that the tribe full of the blessing of the Lord is where leaders are to be found. Then in Psalm 68, where the glory and majesty of Christ is celebrated amongst the players and singers who bless the Lord, four tribes are mentioned—there is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their company, the princes of Zebulun and the princes of Naphthali. Happy indeed if as the result of spiritual exercises or wrestlings we are prepared to act with courage in the face of the enemy, to be available to the Lord for service in relation to His testimony, to be qualified for leadership or rule and marked by princely dignity. We shall then possess the west and the south, in other words, be living in the sunshine of His countenance and behold all the glory of the western sky.

J. R. TITHECOTT.

WINGED THOUGHTS.

BY S. J. B. C.

How many indulge in a hope of heaven, which hope they dare not examine.

The light of the gospel shines on many men as upon a dead wall—it gets no entrance into the soul.

JESUS IN COMPANY WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

AN UNPUBLISHED PAPER BY J. G. BELLETT.

WE are aware by how many different ways our fellow-believers try us and grieve us, and no doubt we do them. We see, or we fancy we see, some bad quality in them, and find it hard to bear it, or to go on in further company with them. It has occurred to me that we may observe that just in those same ways the mind and heart of Jesus were tried and grieved by His disciples in the days of His flesh, and yet He went on with them we know, as I need not add, "*not overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good*"—the evil that *was in them* with the good that was in Himself. I would mention some of these wrong things in them that must have grieved Him, and the influence of which upon our own thoughts and feelings towards others we well understand and continually experience.

Vanity in another tries us—an air of self-satisfaction, or the esteeming of ourselves and the putting of ourselves forth to admiration. The Lord was tried by this spirit in His disciples. The mother betrayed it and His kinsfolk. (John 7. 3.) Peter was thus self-confident when he said, "Although all should be offended, yet will not I." And all of them were guilty of this when they contended who should be the greatest, and also when they *forbade* those who followed not with themselves.

Ill-temper is a very fretful thing, it so interferes with us. Martha tried the Lord with it when she complained to Him of her sister, and so did the apostles when they urged Him to send away the multitude,

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just because their privacy and repast had been intruded upon. (Mark 6.) Any shew of a covetous, grudging spirit is very hateful to us. Jesus must have discerned this (and therefore had to bear with it) on such occasions as Matthew 14. 17 and 15. 33.

Unkindness, whether towards ourselves or to others, is very irritating. Peter's inquiry in Matthew 18. 21 covered, I believe, what the Lord must have seen to be the workings of an unkind and malevolent temper, as also we see in Matthew 15. 23.

Indifference to others and carefulness about oneself is very vexing to us also ; it is so selfish and cold-hearted. Jesus was tried enough by it in His disciples. He asked them to watch with Him, but He found them sleeping ; He spake of His death, but they were thinking of their place and honours in the kingdom ; He spake of leaving them, but none of them asked, "Whither goest thou ? " and in the ship it was of their own safety they thought. These were instances of cold indifference.

Ignorance is very apt to try us and make us impatient. Whoever found more of it in those He was continually teaching than the Lord ? Some of the plainest lessons they had not learned ; and when He spake spiritually or mystically to them they listened to Him as *in the letter*—they were asking explanations of the simplest parables.

Unspirituality of mind in fellow-disciples is a trial to us. How much of this amongst His people was the Lord continually suffering ! and He was always right in discovering it. We often, through vanity or self-esteem, mistake mere nonconformity with ourselves for it.

These are among the ways in which the disciples

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must have tried the mind of the divine Master ; and these are some of the tempers and characteristics which to this hour try and fret us in our brethren. It may be thought that the instances here adduced are but faint and minute expressions of these different wrong tempers. That may be. But we must remember how pure and perfect the mind of Jesus is, and then we shall know that though the instance was faint, and the occasion a small one, yet His finer sensibilities gave it more than the importance of the greatest occasion. And comforting, let me say, it is to see the Lord going before us in such trials as these. But if He has gone before us in the trials themselves, He has also left us an example of a series of victories over them, and in these victories He has told us to follow His steps ; for not only in His ways with His adversaries, but in His ways with His disciples is He our pattern. If, in not answering reviling with reviling, nor wrongs with threatenings, He is an example to us, so also in His going on still with His disciples, in spite of naughty outbreaks and many shortcomings among them. For we have returned to Him as "the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls," in all things as the One who is a pattern to us—how we should carry ourselves to all, adversaries and brethren. (1 Peter 2. 21, 25.) And He, as I said, was never overcome of evil that was in another, but ever overcame it by the good that was in Himself. (Rom. 12. 21.)

Thus did He suffer from His disciples, and thus did He conquer. How ready are our foolish hearts to plead our right to part company if another does not please us. But this was not Jesus. The pride, the indifference, the ill-tempers, and the low unspiritual mind which the disciples were continually betraying did not tempt

HIM to withdraw from them. For at the end of their walk together He is nearer to them than ever. (John 14. 16.) He did not part company with them because they gave Him much exercise of heart and were continually drawing upon Him. He warned and instructed them ; He rebuked and condemned them ; but NEVER GAVE THEM UP. Blessed, perfect Master ! lover of our souls at all cost !

O Lord, Thy heart with love o'erflowed,
 Love spoke in every breath,
 Unwearied love Thy life declared,
 And triumphed in Thy death.

And Thou hast taught Thy followers here,
 Their faithfulness to prove,
 By yielding to Thy sweet command,
 That they each other love.

May we this sacred law fulfil
 In every act and thought,
 Each angry passion be removed,
 Each selfish thought forget.

Teach us to *help each other*, Lord,
Each others burdens bear,
 Let each his willing aid afford,
 And feel *his brother's* care.

“HE SPAKE TO THEIR HEARTS.”

THE instances in the scriptures in which an appeal is made to the heart are greatly encouraging. It is a matter of deep moment that each one should have the ear of the heart open to the Lord's voice, for He delights to make impressions which can never be forgotten.

"HE SPAKE TO THEIR HEARTS."

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In the beautiful story of Ruth the Moabitess there is a typical allusion to the Lord's

VOICE OF GRACE,

for when, as a stranger in a strange land, her hap was to light on the field of Boaz, he spake graciously to her and said, "Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field." In her reply she said, "Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken unto the heart of thine handmaid." (Ruth 2. 13, mar.)

Boaz, the kinsman redeemer, the mighty man of wealth, whose name means "In him is strength," is a remarkable type of Christ, and he acts in tender consideration as he speaks consolingly to this stranger. When eventually Ruth became the wife of Boaz she would ever cherish the memory of that first moment when in grace he had spoken to her heart and won her confidence.

One of the most touching incidents in the life of Joseph, as recorded in Genesis 50, was when his brethren had sent a messenger to him, after their father's death, asking for forgiveness in terms which proved that they had never truly understood the heart of their brother. "And Joseph wept when they spake to him," and said, "Fear not. . . . And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them" (margin, "to their hearts"). It was the

VOICE OF PATIENCE,

typifying the tender compassion and patient grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. How greatly He has been misunderstood, even by those who have received such favour from His hand. He says, as Joseph did, "I will

nourish you, and your little ones," for the Lord speaks to the hearts of His own in order that He may be known, and that all distrust of Him may be dismissed from the heart, and His full, free, unconditional forgiveness enjoyed.

The sweetest impression of intimacy is found in the language of the bridegroom in the Song of Songs. (Chap. 2.) Wonderful secrets are disclosed in that

VOICE OF LOVE

as he speaks to her heart. The bride recognises it as she exclaims, "The voice of my beloved!" "My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Although the literal fulfilment of this will be at the coming of the Lord for His own, it can be known now by those who enjoy intimacy with Him, for He delights to speak, that their hearts may be lifted up above the cares of this life and liberated to respond to His love even now. It is in the Lord's supper, too, that His voice is heard, saying, "This do in remembrance of ME." It is not a command, but the expressed desire of His heart, as He speaks to the hearts of His own of the depths of His love to the church, and of the love of God revealed in His death.

Perhaps the most memorable instance of the Lord speaking to the heart was when He drew near and went with His two disciples on their way to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection. It was when He expounded to them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning Himself that He appealed so greatly to them, causing them to say, "Did not our heart burn within us, as

“HE SPAKE TO THEIR HEARTS.”

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he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures ? ” It was His

VOICE OF RECOVERY

to those who had failed to keep rank with those who loved Him. He did not send a prophet or an angel, but He went Himself and walked with them.

Without a word of rebuke or of command “they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem.” They found their brethren, as will ever be the result of the Lord’s speaking to the heart. The desire to be pleasing to Him is thus revived, and the footsteps brought into the path which is acceptable to Himself.

In the days of Hezekiah, when the temple had been cleansed and the service of the house of the Lord was set in order, and the solemn passover kept, it was apparent to the king that the Levites needed to be stirred up, for upon them rested the charge of the continuance of that service. At the beginning of his reign he said to them, “My sons, be not now negligent ; for the Lord hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him,” and after the passover it is recorded that “Hezekiah spake comfortably unto [or, to the heart of] all the Levites.” It was the

VOICE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

to those who were awakened to the value of the service of God. The Lord is speaking to the hearts of those who desire to serve Him, and would encourage them in “the good knowledge of the Lord,” so that as they are equipped and strengthened, the work of the service of God may be continued in spiritual vigour and power.

Thus, even to-day the Lord Jesus is speaking to

the hearts of His own. Happy are those who respond to Him, for He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." F. S. MARSH.

URGENT.

WHEN the Lord calls a person's name twice, a sort of double call, I think you would agree that the matter must be urgent. So with this thought before us, we might look at a few scriptures, trusting that each of us may get help as we ponder over them.

The first scripture I would draw attention to is in 1 Samuel 3. Samuel is *a little boy*. He had been asked of the Lord, and he had been lent to the Lord, but he did not yet know the Lord. However, the Lord in His goodness was about to make Himself known to the little boy, and in the quietness of the night when he was laid down to sleep the Lord called Samuel. The boy was not indifferent ; he answered, "Here am I," but like many another he turned to the wrong man. He thought it was Eli calling, and ran to him. The Lord in His patient grace called a second and a third time, and then Eli, whose eyes were waxing dim—poor Eli!—perceived that the Lord had called the child. He instructed him to lie down, and if the call came again to say, "Speak, Lord ; for thy servant heareth." And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, "*Samuel, Samuel.*" Surely it was urgent now after so many times ; it might have been the last call. Samuel was wise, for he answered, "Speak ; for thy servant heareth." He did not say, "Lord" yet, but in the end of the chapter we are

told that the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel, and that he was established to be a prophet of the Lord. And in chapter 7 it says that Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. What an honour !

Our next scripture is in Acts 9. *A young man* this time is in view, one who hated the name of Jesus, and did his best to blot it out from the face of the earth. But God, who is rich in mercy, met him when he was just at the height of his wild career. Breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, nearing Damascus, to bring any he found of this way—the way of Jesus—bound unto Jerusalem, that highly privileged, but guilty city ; suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, “*Saul, Saul*, why persecutest thou me ? ” What will Saul do now ? He had been kicking against the pricks ; will he continue to kick ? No ; he was wise. “Who art thou, Lord ? ” And after the gracious answer, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,” he makes reply, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ”

Then followed three days of deep soul-exercise, and it was only a question of days when he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. What a transformation that was ! and he never looked back. Some stop in the middle of the race, but towards the end of a lifetime spent in the service of the One He loved, Paul could say, “I have combated the good combat ; I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” How blessed !

Let us now turn to Exodus 3. Moses had been put in the place of death ; he had been drawn out, and given to his mother to nurse. She had done her part

so well, that when he came to years he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He made his choice. What a grand and wise choice ! He was far-seeing ; that is what is commended in the world to-day, only men of the world do not see far enough.

After this Moses had forty years of schooling. Then as a shepherd he led his flock and came to the mountain of God. No doubt the Lord was leading the shepherd ; he had reached a crisis in his soul-history. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush ; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight." What a sight ! Surely it suggests to us the One who went into the fire and was not consumed, but consumed the fire. It is only on this account that either His earthly or His heavenly people could go through the fire and not be consumed. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, "*Moses, Moses,*" and he said, "Here am I." He was now ready for the special service the Lord had ready for him, to bring His people out of Egypt, and lead them through the wilderness. Shall we call him *a middle-aged man*. He was about eighty years of age, but in vigour he was not past middle age. Indeed, forty years later it is recorded that his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. How we would desire that this might be true of each one of us, that while the earthen vessel may get old and frail, our spiritual vigour may increase rather than diminish !

Our last scripture is in Genesis 22. Here is *an old man*. The Lord had called Abraham to come out from his country, from his kindred, and from his father's house, into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, and by faith he obeyed. He also had the promises: "I will make of thee a great nation . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." How was this to come about? Abraham had no son. After much exercise, waiting and longing, he got his son Isaac when he was a hundred years of age. "God never is before His time, and never is behind."

And now comes the supreme test of Abraham's life. God calls on him to offer up his son Isaac, whom he loved, for a burnt offering on mount Moriah. Will he answer to the test? As far as we can gather from scripture he did not falter for one moment. He rose early in the morning. No doubt he felt what it meant on the three days' journey, but it is very fine to hear him say, in answer to Isaac's question, "My father . . . Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." How suggestive of the time when God did provide Himself a Lamb for a burnt offering, and they went both of them together.

But now the moment comes when Abraham takes the knife to slay his son; he was prepared to go all the way. Another scripture tells us that he counted that God was able to raise him from among the dead. But the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, "*Abraham, Abraham.*" Surely it was urgent here; only One could go all the way. And so there was the ram provided, caught in the thicket by his horns. But what a delight to the heart

of God was the unquestioning obedience and surrender of Abraham ! Oh, that each one of us in this day of lukewarmness might seek to be in some measure on the same line, ready at whatever stage of our soul-history when the Lord calls to answer Him !

A. CAITHNESS.

THE RED SEA AND THE JORDAN.

NOTES OF READING AT COPENHAGEN ON APRIL 1ST, 1931,
WITH OUR BROTHER EU. ROBERTS AND OTHERS.

(EXO. 14. 26-31 ; 15. 1-3, 13-18 ; JOSH. 3. 14-17.)

IT was thought that the Lord might help us in considering the passages of these two waters together. It sometimes helps us in the understanding of the truth to consider it by way of comparison. What marks the portion we read in Exodus 14 is, that the hand of Moses is very prominent, having reference to the authority of Christ as Lord at God's right hand, but what is prominent in Joshua is that the ark stood in Jordan until all the people had passed over. It is there a question of the association of love. Grace and salvation mark the Red sea, love and association mark the Jordan, and the result of the passage of each is to give the people of God a definite setting together ; the Red sea setting them together in the wilderness as the assembly of Jehovah there, the Jordan rather setting them together in spiritual association in the sphere of God's purpose.

At the Red sea it was insisted upon that the little ones and the cattle were to go over. They suggest the families and businesses of the people of God. What the Apostle Paul said to the jailor made it very clear

with regard to the household. "Thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The fact is that if the Lord gets the man, He gets all that is under that man, whether his family or his business. We can see that a believer is not to be governed by any material circumstances. If we are not on the top of the circumstances, the circumstances will be on the top of us, and the only way to be on the top of circumstances is to be under the Lord. Sin is simply that something in the material order of things is governing the heart instead of God.

The salvation here is not deliverance from sin and guilt, but it is from Pharaoh who held them in bondage. The gospel is really to open our eyes and shew us that God has always been our best friend, and the blood meets the question of guilt, and then salvation is from Pharaoh and his hosts, that is, Satan and the power of the world. We get it opened up in Romans 6: "Ye were the bondmen of sin, but ye have become bondmen of righteousness," there is nothing suggested between the two. We need salvation from enemies, from the world as dominated by Satan.

The covenant is involved in Romans 5. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, but then Romans 6 takes up the matter from an experimental point of view, but it is all based upon the death and resurrection of Christ, so no doubt answering more particularly to Marah, which we get at the end of the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. The great danger is that because our experiences are mixed, we are not sufficiently clear as to salvation. How many of us have really sung the song of Exodus 15 with any clarity? It is what God does. It is described in verses 13 and 14. It is a great thing to get the eye on Christ risen, to be able to sing, "Thou hast prevailed, Thy

people are free." Marah is the way we may be kept free to sing salvation's song all through the wilderness, it is the maintaining of the reckoning; but what we are reckoning upon is the death and resurrection of Christ. That is where the power of Satan was overthrown.

So the apostle says, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15. 57.) He did not give us that only to read around graves, but He gives us a word like that to live with every day of the week, that we might be "always abounding in the work of the Lord," because we are under such a triumphant Lord, One who never knew a defeat. So "My strength and song is Jehovah," the Person becomes that to you. Mary follows on this line: "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour." It is the Person, and there is immediately the resolve to glorify God, or prepare Him a habitation, as it might read. In verse 13, "Thou hast guided them by thy strength unto the abode of thy holiness," that is, you are brought to the God who has overthrown the enemy.

Israel were not looked at as redeemed in Egypt. There are many of God's people, whom you may take account of as being ransomed, but not redeemed. It is a question whether any one is regarded as redeemed until they are secured for God's pleasure; and owning the redemptive claim of the Lord puts the Lord's people together. Many are found as lost sheep who are never, like the lost piece of silver, put with the other nine. Silver speaks of redemption in that way, so the saints at Corinth are spoken of as those who call on the name of the Lord. They are owning His redemptive claim over them and doing it together.

"THE HOLY SCRIPTURES."

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The lost sheep and the piece of silver are the same person. The one is our sinnership, the other is our value to Christ and to God as the purchase of His blood, and we are set together in that way. "Thy brother, for whom Christ died," that is the value He has placed upon him, and we need to value one another just on that account.

Every board in the tabernacle was set up on sockets of silver. Then it says, "They were made standing upright." So in Leviticus 26. 13, "I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright." It is like the board standing upright, so that owning the redemptive claim of the Lord leads to uprightness in business and family relationships, and the boards consequently fit together. If we get out with our brethren, it is because we are not personally upright and do not fit in with the other boards, so even in a day of brokenness we find one another as "following righteousness." (2 Tim. 2. 22.) But then at the end of verse 13 we get, "Thou hast guided them by thy strength unto the abode of thy holiness." It involves the tabernacle system. That is really what we are redeemed for, to form part of God's habitation.

(To be continued.)

"THE HOLY SCRIPTURES."

(2 TIM. 3. 15.)

SOME QUESTIONS AND SCRIPTURE ANSWERS.

QUES. Why is it of such importance to see what scripture—the Bible—says on matters relating to our soul's salvation?

ANS. "The holy scriptures . . . are able to make

thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3. 15.)

QUES. Was the Bible written by holy men according to their own ability, or did God inspire them so that they wrote exactly what He wished ?

ANS. "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1. 21.)

QUES. But this verse speaks of "prophecy of old time" ; are the other parts of the Bible also God-given and inspired ?

ANS. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." (2 Tim. 3. 16.)

QUES. Did God give men the thoughts and the writers chose their own way of expressing the thoughts, or did God so inspire them that they were led to use even the right words ?

ANS. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." (1 Cor. 2. 13.)

QUES. Have we any instance in the Bible illustrating how God controlled the writers as to the very words employed ?

ANS. "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Gal. 3. 16 ; see Gen. 22.)

QUES. Should we then adhere exactly to what the Bible says ? May we not add anything to it or modify it to suit modern conditions ?

ANS. "Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it." (Deut. 4. 2.) "Add thou not to his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." (Prov. 30. 6 ; see also Lev. 22. 18.)

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QUES. Then are things written by the Apostles Paul or Peter to be regarded as our Lord's own instructions or commands ?

ANS. “The things that I write unto you are the commands of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 14. 37.)

QUES. Why is it, then, that people, generally speaking, do not read scripture like this, and in some instances do not even accept it ?

ANS. “He that knoweth God heareth us : he that is not of God heareth not us.” (1 John 4. 6 ; see also John 8. 43.) “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . and they shall turn away their ears from the truth.” (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4.)

QUES. Sometimes learned men do not accept, or even seem to understand scripture ; how is this accounted for ?

ANS. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2. 14.)

QUES. What is necessary if we are to understand the scriptures and the things of God ?

ANS. “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (1 Cor. 2. 12.) “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” (1 John 2. 20.)

QUES. But if any one wishes to do God's will, will not God enable him to understand it ?

ANS. “If any man will [desires to] do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.” (John 7. 17.)

QUES. Why do men dislike the Bible ?

ANS. “Every one that doeth evil hateth the light.” (John 3. 20.)

QUES. Will scripture help us on all matters as well as the question of salvation ?

ANS. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.) "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Psa. 119. 105.)

M. W. BIGGS.

THE OUTSTRETCHED ARM.

IT is a very familiar sight now in busy thoroughfares to see a policeman with his outstretched arm regulating the traffic. His directions act in two ways. One side signifies safety and the other side danger. Those in front of him are free to pass on their way across the busy road, knowing that the outstretched arm will prevent the movement of any vehicles, however great their number, whilst those behind dare not move, for by so doing they would incur the penalty of law.

This simple illustration reminds us of the way God delivered His people Israel from Egypt, and typifies how we now are sheltered and blessed. In Exodus 6. 6 God said He would redeem His people with an outstretched arm and great judgments. There are two sides here, as already seen in our illustration. The same arm that meant salvation and redemption to His people, meant the most severe judgment on their enemies. It is well then to raise the question as to which side *you* are. If you are sheltered by the precious blood of Christ which redeems us to God, you are safe for ever. The enemy cannot pass that arm. But it

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means danger and destruction to all those who do not trust this blessed Saviour.

The enemies of the children of Israel tried their utmost to get at the people, but were securely held back by God's powerful arm. Is there a trembling or a doubting one reading this, wondering whether you will really be saved from judgment? Just pause for a moment and consider the position. It was absolutely secure. The protecting cloud and the rod of Moses were both evidences of the outstretched arm. Every one of the Israelites were not only delivered from Egypt, but they passed clean through the Red Sea, whilst every one of the pursuing Egyptians were destroyed in the sea. Here then is the glorious witness to God's outstretched arm. Redemption on one side for His people, but judgment on the other for His enemies.

It is interesting to see from Jeremiah 27. 5 that creation is attributed to God's outstretched arm. The earth, and man and beast upon it, all witness to His creatorial power. But how wonderful that the Creator has become the Redeemer. His arm is stretched out still, that all who read this might be on the side of safety and protection, and not on the side of destruction and death.

W. J. WHITE.

"LOVE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE."

"OH, it's just as different as can be," murmured a young believer.

"What is so different?" asked some one who heard her.

"Why, being a Christian. I used to say, if I became a Christian, what an irksome life I should have to

lead ! I should have to give up all my amusements—
golf, picture shows, novels, etc., and I should have to
pray and read my Bible, and attend religious meetings,
and forsake my old, gay companions.”

“And have you done so ? ”

“Yes, but *I love to do so now*. I love my Saviour,
and love to please Him, and to forgo all that grieves
Him. *Love makes all the difference !* ”

S. J. B. CARTER.

ISAIAH 57. 15.

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,
whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him
also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of
the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

Where dwells the high and lofty One,
Who storm and wind decrees,
Who guides the flashing lightning's track,
And 'neath the heaven sees ?

Death and destruction hide Him not,
Though they have heard His name ;
His garment is Eternity,
And Holy is His name.

Far, far removed from earth He dwells,
In holy place and high,
Yet so amazing is His grace
That we may know Him nigh.

A humble and a contrite heart,
In such He will abide,
The heart that puts its trust in Him
And in naught else beside.

The spirit of the crushed to raise,
The contrite to support ;
This is the act of Him who dwells
Beyond all power of thought.

J. C.

HINDRANCES TO SPIRITUAL JOY.

THE question, "Why am I not happy?" has so frequently to be asked in the experience of many a believer's life that the subject is worthy of careful inquiry. It should ever be borne in mind that a Christian should normally be happy. If therefore joy is not experienced, there is a cause to be ascertained and removed, so that each may be "filled with joy and peace in believing."

It is not possible to have true spiritual joy until, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," and there are many who are joyless because they have

NO PEACE.

How can a person be happy who is afraid of God, in fear of His judgment, or in dread of eternity? Not until there is faith in Christ, "who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," and faith in God who raised Him from the dead, can the soul have that peace which results from the settlement of every question outstanding between the soul and God. The assurance of divine favour follows, and we "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," and "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (See Rom. 5. 1-11.)

For the maintenance of this joy it is essential to be "holding faith and a good conscience." The Apostle Paul said, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always

a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." If therefore there is

UNJUDGED SIN,

some secret allowance of evil or worldliness which is displeasing to the Lord, there will inevitably be much unhappiness, for the Holy Spirit of God is grieved, and the absence of the Lord's approval will account for the lack of joy. How unhappy Ananias and Sapphira must have been in their efforts to deceive Peter and gain a false reputation! What a path of sorrow Demas must have found when he forsook Paul, "having loved this present world."

But there is a divine way of recovery, for "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." David's prayer, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation," was fully answered by God on his confessing his sin.

It is ever the desire of a follower of Jesus to be like Him in Spirit, and as this is produced there will be joyfulness. The spirit of meekness and gentleness, of grace and lowliness, will ever yield much happiness as it sheds its holy influence upon all around. Conversely, bitterness of spirit, envy, jealousy (which is cruel as the grave), or an unforgiving spirit, all bring sorrow in their train. "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," is the divine way to mutual joy.

AN UNCHRISTLIKE SPIRIT

not only produces unhappiness in the one who bears it, but causes sorrow and depression wherever it is found.

An unselfish life is a happy one, for there is great joy in living for others, as followers of Him who said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." It was written of Him, "Even Christ pleased not himself." Many are losing the best of the present moment because they are living

A SELF-CENTRED LIFE.

Self-seeking in any form will ever bring disappointment and discontent. One of the greatest results of the constraining love of Christ is that "they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

There is, too, the holy enjoyment of "the things concerning himself," as unfolded to us in the scriptures, and the privilege of prayer which is so intimately connected with the Christian's practical life. It is not difficult in many cases to trace the absence of joy to the

NEGLECT OF THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYER,

for where the daily reading of the scriptures is dropped and prayer becomes formal and lifeless, there will inevitably be a corresponding loss of joy and power. The word of exhortation stands, "Give attendance to reading," and "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Neglect of this kind will soon be followed by lack of interest and a forsaking of "the assembling of ourselves together," which will increase the unhappiness, and open the door to worldly associations and interests.

The purest joys of Christianity are found in the path in which believers can walk together in the

fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and to which they are called. In contrast to this, the development of any

UNSUITABLE COMPANIONSHIP

is so frequently the cause of spiritual disaster, for "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" There must be constant irritation of spirit, a defiled conscience, and lack of fellowship in such a link, for "What communion hath light with darkness?"

Some believers, however, experience little joy in their lives, notwithstanding that none of the hindrances, already considered may be in evidence. Though possessing love to Christ and earnest desires, they have

NO DEFINITE SERVICE FOR THE LORD,

and hence their leisure time is largely spent aimlessly, and some of it even uselessly. They are spending money "for that which is not bread," and labouring "for that which satisfieth not." There is such joy in devoted service to Christ that it is well for each to inquire, "Lord! what wilt thou have me to do?" The field is great! The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Happy are they who *labour* in it, for the Lord has given "to every man his work."

May the Lord Himself indicate the things which cause lack of joy, that these may be removed and that "our joy may be full."

F. S. MARSH.

THE PULL AND THE PUSH.

ON the large swing-doors of banks and other buildings may be often seen the word "Pull," and if we answer to the injunction, the door gives towards us and we can walk through. Glancing back at the same door we see another notice on the inner side. Not "Pull" this time, but "Push." It would not do to have "Pull" on both sides or "Push" either, for that would only mean contention, and there would be no entrance, but the "Pull" on the one side and the "Push" on the other work together to the desired end.

It is thus with God's ways with His people. He ever sets before us the attractiveness of what He has for us, all that is to be found in Christ. This is the *pull* that would ever lead us onward to take real possession of what He has for us. Yet, alas, we are often hindered by what we are in ourselves, and by what is around, so in His blessed kindness He takes the trouble to touch us in our circumstances so as to urge us in the direction His love would attract us.

When David was in the cave of Adullam, it says a company of people came *to David*. This was the *pull*. The greatness of David, his victory over Goliath, made him *attractive* to all. Then it says they were in debt, distressed and discontented. Here was the *push*. Their circumstances urged them in the same direction as the greatness of David attracted them.

When Israel were in Egypt, God longed for them to come out of that country to a land flowing with milk and honey, but they were settled there and had lost all desire for their *own* land, so God had to raise up a Pharaoh that knew not Joseph and give them over

to the taskmasters till they cried out to be delivered. They had lost touch with the attracting *pull*, and God came in with the *push*, so that they might go from Egypt and enter the promised land.

Yet Joseph needed no *push*. When the Spirit of God is speaking of Joseph's faith in Hebrews 11 it is recorded, "By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones." There was Joseph in the heyday of his glory in Egypt, which he had received under the mercy of God, and yet he seems to say, This place of God's providential care is good, but it is not the promised land ; it is not the land of God's purpose.

Thus the attraction, the pull, was in all its force, and he desires them to carry his bones to the land of promise, so that in the resurrection day he should rise, not from the land of God's providential care, but from the land of His purpose.

No taskmaster's whip was needed to urge *him* from Egypt ; he spake of their departing. It was all pull and no push with *him*.

May we reverently apply the same thought to our blessed Lord, who, *for the joy that was set before Him* endured the cross, despising the shame. What wondrous attractive power—the joy there was before Him !

May the Lord give us exercise of heart to be so under His influence that the pull may suffice. And yet we thank God for His patience with us, that when we are not sensitive to the pull He so touches us or our circumstances that their urging influence may push us to reach the end He has for us.

A. J. H. BROWN.

FUNDAMENTAL FACTS.

EXTRACT I.

SOME may say that God is too kind or too loving to condemn any one to judgment eternally.

It really, however, overlooks the great fundamental principle of the righteousness of God.

God is right in saving men, simply because redemption has been accomplished and God's rights are now being exercised in mercy. It is the divine prerogative to shew mercy.

Sin has been atoned for in Christ's death, and God is able to bless men wherever there is repentance towards Him, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The love of God is not in opposition to the righteousness of God.

Men want righteousness in the presence of God, and in the death of Christ this is provided for man.

Love is quite another side of the question. People are terribly weak on the righteousness of God. They will harp on His love, and that often at the expense of His righteousness.

Repentance is our side of the matter of salvation ; that is what I am responsible to see to. I must know myself that I have taken the divinely appointed way of blessing, and not just leave it to the love of God to act. The idea is false.

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EXTRACT II.

THERE is no salvation apart from the *death* of *Christ*, and the shedding of His blood is the only ground of blessing.

Redemption is through the blood. *Salvation* is

another idea, and is through the Red sea, or by way of the burial of Christ. It means present emancipation from the world that is hostile to God and to Christ.

I do not know of a passage where the blood is said to be connected exactly with the idea of salvation.

We must learn to distinguish between the things that differ in scripture.

Forgiveness is through the blood, remission, etc. It is the blood of the atonement.

We shall be saved in the power of His life, scripture says ; the ideas are different, the blood being the foundation of everything.

The blessing of sinners has always been connected with death and blood-shedding.

You will particularly note that in the Lord's case His death occurred before His blood was shed.

* * * * *

EXTRACT III.

Salvation and *entering heaven* are utterly different from each other. We do not want salvation in heaven ; there is no such thing there ; we do not want to be saved from God or from heaven.

It is here in this hostile world that we need *salvation* from ourselves and from all that marks the world. Salvation is known and realised in a real and practical way as we appreciate the privileges and the responsibilities of fellowship, and all that exists for our joy and comfort among the saints down here. It has nothing at all to do with heaven. The salvation of our souls is a present thing here and now, and is in process, as, for example, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." It is obviously nearer morally on account of the fact that because of the work of God

in us, by His Holy Spirit we are more emancipated from the world morally now than we were when we first believed.

If it is not so, then the work of God in us has been somehow arrested.

Entering heaven has to do entirely with *God's sovereign purpose*. We were made for earth ; if God delights to have men around Him in heaven, what marvellous grace it is that lets the light of this into our souls. Ephesians should be read to get the full sense of this. The good pleasure of His will. The counsel of His will. The mystery of His will. The glory of His grace. The hope of His calling. The riches of His glory. All these expressions have to do with God's sovereign purpose, the purpose of His love, and we shall find ourselves in heaven solely on this account and not merely because we are saved.

Being saved and going to heaven when we die are, or were, so much connected in our minds that they almost form our theology ! Here again we must rightly divide the word of truth, and not mix up the things that differ.

Scripture is very accurate, and we are often careless in our handling of divine facts.

* * * * *

EXTRACT IV.

THE sprinkling of the blood upon all the people in the wilderness is explained, I think, simply in Hebrews 9. 15-28.

It was connected with the inauguration of the covenant, as you will see in Hebrews 9. It was to bring the people on to the ground of the covenant and to bring home to them their side of it, their respon-

sibility, and also their privilege, to know that God loved them.

The true meaning of the covenant is that God is love.

It demanded love from the people.

In *Christianity* it is perfectly simple. What the law *demand*ed, God gets from our *heart*s; we delight in loving God and in answering to His own love.

So in the supper it is all brought before us so simply each Lord's day morning, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood."

It is wonderful. We partake of it, and thus are in accord with the heart of the blessed God. Love responds to love.

J. JAY.

THE BIBLE.

(AMOS 9.)

A VERY solemn sentence of judgment is presented to us in this chapter of the prophecy of Amos. The vision of the Lord* standing on the altar must have greatly impressed the prophet. No sacrifice is referred to; there is no mention of the blood which Jehovah had given upon the altar to make atonement. (See Lev. 17. 11.) That inflexible justice which tests all that man is, now forms the basis of the Lord's action in judgment. The Lord stands upon the altar and gives command to smite, not bless. The altar of brass with the sacrifice and blood would secure blessing. The altar of brass without either and forming a basis for the Lord's actions would bring the severer judgment.

It is not always seen that the death of Christ has two very different results. Viewed vicariously or

* Note, it is the "Lord" here, not Jehovah.

sacrificially, that is to say, as dying for us, it procures infinite blessing. The blood makes atonement ; Jesus Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree. If God blesses me on the ground of that sacrifice, how great indeed must be the blessing. This is the happy portion of the believer. On the other hand, Jesus' death was the expression of God's judgment and abhorrence of sin. This being so, what would be the result if God were to judge me according to His perfect justice which was witnessed there. Nowhere do we more plainly see that God hates sin than at the cross. And if any be still in his sins and be judged according to that holy hatred of sin, how terrible the position indeed ! If I stand in the value of the sacrifice and am blessed according to its preciousness, how great indeed the blessing. If I be judged on the ground of what *I* am and yet according to the judgment of sin shewn at the cross, how hopeless my position !

It is the latter thought that is seen in the passage before us. The Lord is standing on the altar and commands judgment to be executed. "Smite," He says, "break . . . and I will slay." This evidently speaks of judgment. And there would be no escape. "He that fleeth of them shall not get away." Nowhere is, or could ever be, beyond the reach of God. The believer rejoices in such a thought, as we may see in Psalm 139. "Even there shall thy hand lead me." (Ver. 10.) Again, "When I awake, I am still with thee." (Ver. 18.) But nothing could be more solemn and disquieting for any who would seek to banish God from their thoughts and lives. It is solemn for a believer in connection with God's discipline or His governmental ways which really are the subjects of this chapter. God had brought Israel out of Egypt

as He had placed other nations in their assigned places, and His eyes were on the sinful kingdom, and He would destroy it. How hopeless the situation would have been had this been all! But, as so often in scripture, here again we see the sovereign mercy of God. His discipline would be severe ; the high wheels of His governmental dealings would take long to move in their solemn course, but mercy would preserve every grain of the true Israel. "All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword," says God ; but not one grain should fall to the earth during the shaking to and fro among the nations. How marvellous indeed are the ways of God ! He chastens and judges His people, but yet, and indeed through this very means, He preserves all that is of Himself. Not the least grain should fall. This principle equally applies to the assembly as a whole as to the individual believer. As to the latter, an extreme case is seen in 1 Corinthians 5. 5, when the evil-doer was delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Of the assembly how many instances are seen in the Book of Acts, for example, chapter 8. 1-5 ; 11. 19, 27 ; 12.

Chapter 9. 11, 12 has especial interest by reason of its citation by James in Acts 15. The intelligent application of the scripture on this occasion, when it was used to shew that the introduction of Gentiles was no afterthought on the part of God, helps us to see the wide range of the bearing of scripture, illustrating from a passage may be intelligently *restricted* in its scope. The full meaning of the passage is obviously future. It is of interest, too, to note that James quotes from the Septuagint (that is, the Greek version of the scriptures commonly used by the Jews at that

time), hence Acts 15. 17 reads, "that the residue of *men*," etc., not Edom.

What a moment it will be when Jerusalem and all that is associated with the expression, "tabernacle of David," is again raised up by God, and the true David becomes the centre of gathering for Gentiles as well as His people Israel. Days of unparalleled prosperity will then be known—abundance such as earth has never seen, *all* Israel being blessed.

Let us remember that verse 15 is to be literally brought to pass. Men and nations may seek to settle the question of Palestine, but it never will be rightly settled until Jehovah the God of Israel plants His people in their land under their once rejected Messiah our Lord Jesus Christ. Glory be to His peerless name for ever !

Enfield.

M. W. BIGGS.

THE RED SEA AND THE JORDAN.

NOTES OF READING AT COPENHAGEN ON APRIL 1ST, 1931,
WITH OUR BROTHER EU. ROBERTS AND OTHERS.

(EXO. 14. 26-31 ; 15. 1-3, 13-18 ; JOSH. 3. 14-17.)

GOD is among His people. There is nothing like that in the world's religion, that God should be with them. Nothing can stand before it. You get it in Joshua 2. 9-11. So we should be moving forward as a triumphant people. "The Lord of hosts is with us ; the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Psa. 46. 7-11.) We have no need to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, our triumphant Lord ; the youngest believer has such an One as that as his or her Saviour. "Jesus Christ our Saviour, who hath abolished death." What cannot He

do then? "And brought to light life and incorruptibility by the glad tidings." (2 Tim. 1. 10.) The victory is complete in Christ risen. A Man has been into the portals of death and vanquished it, beaten the enemy on his own ground, in his very stronghold. The victory is very great, and the celebration of it magnificent.

All our comings together should be characterised by that, but there is what is infinitely greater, and that is love, that there were thoughts and purposes of love in God's heart before there was any need for any victory to be accomplished. In 2 Timothy 1. 9 we have "His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the ages of time," before there was any sin, and the victory has been accomplished so that those thoughts of love might be given effect to.

Each believer can say, "He had need of me," an infinitely greater thought than my need of Him; I had to be born into this world, because it was God's thought to identify me with His Son in that world, and the death of Christ has made that possible. He went there in love to secure the objects of His love. It is not a question now of the rod of authority in Moses' hand, but it is the ark standing in Jordan until all the people passed over. It is the identification of Christ with us in love in the place of death, that He might identify us with Himself in the place of life, that is what those twelve stones speak of.

It was a new generation that was entering the land; not those that were born in Egypt. The brazen serpent was the end of the generation that was born in Egypt, and the springing well is the new power. It was only the little ones that went into the land, that is, newborn ones, and they go in, in the energy of the new power. You have nothing about the women and

children crossing the Jordan. They are left in the plains of Moab, the territory given to them by Moses. We could not take our children into the land with us. They must learn to love it for themselves and go there themselves. We can take them with us over the Red sea into the wilderness position, and that is important. They have a place among the people of God there. Their baptism is the figure of this.

Joshua was never told to put the twelve stones in the midst of Jordan. It is love on the part of the saints, identifying themselves with Christ in the place of death. We do it putting our hands to the loaf and the cup. "We own with Thee we've died," and as surely as we do so, we shall reach Him where He lives as a spiritual host. At the Red sea there is only one Man out of death, Christ risen, and the people are viewed in the wilderness under His authority. On the other side of Jordan you have a company "risen with Christ" (Col. 3. 1), and associated with Him. It is grace and authority at the Red sea, "grace reigns through righteousness"; you may depend upon it if grace is not reigning in our hearts, sin will be active, but at the Jordan it is love reigning, "Love that on death's dark vale, its sweetest odours spread." So in the first verse we read in Joshua 3, "The people removed from their tents." The tents are in the wilderness. It does not suggest they go back to them. It is a spiritual suggestion that we are leaving everything connected with our responsible lives behind. We do not go into the land as husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. We go in as the host of Jehovah and the Israel of God.

The central object here is the ark in the midst of Jordan. Moses is typical of the Lord officially, the ark

is typical of the Son of God personally. It is personal love, the love of Christ for the assembly, and it will have a perfect answer. The chapter ends with, "Until all the nation had completely gone over Jordan." The perfect love of Christ has secured a perfect answer in the assembly.

The assembly is a spiritual vessel for the affections of Christ. And then you get, "When ye see the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God." We want to accustom ourselves to contemplate the movements of the Lord Jesus; it is what the supper is for. "Lord, e'en to death Thy love could go." It is a movement of love on His part. Then there were two thousand cubits between them and it, shewing that He must go that way alone. We have to contemplate Him and then follow, and as we are beholding Him, we are formed after Him.

It is a great thing when Christ dawns on us as unique and distinctive in His manhood, and then to take account of the marvellous fact that such an One has secured companions, they must come up out of His death, they must be of Him to be with Him. That is the true spiritual character and relationship of the assembly. The youngest believer is entitled to take account of himself or herself in that way. "Of God are ye in Christ Jesus." (1 Cor. 1. 30.) That was written to the Corinthians to recover them from their failure, to give them power to judge themselves.

It has been said that the feet of the priests are the feet of Christ. It was when His feet touched Jordan that the waters were driven back. When they came to take Him, He said, "I am he," and "they all fell backward to the ground." The Resurrection and the Life was going into death. If the Resurrection and the

Life goes into death, death must be abolished. "Death swallowed up in victory." There was no water in Jordan, nothing but a trail of love: "Love that made sorrow as sweet," and we are the fruit of that love, fruit of the way He has gone.

So we need not only to be together as redeemed ones in the wilderness, we need to be together as those who love one another spiritually, outside of the differences of temperament, character and nationality. "Of God are ye." It is what we are as the result of His blessed work, "in Christ Jesus," after His own order.

The Jordan is a figure of the death of Christ, where He went in love apart from the question of sin, like the deep sleep that fell on Adam, a type of the death of Christ before sin came in. So in the supper we do not want to be occupied with the question of sin, but with the love that has gone that way. He has given Himself for the assembly in love, and the love gets a perfect answer. As Adam looked at Eve he said, "This time it is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, for she is taken out of man." The assembly is of Christ, only what is of Christ can be with Christ.

As John 12. 24 says, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." It is the answer to, "It is not good that man should be alone." Now Christ has fallen into the ground and died, and He went that way voluntarily, so that He will never be alone again, but has secured eternal companionship. It leads to the thought of "My Father, and your Father . . . my God, and your God." (John 20. 17.)

WISDOM KNOWN—ITS RESULT !

“Eat honey, my son, for it is good ; and a honeycomb is sweet to thy taste : so consider wisdom for thy soul ; if thou hast found it, there shall be *a result*, and thine expectation shall not be cut off.” (Prov. 24. 13, 14, New Trans.)

EVERY one will be acquainted in some measure with the idea of “a result,” since, more or less, it is what all of us would think of and have regard to in relation to our many activities and movements in the varied and different spheres of life. Even a boy or girl knows how at the end of the term his or her efforts at school will be shewn and come to light in the way of “result,” either good or bad. And later on in years, what person is there but knows full well how the very thought of it greatly enters into and governs the way in which this and that is handled ? The question of result, therefore, even as it affects us in this world, is a very important consideration. It is so, too—indeed, much more so—in the things of God, for, as wisdom is really known by us and the work of God found in our souls, so surely will there be a corresponding result.

Honey is suggestive, among other things, of the sweetness of natural affections—affections which, being of God, are proper and suitable for man—God’s creature, as found on earth. Then the honeycomb, so closely allied with the labour of the hive, is suggestive of the unity which necessarily follows, and which would be secured, where such affections obtain, and, these are indeed two very beautiful realities still to be known and enjoyed by man in the gracious ordering of God in the present time ! But sweet and precious as these are, there is the further and greater reality of our soul’s need, and, nothing is of such importance in this regard as our finding wisdom. Wisdom is with

God—and James in his epistle tells us, “If any one of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all freely and reproaches not, and it shall be given to him ; but let him ask in faith, nothing doubting.” (James 1. 5, New Trans.)

Then other passages, both in this wonderful Book of Proverbs and other parts of the Holy Scripture, would confirm that to us. And if we have found and known wisdom for our souls according to God, the scriptures affirm there will be a result, and, of such a character as shall not only be evident and manifest to the eye of God, but which may be seen and taken account of even by those around and about us. Hence those in whose souls wisdom is known, will not simply be content to go on in a kind of secret appreciation of Christ and of those things which stand connected with Him (though even that is something for which to be profoundly thankful), but will be exercised and concerned as to the necessity of identifying themselves in a definite manner, and on the line of true committal, with the people of God—taking up, as grace enables them, the privileges and responsibilities which stand connected with the great thoughts of God upon earth in relation to His people, and thus have a definite link with the “testimony of our Lord” to-day. I suppose there could hardly be now a greater result than that ? How blessed to be found on earth thus marked ! There will not always be so wonderful an opportunity. May this scripture—so searching—exercise both writer and reader alike.

What results are there with us ? Are they such, while indicating our having found Christ, in connection with the need of our souls—find us also so appreciative of wisdom (that which is given of God), that we are

found truly answering and responsive to the present purpose and pleasure of God ? This is the result God proposes, and which indeed shall be, as we give ourselves over unreservedly and sympathetically to the wonderful and blessed work of the Spirit of God, and consequent upon our appreciation and knowledge of Christ, and of our acquaintance with wisdom, which it is the pleasure of God to give.

W. B. HARRIS.

ONE LITTLE FAULT.

A KEEPER of a lighthouse on the coast, but far from land, accidentally, while cleaning his lamps, broke a glass pane one night. It was too late to mend it, so he fitted a piece of tin in to prevent the wind blowing out the lights in the tower.

The lamps sent their rays right out to sea, save where the piece of tin threw a dark shadow upon the waters, *widening* as it fell upon the distant seas.

Vessels passing saw no light where it ought to have been—the light shone, but not, for some, where it ought to have shone—wrecks, lives lost, sad disasters followed through that bit of dark tin.

So one little fault in our christian character and ways—a bad habit, a hasty temper, a giddy, foolish tongue, may obliterate our light of testimony just *when* and *where* it is needed, and ruin both it and souls who need the light of life to illuminate them. “The light of the knowledge of the glory of God,” which has “shone into our hearts,” we should *give* light *all round*. (2 Cor. 4. 6.) Let there be no broken pane with its darkening piece of tin, and ruinous results.

S. J. B. CARTER.

NOTICE.

The reader will learn with sorrow of the death of our Editor.

Our beloved brother, J. R. Tithecott, fell asleep in Jesus on Monday evening, July 25. He had been a sufferer for some years past, but had continued in service to his Master, our Lord Jesus. He was conscious nearly to the end and was restful in the Lord. Almost his closing words were, "Make haste, Lord Jesus." Soon after this he departed to be "with Christ, which is far better."

Though no one can take our brother's place, the magazine will be continued, if the Lord will.

M. W. BIGGS.

G. J. EARLE.

THE OUTSIDE PLACE.

THE Lord outside ! What a serious consideration for those who love Him—that He should still be rejected and denied the place of supremacy and authority to which He is entitled as Lord and as Head ! Solemn instances are recorded in scripture of the Lord being outside of the religious activities of the moment. It should therefore be seriously contemplated that a great religious system can continue, and yet the Lord be outside of it. There may still be those whom the Lord loves remaining in it, but the supreme test to be applied is, What place has the Lord, is He out-

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side ? If He is, the only course for His followers is to seek and to find Him in that place.

It was a momentous act, and one of deep spiritual import when in Exodus 33 "Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." Idolatry had come into the camp ; "the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." God in His holiness could no longer vouchsafe His presence, and had said, "I will not go up in the midst of thee ; for thou art a stiff-necked people : lest I consume thee in the way." It was for this reason that Moses pitched the tent in the outside place, thus providing a solution of the sad position for every one who sought the Lord. The care of God and His merciful provision of manna and water did not cease, but He was outside.

Every person was tested by this action. Was he to remain in the camp with its idolatry and iniquity—even though his motive was to improve it—or was he to act consistently with the holiness of God, judge the iniquity, and depart from it by going outside to Jehovah ? Moses was approved in this, for the Lord spake unto him face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. Joshua, too, was commended, as a young man who "departed not out of the tabernacle."

An analogous position has arisen to-day throughout Christendom. Idolatry and iniquity in the holy things are found, even where there is an outward profession of Christ. It is now for every one who seeks the Lord and the honour of His name to obey the

injunction, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ *depart from iniquity*," and the word, "Let us go forth therefore unto him *without the camp*, bearing his reproach."

Those who so act will not assume a place of superiority, nor will they claim a sectarian position. They will not cease to love *all* saints, though they must inevitably leave some of them in the confusion of the camp. They will be called upon to bear reproach ; to be misunderstood, even by many of their fellow-believers ; but they will be compensated by a realisation of the Lord's presence and of His approval in this outside place.

Consider, too, the scene in the garden of Gethsemane (John 18) on the night of the betrayal of Jesus. When He had spoken the words recorded in the seventeenth chapter, "He went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place : for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." Three times His disciples are mentioned thus as being *in His company* in the outside place.

But why was the Son of God outside that city, with its temple service and religious activities ? Because "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Unappreciated, save by His followers, hated without a cause by the religious leaders, shortly to be betrayed by Judas, He resorts to this outside place with His disciples, that they may learn its import and value His company in such a position. It was better to be outside with Jesus than inside the city (and its formal religion) without Him ! How *He* valued those who were with Him in that night of sorrow !

This was soon followed by His crucifixion. "They took Jesus, and led him away. And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull . . . where they crucified him. . . . Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." Thus was our Lord Jesus crucified in the outside place, indicative of ignominy, shame and reproach. The skull was expressive of the complete absence of human wisdom, for man failed to apprehend the Person of the Son of God.

Yet, in His rejection, there were those who loved Him and who in devotedness to Him were prepared for that place in fidelity to Himself. Love and sympathy were theirs, amidst the hatred and cruelty of men. The spirit of this caused one to say later, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Yet again the Lord is outside. As the Amen, the faithful and true witness, He addresses the professing church at Laodicea. (Rev. 3.) He rebukes its lukewarmness, and indicates its offensiveness to Him; but He is outside, for He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Such is the invitation He gives in order that the overcomer may have the joy of *opening to Him*, of having communion with Him in the outside place, and of being brought to sup with Him in company with all those who have responded to Him.

Every crisis in the history of the individual believer

or in His church raises the vital inquiry, "Where is the Lord in relation to this ?" If He is outside, then every one that loves Him will surely desire to be with Him there, for He is the good Shepherd, who "callesh his own sheep by name, and leadeth them *out*." "Wherefore come *out* from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." F. S. MARSH.

BOOKS.

THIS world is full of books. Some are very useful in the sphere to which they apply, but many, alas ! are filled with poison, and are a powerful medium used by Satan, the god of this world, to hold men's minds in darkness and alienation from the true God. It is good to see that *God* has books. In Psalm 40 we read of a wonderful book. We find one grand truth written in that book, which we might speak of as the book of divine counsel. How much depended upon what is recorded there in those blessed words, "Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." Precious record ! One who could say, "I COME"—the same blessed Person who says "I LOVE." (Exo. 21. 5.) All blessing flows from this ; all, all depended upon *His* coming. For He alone could carry out the will of God. And what marvellous results flow from what He has accomplished ! It involved His patient, holy life here, His giving up that life—the "one offering," the "one sacrifice for sins" ; all His blessed *work* in carrying

out God's *will* is now borne *witness* to by the Holy Spirit. He has carried it through to glorious fulfilment and "set himself down on the right hand of the greatness on high." (Heb. 1. 3, New Trans.)

At the commencement of His public ministry here on earth we read of Him coming to Nazareth where He had been brought up, and going into the synagogue and standing up to read. How blessed to see Him opening the book, and *finding the place*, reading those wonderful words of grace, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor; he has sent me to preach to captives deliverance, and to the blind sight, to send forth the crushed delivered, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4. 18.) He closed the book at a most significant point; He was here to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. He was Himself opening a blessed dispensation of grace, coming into this scene as the Vessel of grace, laying in His precious death the basis upon which that grace could be fully and freely dispensed to poor, perishing sinful men. The day of vengeance of God was not mentioned by His blessed lips, for He was announcing a tale of grace. What a day this is! "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Dear reader, are *you* aware of the marvellous dispensation of grace which marks this day, the day in which *you* live? Do not be indifferent to it, do not despise it, for to despise it is to perish. (Acts 13. 41.) To receive it, to believe the report, will mean present peace and eternal joy.

There is a striking reference to books in Acts 19 at Ephesus, where Paul preached in such power the gospel of the glory, with the result that the name of

the Lord Jesus was magnified. We read of those who brought their books and burnt them before all. They never intended to refer to those books again—they *burnt them*. They had done with those things and that system of darkness for ever, for a wonderful displacement had taken place: that order of things had disappeared, the darkness dispelled by the light and the glory of Christ. Paul had brought to them some precious thoughts out of that book of Psalm 40; he said afterwards, "I have not shrunk from announcing to you all the counsel of God." "The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified," and books to the value of fifty thousand pieces of silver were destroyed. "Thus with might the word of the Lord increased and prevailed."

In Malachi 3 we read of another of God's books, which records the interest He takes in those who fear Him. We read, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." Here we have a book of divine remembrance. How this should encourage us in this day of widespread and open departure regarding His name, to speak *often* one to another of Himself, knowing that He takes account of it, that it is a joy to His heart, in view of "that day" when He will publicly say, "they are mine," and display them as His jewels. It may be that very few are together in a company, and in great weakness, but it rejoices His heart that they speak of *Him*. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . . but encouraging one an-

other, and by so much the more as ye see the day drawing near." May the privilege of coming together be increasingly valued by us, for *His* sake !

In Revelation 5 we read of another wonderful book. This book is seen in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne in heaven ; it is sealed, and no one in heaven or on earth is found able to open the book or to regard it. It is the book of God's counsels regarding the earth, and *One alone* has right to open it : "the lion of the tribe of Judah" ; He who stood for God's rights upon earth unflinchingly, the Lion "which turned not away for any," the Accomplisher of the will of God. The *Lion*, yet the *Lamb*, the One who paid redemption's price in His own blood, He alone has right to the title-deeds, the reading of which publicly vindicates God's indisputable rights in His creation, and we find in the end of that chapter all creation in accord. Then again, we have a book in chapter 10 ; a little book *opened* in the hand of the "strong angel." It is opened, suggesting what has been revealed in prophecy and about to be fulfilled. It is *sweet* to the saints to know that God will have His own way in triumph, but *bitter* to contemplate His judgments which must be executed. Then in Revelation 20 we read of a most solemn time when the books containing the divine records of the lives of men will be read. After reading of that happy company who "lived and reigned with the Christ a thousand years," that wonderful time which we speak of as the millennium, we read of the dead, small and great, standing before the "great white throne," all those who have lived and died without Christ summoned to stand there in the awful light of that throne. "And the books were opened . . . and the dead were judged out

of the things written in the books according to their works." Solemn moment, when each has to face the record of a life as judged by the holy standard of God, for there are no mistakes in those books, no errors in divine judgment. However great or religious or otherwise men may have been by the standards of men, they will be found sadly wanting when judged by the divine standard, and will hear the hopeless, terrible, yet righteous sentence, pronouncing their eternal doom.

But we read of yet another book—thank God for the other book—the book of life! In it, it is not a question of "their works"; works will only condemn in those books of judgment. To-day, dear reader, salvation, a Deliverer from the coming wrath is offered you in Jesus, He who suffered that you might be delivered, and *died* that you might *live*. All those who turn to Him, believing in Him as their Substitute, rejoicing in Him as their Saviour, owning Him as their Lord, are assured *even now* that their names are written in the book of life, not according to their works, but in virtue of all His precious, acceptable worth. May we, who rejoice that our names are written in heaven, become more and more appreciative of God's precious thoughts which He has made known; how great is the sum of them! and, as led by the Holy Spirit, our blessed Guide into all truth, give ourselves more to reading and meditating upon the holy scriptures, of which the Lord Jesus said, "they are they *that testify of ME*"; and He will, out of them, as He did to those two disciples of old, unfold to us the things concerning Himself. Thus shall we be preserved from the subtle evil found in this world's books, and so shall the displacement of darkness by

light be effected in our hearts, "For all ye are sons of light and sons of day ; we are not of night nor of darkness . . . let us watch and be sober."

Winnipeg.

C. DEAYTON.

GOD'S GOVERNMENT.

THE schools of this world are keenly interested in inculcating into the tender minds of pupils the principles of citizenship, politics, and state-craft, and it would seem as if the Lord were meeting that activity by calling our attention to God's thought of rule, citizenship, and government. The following impressions in regard to the government of God came before me recently, and I venture to express them here, hoping that they may be of value, especially to young believers.

God's government stands out in its grand immutability as clearly as the stability of His throne. It has pursued its unswerving course right down through the long avenues of time, favouring none, sparing none, avoiding none. It has rolled on and on through the ages, before the deluge, amongst the patriarchs, past the dynasties of Egypt, through the kingdoms of men, amongst the godless, amongst His people, touching families and individuals, active in bygone days, and still operative in the modern world.

Who is not subdued and solemnised when he remembers that God is not mocked, and what a man sows that shall he also reap ? Who has not traced in his own life's history that righteous government which brings back again from the forgotten past some unworthy act, or some good deed, and shews it in its multiplied results ? But in His own book God reveals

to us how these things work. True it is that His ways are past finding out, yet he shews us innumerable cases of His government which we may well consider, and in no one are the principles more amplified than in Jacob.

Jacob very early displays his characteristics, and imposes upon his own brother when the latter returns from the field weary and famished. Taking advantage of Esau, instead of shewing brotherly kindness, he secures his own advantage, and later robs Esau of what was his naturally. I do not overlook Esau's profanity, nor excuse his despising his birthright.

Later on in life Laban, his near relative, takes advantage of Jacob's position, and imposes upon him, so that he reaps what he had sown. Jacob is imposed upon ; he is robbed of Rachel after serving his years, whilst later still he has to complain to his wives that "your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times." (Gen. 31. 7.) Jacob lied to his father, in addition to which, having taken goats from the flock, he covers himself with their skins and deceives him. In chapter 37 the sons of Jacob also take a goat from the flock and use the blood of it to stain Joseph's coat. Then with lying deception they say, "This have we found : know now whether it be thy son's coat or no."

Did Jacob remember that day long past away when, as a youth covered with goats' skins, *he* stood before *his* father, lied to him, and deceived him ? Oh, the eye of God which ran to and fro throughout the whole earth ! What Jacob had sown *that* he also reaped, and the harvest was plentiful.

However, there is a happier incident in his chequered career, which presents the other side of the govern-

ment of God, and which is of the greatest possible cheer to our hearts. Joseph was seventeen years old, was loved and cared for in a most unusual manner. For seventeen years he was the one object of Jacob's heart ; we might say, daily his delight. The one-time self-centred Jacob has another object, and he cares for him with an unbounded affection. This also he will reap, and the Spirit of God does not fail to call our attention to the fact, that when Joseph was in power and authority in Egypt, Jacob went down there and lived in the land of Egypt *seventeen* years. (Gen. 47. 28.) He received in the government of God the filial devotion, love and care, day for day and year for year, that he himself had lavished upon his son.

Let the children of christian parents remember this. God notices their feelings and attitude towards their parents, and will requite it all, measure for measure. "Honour thy father and mother ; which is the first commandment with promise ; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." (Eph. 6. 2, 3.)

A remarkable case is given us in Judges 1, where even a godless Canaanitish king recognises the government of God. "And Adoni-bezek fled ; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and great toes. And Adoni-bezek said, Three-score and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered under my table : as I have done, so God hath requited me." It is very impressive that a man of such cruelty should be made to confess the righteousness of God's government.

The next example is within the ranks of the people of God, and should cause exercise in regard to the workings of envy and jealousy in our hearts.

King Saul may well stand before us as one who nourishes feelings against another whom the Lord has taken up, and he is never without his spear. On two distinct occasions he hurls it at David. At another time he abode in Gibeah, having his spear in his hand. (1 Sam. 22. 6.) Again, he slept within a trench, and the spear stuck in the ground at his bolster. (1 Sam. 26. 7.) But wherever we see him in his remorseless hatred of David, all the outcome of secret envy, he always handles his spear. It was his one weapon. He relied upon it, and I suppose that the whole of his course on that line fell little short of forty years. Then the end came, and in the government of God Saul leaned upon his spear and died. (2 Sam. 1. 6.)

One would seek to be vigilant in regard to any weapon of the flesh, lest that dread government should in its relentless rolling come upon us, and there should be a public display of a useless carcase upon the city walls.

Years afterwards, poor David himself comes under it, and again the details of the visitation are equally arresting. He commits adultery with Bathsheba, and kills Uriah her husband with the sword. Only a little time elapses before we see the results. His own family circle is corrupted with many incidents of adultery, first with Ammon, then with Absalom. The sword also begins its dread work; Ammon is murdered, Absalom is slain. Excusing none, favouring none, righteous ever, the changeless government of God pursues its course; the great wheels, full of eyes roll on. In Ezekiel 1. 16 we read, "The appearance of the wheels and their work was as the look of a chrysolite; and they four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel,"

There is surely the definite working out in purposeful fulfilment of every consequence of our actions here, good or bad, the infallible results of everything, the fruition of every seed sown. In regard to the line of things in which we see the universal dispensation of God's righteous acts in government in reference to man's works, we have the general idea of the outer wheel. All are included in its course, all comprised within its diameter. Godly and ungodly alike come within its circumference, Adoni-bezek the Canaanite as well as David, king of Israel ; there is no exemption. The great wheel, like the great globe, rolls on its fixed course, and nothing can divert it. Having begun at the exit of the first paradise, it will revolve until the end of man's day of responsibility, and the dawn of the new paradise.

But there is a wheel within this wheel, which may suggest the intricate methods of God's governmental ways which work things out in connection with our blessing. We might say this belongs to the *inside*, the inner wheel, and it shews how He, in His wise goodness and love, effectuates many of His own purposes, and brings out of our failures very often some of the greatest triumphs of His grace.

It is very palpable in David's case. His greatest failure was in connection with Bathsheba, and a full crop of bitter sorrows and disasters fell to his reaping. This was the revealing of the great outer wheel full of eyes. But what did the inner wheel bring, what secret thoughts of blessing did God entertain for the man who had lived in faithfulness hitherto ?—the greatest king who ever sat upon an earthly throne in wisdom and power, and God loved him. His righteousness called for the fulfilment of government, but

His lovingkindness abounded over it, so that if David sinned by Bathsheba, he also received by her this remarkable son, so wonderful a type of Christ.

I think we see it again later on in David's life. After that regrettable numbering of the people, the angel of divine judgment stood by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. That would have been a spot for ever linked in the mind of David with the castigation of the people, yet caused by himself, but the revolving of the inner wheel gave to David the wonderful privilege of securing that spot, and *there* the temple was built. In this way one can see that for God's people the two wheels are closely connected, and it cheers one's heart to know that He will secure triumphs of grace and mercy which will publicly display in glory His righteousness, faithfulness, and love. The wheels went on their *four* sides, shewing the universal application, as well as the fixedness of their purpose. Hence they have reference to the future establishment of that which will manifest the glory of God. I refer to the heavenly city, which will also have four sides. It will be there, no doubt, where God will gather in all the grand results of all His thoughts, purposes and ways. The wheels not only have their appearance but their work.

H. R. WILKINSON.

“ BECAUSE.”

(GEN. 3. 10 ; EPH. 5. 6 ; 1 JOHN 4. 18, 19.)

IT is characteristic, I suppose, for children to ask the “Why and the wherefore” of many things in this life, and in answers to these questions for older ones to say, “*Because*” of this or that. We all remember

how the queen of Sheba came to ask king Solomon many hard questions, and when she came she spoke to him of all that was in her heart, and Solomon explained to her all she spoke of; there was not a thing hidden from the king that he did not *explain* to her. (1 Kings 10. 1-4, New Trans.)

It is our happy privilege as the children of God to ask Him anything within the sphere of revelation, be it ever so hard, and the One in whom He has been revealed and declared, who is a greater than Solomon, will explain everything to us. As creatures, which we *always* shall be, we are confined to what God has revealed of Himself in Christ. But it is a good thing to ask questions, it is the principle upon which we receive (Matt. 7. 7), and it is often to be deplored that more questions are not asked in some Bible readings. Be not many teachers, the Apostle James tells us, and the heeding this perhaps would allow the Lord to be the Teacher, as He would wish to be when we are gathered together in meetings for the reading of the Holy Scriptures. While we cannot of course do without our memories, we should be concerned not to rely on this as a means of edification; better to rely on the Lord to give a *fresh* touch each time we are thus together. The Holy Spirit would then be free to make things *living* and thus in *power*. We are apt to quench the Spirit by *trying* to remember what we have heard or read.

How often a question asked by a young brother has led to much help being given to others beside the questioner. We have the record that the Lord Jesus at the age of twelve was found sitting in the midst of the teachers, hearing them and asking them questions; how beautiful and comely and perfect! (Luke 2. 46.)

It may be a young brother, or perhaps an older one, has a definite exercise in regard to the scripture being considered, or as to the subject that is before the saints, and through being timid has failed to ask the question, and perhaps missed an opportunity of making a “dull” reading a very interesting one. Let us be on the alert so to be under the Lord’s hand, and as directed by the Holy Spirit to *hear* and also *ready* to ask questions.

In the First Epistle of John it is to be noted that the word

Because

occurs at least twenty-five times, and the context gives the reason why. If some one at that time asked the beloved apostle, Why did you write to your “children,” (for he so addressed them)? he would have said, Well one reason is

Because their sins are forgiven

for His name’s sake. (Chap. 2. 12.) That is true of the whole family of God, whatever stage of growth they may have reached.

Or, if another came to him and said, Oh, tell us something of this great theme you have so much on your heart! John would answer, “Hereby perceive we love, *because* he laid down his life for us, and *we ought* to lay down our lives for the brethren” (chap. 3. 16, New Trans.), for “We know we have passed from death unto life *because* we love the brethren.” (Chap. 3. 14.) Moreover, he would add, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, *because* that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” (Chap. 4. 9.) Oh, how the beloved apostle’s heart would warm as he answered

such questions ! And are you not afraid of the day of judgment ? asks some trembling one, and what is his answer, "Herein is love *with* us made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, *because* as he is so are we in this world ; there is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, *because* fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him *because* he first loved us." (Chap. 4. 17-19.)

It is *God's* perfect love so manifested that casts out fear. How can any question be raised as to God being *Love* (for God is Love) after such a manifestation of it ? "I know," says John, "the world knoweth us not,

because it knew him not." (Chap. 3. 1.)

It is true the world saw Him a lowly, blessed Man walking among men, but the world hated Him, and now where *He is not* the children of God *are*, and the apostle writes to them as born of God, "*because* ye know the truth, and that no lie is of the truth " (chap. 2. 21), and so while *in* a world of darkness and hatred that lies in the wicked one, the family of God is seen as overcoming the false teachers who have gone out into the world.

"*Because* greater is he that is *in* you than he that is in the world." (Chap. 4. 4.) What a joy to be of that family. Loved by the Father, looked at by Him as He looks at His beloved Son in glory. "That which is true in him is in his children, *because* the darkness is passing and the true light now shineth" (chap. 2. 8), "For it is not yet *manifested* what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (Chap. 3. 2.) How very precious are these "Reasons why." The Holy Spirit

“EVERY IDLE WORD.”

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is here bearing witness to the fact that Jesus Christ came by water and blood, “*because* the Spirit is the truth.” (Chap. 5. 6.)

And finally John says, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself, he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, *because* he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.” (Chap. 5. 10.)

May we ask the reader how he or she stands in relation to these eternal truths. The beloved apostle who rested his head on the bosom of Jesus wants us to be *believers* in the present tense. He wrote his gospel and his epistles to that end (see John 20. 31), and says, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in *truth*.” Then may it be true of us all.

Brisbane.

A. HURWORTH.

“EVERY IDLE WORD.”

THOUSANDS, perhaps tens of thousands, of years ago, a leaf fell on a piece of soft clay and left its impress.

Only this year a geologist broke off a piece of hard rock—the petrified clay—and there lay the image of the leaf. Every line and vein of its delicate tracery was there preserved in the hard stone.

So the “idle word” we speak is not lost nor the thoughtful word either. Every word will be revealed in the great judgment day—divinely preserved.

S. J. B. CARTER.

BEHOLD !

" Behold My Servant, Mine Elect,"

God's infinite delight ;
The only One who could effect
God's holy will upon the earth,
We join with heaven to tell His worth,
His glory and His might.

" Behold the Lamb, the Lamb of God,"

Thus cried the witness true.
We view the path which Jesus trod ;
Drawn to Thee, Saviour, by Thy grace,
Invited to Thy dwelling-place,
Our hearts, Thee, Lord, pursue.

" Behold the man," this wondrous word

Was uttered once of old ;
That cry our wondering hearts have heard—
" Behold the man " go forth to die,
The Spirit now takes up the cry,
His glories to unfold.

" Behold your King," we see Him go

Wearing a crown of thorns,
To Calvary's awful depths of woe ;
There tasting death for everything,
Now risen, triumphant, truly KING,
Heaven's royal crown adorns.

" Behold He comes, and comes to reign,"

No pain or sorrow now,
All power is His, the Lamb once slain ;
Let all creation praises sing,
As heaven says, " Behold your King ! "
And all before Him bow.

C. DEAYTON.

TRANSFORMATION.

ONE of the great evidences of the living character of Christianity is the transformation that it effects.

The gospel of the grace of God is not a system of doctrines (though it is true in every detail and has its teaching); it is "the power of God unto salvation," and is "living," for its effects and marvellous results are seen and known.

It is not by *reformation*, but by *transformation* that these results are achieved; not by human efforts to improve man, but by the mighty power of God in the gospel. It is a glorious triumph for Him, when there is

A TRANSFORMED LIFE,

and there are multitudes on earth to-day who evidence by this the work of God in their souls.

In the Epistle to the Romans, after setting forth the truth of the gospel of God in its clearness and simplicity, and shewing how we may know and enjoy the forgiveness of sins, justification, peace with God, deliverance from the power of sin, and reconciliation, the Apostle Paul exhorts :

"be not conformed to this world, but be TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12. 2.)

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What an example he was of this transformation. Compare his life as Saul of Tarsus with that as Paul the Apostle. It was the same person (for our personality remains), but the life was transformed under the power and influence of Jesus. There could not have been a greater contrast ; for he said that the assemblies "were hearing that he who persecuted us formerly, now announces the glad tidings of the faith which formerly he ravaged."

There must be a great difference between a converted person and one still unconverted. The life of a Christian must contrast with that of a man of the world : the believer in Jesus evidences the possession of a faith which is unknown to an unbeliever. The changed life is a living witness to Christ.

While the work of God in the soul cannot be seen, its effect upon the life and ways must be apparent. What testimony would there be to the power of the gospel if it had not produced a transformation ? Hence the word, "be transformed by the renewing of your mind," is so important. The influence of the mind of a person upon his life is recognised ; for if the mind is renewed the life will reflect it.

It is therefore of utmost importance that a Christian should yield to the power and activities of the Holy Spirit of God ; that his mind may be occupied with Christ and the things of God, instead of being engaged with that which is worldly, corrupt and impure.

Even in a young convert the transforming effect of his conversion is seen ; but for this to be maintained he must heed the word, "be not conformed to this world." It will not at all do to seek to be as much like the world as possible. No, indeed ! We must be Christlike in mind, in heart, and in ways.

Another has said, "The Christian has a new way of thinking about everything, because he judges himself and has God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the brethren in his thoughts. He thinks altogether differently from the natural man."

Transformation is viewed from another standpoint in 2 Corinthians 3. 18. The Apostle Paul had been speaking of the saints as "Christ's epistle . . . written, not with ink, but the Spirit of the living God," and he leads up to the wonderful statement :

"But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are TRANSFORMED according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit."

Think of it—"we . . . are *transformed*" ! The same persons, but changed ! The spirit of the believer has come under the influence of the glory of the Lord, and this marvellous change has resulted.

It is said of Moses that when he had been with the Lord forty days and forty nights "the skin of his face shone."

Stephen, too, is a beautiful example of this transformation, for he "saw the glory of God and Jesus" ; he not only testified of Him in power, but displayed most signally the Spirit of Jesus, as he prayed for his enemies who were stoning him to death.

Paul, too, was transformed as he beheld the glory of the Lord ; for afterwards, when "a thorn for the flesh" was sent and he had thrice besought the Lord that it might depart from him, he could say, "Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses, that the power of the Christ may dwell upon me."

The effect of "beholding" is

A TRANSFORMED SPIRIT

and outlook, as the believer is thus changed entirely from the judgment of things which he had formed from his own feelings into the Lord's judgment of things.

Yet still we await the great transformation which will be effected at the coming of Christ for His own, for

"We await the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, who shall TRANSFORM our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory, according to the working of the power which he has even to subdue all things to himself." (Phil. 3. 21.)

By this final touch of power we shall have

A TRANSFORMED BODY

—a body of glory—and we shall be like Christ and with Him for ever. As we realise increasingly the terrible effects of sin and death upon the body of humiliation, we have greater longings for this moment of triumph, when we shall have our "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

No trace of sin, disease, or death will be found then, for "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying : neither shall there be any more pain." "We shall be changed" !

With such a body, what ability will there be to enjoy the holy presence and love of God, as suited to that place of nearness and favour.

The Lord grant that each one of us may evidence

the results of His transforming work, and be kept in the joyful anticipation of seeing His face and being "like Him" for ever.

Northampton.

F. S. MARSH.

THE BIBLE.

OBADIAH.

THE brief prophecy of Obadiah brings before us two very important principles, one of which has already been referred to in the prophecy of Amos (see chap. 1. 11, 12), namely, the seriousness of disregarding brotherly relations. The second principle to which I refer is that, whereas God's people are the subjects of His immediate care and judgment, God is Judge of all, and all must have to say to Him, and especially those placed in relation to His people, or who have dealings with them. With regard to the first principle to which I have drawn attention, a spirit very different from Edom's as to Israel was that seen in Abram with regard to Lot. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee," says Abram, "for we be brethren." (Gen. 13. 8.) Again, "When Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants . . . and pursued . . . and he brought back . . . his brother." (Gen. 14. 14-16.) A happy contrast this, indeed! May we ever follow in this respect the footsteps of our father Abraham! Edom pursued his brother, cast off all pity and was marked by violence against him.

Historically Edom's early dealings with Israel had been marked by a definite opposition. (Num. 20.

14-21.) The report of Israel's passage through the Red sea had alarmed the Dukes of Edom. The power of God put forth on behalf of His people had struck terror into the hearts of the descendants of Esau. It was this, possibly, that accounted for the hatred that existed on the part of Edom towards Israel. It is possible, too, that a jealousy sprang up as Edom saw Israel becoming the greater nation; for there were kings over Edom before any king reigned in Israel. But later in their history Edom was brought into subjection to Israel. God had long before said that the elder should serve the younger, and the divine statement most certainly came true. Doubtless, too, there was an enmity against what was of God, and Israel was the witness to Jehovah, however poorly they fulfilled their responsibility. When Israel's day of weakness came, Edom was not slow to seize the opportunity and add to Israel's distress. From the prophecy before us we may see how God viewed such animus. He had carefully guarded Israel from any such feeling. He had not allowed Israel to enter into conflict with Edom, nor to take any of their territory, for Edom had his own portion assigned to him by Jehovah. (See Deut. 2. 4-8.) Moreover, the children of Israel were instructed not to abhor the Edomites; they were to regard them as their brethren. And, too, in contrast to some other nations, the Edomites were allowed to be reckoned among Israel after the third generation. (See Deut. 23. 7, 8.) But in spite of these expressions of consideration on God's part, hatred existed on the part of Edom. Probably the hatred had been augmented by the victories in David's time, and waited opportunity for retaliation.

Whatever partial accomplishment there may have

been in the past, the closing verses of the prophecy necessitate a still further fulfilment. A most absolute judgment is pronounced against Edom, and the reason given is his hatred of and his behaviour towards his brother. Let us remember this.

From Psalm 83. 6, Ezekiel 35, Isaiah 34 and 63. 1 and 4, it would appear that in the end once more the same features of hatred will again manifest themselves in Edom towards Israel. It may seem very unlikely that such a nation as Edom should exist again ; but there are no difficulties with God, and we may rest quite sure that scripture will be fulfilled. God has said and shall He not do it ? Moreover, from the psalm referred to, we may learn that Edom will combine with other nations against Israel. But from the seventh verse of our prophecy the nations in alliance with Edom will deceive him, and though Edom escapes the scourge of the King of the North (See Dan. 11. 41) he is definitely judged through the instrumentality of Israel. (Obadiah 18.) Yet it would appear that the Lord Himself very personally deals with this enemy of His people, thus delivering them. (See Isa. 63. 1-4.) The expression "peoples" here refers to other nations.

Another detail of interest is that the judgment of Edom will take place in conjunction with that of "all nations." (See ver. 15 and Isa. 34.) These passages confirm the idea of a general combine against God's people in the latter days, as Psalm 83 states. From Jeremiah 49 and this prophecy we may learn that the particular weakness of Edom will be seen in his lack of wisdom. God will come in for His people and destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau. This is what might be

expected ; there is no counsel against the Lord. We may well fear for people who are antagonistic towards God's people. Nothing is more sure to meet with God's judgment.

It is instructive to note that deliverance is on mount Zion. God's sovereign mercy, of which Zion speaks, secures this. Holiness is the result. Being delivered from everything against them, God's people are enabled to serve Him in holiness. Mercy secures deliverance ; deliverance issues in holiness. It is the same with ourselves. God's mercy delivers us from that which is contrary to Himself, so that we may suitably serve Him in holiness.

Though in some scriptures Edom is regarded as having a place given of God and is to be recognised as a brother (see Deut. 23), yet the feature suggested by Edom in the passage before us is anything but that of a brother. Hence we may take warning ; for whatever position we may occupy, what God looks at is not the position, save to carry with it a responsibility, but our condition. We may be brethren in position and have to be regarded as such ; but what we must be concerned about is to possess brotherly features. Edom very seriously failed in this respect, and we must see that we do not do as he did. An unbrotherly spirit is regarded very seriously by God. The prophecy of Obadiah clearly teaches us this.

Enfield.

M. W. BIGGS

YOUR DIFFICULTY.

WHAT does Scripture say about it ? Have you prayed to God about it ? Why turn elsewhere before you see what Scripture says and before you pray ? M. W. B.

AN OUTLINE OF SOUND WORDS.

EVERY believer should have an earnest desire to have before the mind a clear *outline* of truth, otherwise every item of the truth, as received, will be in a measure defective. This may at first appear to be a strong, unwarranted statement ; but we have to bear in mind that truth is one glorious whole, so that unless any item of doctrine is held in its true relation to the whole, it falls short in the mind of the divine idea.

One well remembers being hindered for many years for this very reason, and one would long to help one's brethren—particularly the younger brethren—by encouraging them to seek a clear understanding of the great subjects of scripture, for God in His infinite wisdom teaches us by way of subjects.

If little bits of light which we may get in one way and another are taken up in an isolated manner the result is somewhat like a patchwork quilt. Every impression of Christ is beautiful in itself ; every thought of the system of glory is spiritually exhilarating ; but if regarded in an isolated way they lose much of their lustre, because before the mind and heart they only present a collection of beautiful colours, so to speak, thrown together haphazard, without forming any definite design.

Divine Persons would build up in the saints a framework, or outline, of the cardinal truths and principles of Christianity.

Although scripture presents the truth by means of different books, and thus sets before us various aspects of it, yet the Spirit of God would teach us what are the great underlying subjects and principles ; because

we must always apprehend the thing itself before we can understand the various aspects of it.

Timothy was exhorted to have an outline of sound words (2 Tim. 1. 13, New Trans.), and we need that exhortation to-day. Moreover, the apostle instructed him rightly to divide, or to cut in a straight line, the word of truth (2 Tim. 2. 15), that is, to learn to distinguish in the mind between one truth and another, or rather, between one subject and another, and the precious details which apply to each subject. Then there would be no confusion of ideas.

This will require deep exercise on our part and earnest prayer, because we are entirely dependent on divine Persons to teach us. Wisdom, however, comes to us in this way, and if we apply our hearts to wisdom we shall find that divine thoughts as set forth in the scriptures become plainer and more powerful, bringing with them increasing delight and producing in our affections intelligent response in worship.

Croydon.

H. W. ELLIS.

OTHNIEL AND ACHSAH.

AN ADDRESS.

OTHNIEL was a man of valour ; he had passed through the land of Og, king of Bashan, without being detained. The dimensions of the bedstead of that king are given, suggesting that his land was one of ease and luxury, tempting one to settle down and be satisfied with present things, as was the case with the two and a half tribes.

Not so with Othniel ; he had overcome these con-

ditions and had crossed the Jordan. Next, at the call of Caleb, and with the reward in view (a wife), he takes a city. As Achsah, Caleb's daughter, came to him she urges him to ask of her father a field. Caleb said to her, "What wilt thou?" She said, "Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water." And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

I would desire to say a word to our sister, who this day has taken up a position as wife, and to every other sister who occupies a similar relationship. You have a south land; through the precious work and death of Christ you stand in all the favour of God; the blessing of God rests upon you never to be recalled. The opportunities to serve the Lord who loved you and gave Himself for you are many, and are to be found in the sphere you are now to occupy. There are no limitations with the Lord; He would say, "What wilt thou?" May I encourage you to follow Achsah's example and ask for springs of water (the upper and the nether springs suggesting unfailing energy and refreshment in the power of the Holy Spirit) so that you may be maintained in all the sunshine and freshness of the south land. May the Lord give you grace to move or urge your husband to greater spiritual exercises, to encourage and to pray for him—a true helpmeet. Although the place of subjection be yours, and your service be of a hidden character, the moment is coming when all service will be rightly valued, and a public acknowledgment made.

Do we hear anything more of Othniel? Yes; we do. In Judges 3 we have an account of the general departure and unfaithfulness of Israel, and consequent

upon that God delivered them into the hands of their enemies, whereupon they turned to God and He came in and raised up a saviour, a vessel ready to hand.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel, and he went out and delivered Israel, and the land had rest forty years. Figuratively speaking the springs of water that Achsah sought had done their work, and in a day of departure and decline he was maintained in spiritual freshness and readiness for service.

But in all this where is Achsah, you ask. According to Proverbs 31 she is seen in her husband. In verse 10 of that chapter we read, "Who can find a woman of worth ? for her price is far above rubies." Well, Othniel found her. In verse 16 she considereth a field and buyeth it. Achsah did so, and said, I must also have springs of water. In verse 23 her husband is known in the gate, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. He stood out in prominence amongst them, through the activities of his wife.

So with Othniel, he became Israel's judge ; he went from strength to strength ; he sat in the gate, and as judge administered justice and judgment, and Achsah is seen in him.

May the Lord give you grace to urge your husband, so that in a day of weakness and brokenness like the present he may be a vessel meet for the Master's use, a tower of strength to his brethren, and such a comfort to the Lord's people that they will give thanks to God for you.

Bristol.

H. J. FOOTE.

BETHANY.

BETHANY, itself a place of little consequence, not being mentioned in the Old Testament or any apocryphal writings, has, however, profound interest to the Christian, because of the way in which our Lord Jesus Christ associated Himself with it. And doubtless many spiritual lessons can be learned by those who contemplate the setting given it by the Spirit of God in scripture. To Him, during the days of His ministry, it must have been a well-known spot, though not till quite the close is it spoken of by name. Under such circumstances the meaning of the name can hardly be without significance, and therefore from early times of the Christian era it has been noticed, if not reached.

Of Beth-phage, coupled with it in the narrative, the meaning is, "the house of unripe figs"—phage being translated "green figs," that is, immature figs, in Canticles 2. 13. The word is found there only in the Old Testament, "the fig tree" being the usual word for fig, and as used in Genesis 3.

Of Beth-any, the *any* in English quite regularly represents the Hebrew letters which form a very frequently used word—*ani*, translated afflicted, humble, lowly, meek or poor, and the verb "to afflict."

So Bethany really means, "the *house* of the *poor*, or lowly, in spirit," not "poor" in pocket, which is distinctly instructive; for with these adjectives in mind, our thoughts are at once taken to the basis of the principles of the kingdom of God. When the Lord looked upon His disciples, He said, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6. 20), or in Matthew 5, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The latter is from

a dispensational point of view, while Luke speaks of the moral side of the kingdom.

Among those who feared God and in whom such characteristics had been begotten, we can understand how the Lord Jesus would find a place, a home ; we can see also a fulfilment of the concluding words of Isaiah's prophecy, where he tells us of Jehovah's question—the One who can say, "heaven is my throne and earth my footstool," yet He asks, "Where is the place of my rest ? " Not a rest or sabbath after toil, but a rest or complacent quietude of spirit—the "rest" spoken of in Psalms 95. 11 and 132.* To that question Jehovah Himself supplies the answer, "To this man will I look, even to him that is *poor* and of a contrite spirit," using this word *ani*, which is applied also prophetically to Christ in the Psalms in such expressions as, "I am *poor* and needy" (Psa. 40. 17, etc.), and in Zechariah 9. 9, "lowly." (Comp. Prov. 3. 34.) In Psalms 9. 12 and 10. 12 the translators varied the word by "humble," and in Psalm 37. 11 by "meek." Referring again directly to Christ it is translated "afflicted" in Isaiah 53. 4 and 7, and often.

These qualities, covered by so small a word, were all exhibited in perfection during the thirty-three years of our Lord's path on earth ; they have marked, too, in their measures, the saints of old, and His own disciples, and the saints of the present dispensation. In Him, as Man, they were the very spring of His being, so that He could say in absoluteness, "I am meek and lowly in heart." While of Moses it could be said in comparison with other men that "he was very meek" (Num. 12. 3), yet "his spirit was pro-

* The sabbath is the rest of Genesis 2, but this "rest" is Genesis 8. 21, margin, and is cognate with the name Noah.

voked" and he failed in this respect at the water of Meribah (chap. 20. 10)—even he, "the chosen of God." (Psa. 106.) Therefore to us, from the Apostle Paul, who by nature was far from meek, the exhortation comes to "put on humbleness of mind, meekness." (Col. 3. 12.) The opposite to these qualities is *pride*, the root of sin, or my will acting contrary to God—the creature exalting itself and moving in independence of the Creator. Under the figures of the prince and the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28 Satan is described as having his "heart lifted up because of his beauty, and having corrupted his wisdom," so as being "profane," irrevocable judgment is pronounced upon him. But in Hezekiah, who feared God and who "humbled himself for the pride ['the lifting up'—marg.] of his heart," the wrath of Jehovah's government came not in his days. (2 Chron. 32. 25, 26.)

Thus we can understand it was to Bethany, where there were those in whom was the meek and quiet spirit, that Christ retired during the last days of His ministry. "He went out of the city" where "violence and strife and wickedness" were seen, as told in prophetic foresight by the Spirit in Psalm 55. 9, and He lodged in Bethany. (Matt. 21. 17.) How fitting then that after His resurrection He should lead out His disciples to Bethany, where He had resorted before His death, and where they made Him a supper, encircling Him with the evidences of His work. (John 12.) For there was present one in whom deliverance from the power of death was manifest; one who served in subduedness of spirit; and one who had a deep appreciation of His Person, and in Him of the revelation of God. To-day these three characteristics continue in the individual Christian. And so as risen

and about to ascend, the Lord's last movement was to take them, the fruit of His own labour, to that spot eastward of the city, whence looking upon and blessing them He was "carried up into heaven." (Luke 24.)

What distance could there be between such and heaven itself? Like Psalm 16, the One answering to that description could have no other destination.

May it become more and more the desire of each of us to be learners at His feet, coupled with "purpose of heart" to continue down here the traits of the second Man, the heavenly One; not only for the pleasure of God, but for our present joy and blessing, till we are all "caught up."

Ilford.

ARTHUR J. MARKS.

"GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY."

(GAL. 6. 14.)

NEARLY thirty years ago I was in a meeting room in a Banffshire village where a very few Christians were gathered together to read the word of God. They were reading in the sixth chapter of Galatians, and the meeting was nearing a finish, when a young believer (the only young brother present at the meeting) timidly asked the question, "What is meant by the fourteenth verse, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world'?" A dear godly brother made the following reply—as nearly as I can remember. "Well, Jeems, many years ago I was greatly exercised about that

same verse, and one day when we had gone into a Highland loch in our boat, I went ashore and walked some distance meditating on that very verse. Getting to a quiet spot I got on my knees and prayed to God about the matter.

“Shortly afterwards, looking up, I saw a woman standing not very far from me, looking towards the loch and wringing her hands in great distress. Well, Jeems, the Lord had answered my prayer ; I now undertood the meaning of the verse. The woman was a widow woman and she had one son, Donald, who was the postman in the district. In the course of his duties Donald had had to cross the loch in a small boat, and only a few days before this while crossing the loch in rough weather the boat had upset and her only son Donald had been drowned. Now the woman by her actions was saying, ‘I can have nothing more to do with the loch nor the loch with me.’ Now, Jeems, the world has crucified the Lord Jesus, the One we love, and we can have nothing more to do with the world, nor the world with us.”

Inverurie.

JAMES FALCONER.

WHAT AM I LIVING FOR?

TRULY this is a wholesome question for each one of us. On every hand we find people living for themselves and their own interests. Pleasure, the desire for riches, fame, and various other objects absorb their attention.

Such desires, however, should not be found with us as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. Would we not seek with ever increasing fervour that that blessed

Person might be magnified in our lives ? No doubt we shall all feel our weakness and shortcomings in this regard, and realise the need of more whole-hearted dependence upon Him, in order that those precious features which characterised Him in His movements when here amongst men may, in greater measure, be seen in us.

Though men boast of their advancement in this supposedly enlightened age, yet it is a solemn and undeniable fact that Christ is no more desired in the world's circle to-day than when He was taken by wicked hands and nailed to the cross ! If this fact were more seriously considered by Christians generally, what a sobering effect it would have upon them in their walk and ways ; and how very much brighter would be the testimony to His name !

May each one of us seek fresh grace to afford more comfort and joy to His heart whilst still in the scene of His rejection, so as to be enabled to say in the language of the beloved apostle, "For to me to live is CHRIST." (Phil. 1. 21.) And again, "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me." (Gal. 2. 20.)

" O teach us so the power to know
Of risen life with Thee ;
Not we may live while here below,
But CHRIST our life may be ! "

Plympton.

A. E. BIRD.

NOW.

How would you wish to spend the last few months of your life ? Would you not like to spend them in devotedness to Christ ? When will that period of your life begin ? It may already have begun ; it may nearly be ended. Let us be devoted to Christ NOW. M. W. B.

CHRIST—THE SERVANT OF OTHERS.

“ For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Mark 10. 45.)

ONE thing impressed my own mind most peculiarly when the Lord was first opening my eyes—I never found Christ doing a single thing for Himself. Here is an immense principle. There was not one act in all Christ’s life done to serve or to please Himself. An unbroken stream of blessed, perfect, unfailing love flowed from Him—no matter what the contradiction of sinners—one amazing and unwavering testimony of love and sympathy, and help ; but it was ever others, and not Himself, that were comforted, and nothing could weary it, nothing turn it aside. Now the world’s whole principle is self, doing well for itself. (Psa. 49. 18.) Men know that it is upon the energy of selfishness they have to depend. Every one that knows anything at all of the world knows this. Without it the world could not go on. What is the world’s honour ? Self. What its wealth ? Self. What is advancement in the world ? Self. They are but so many forms of the same thing ; the principle that animates the individual man in each is the spirit of self-seeking. The business of the world is the seeking of self, and the pleasures of the world are selfish pleasures. They are troublesome pleasures too ; for we cannot escape from a world where God has said, “ In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground,” etc. Toil for self is irksome ; but suppose a man finds out at length that the busy seeking of self is trouble and weariness, and having procured the means of living without it, gives it up, what then ? He just adopts another form of the same spirit of self, and turns to selfish ease.

I am not now speaking of vice and gross sin (of course, every one will allow that to be opposite to the spirit of Christ), but of the whole course of the world. Take the world's decent moral man, and is he an "epistle of Christ"? Is there in him a single motive like Christ's? He may do the same things; he may be a carpenter as Christ was (Mark 6. 3); but he has not one thought in common with Christ. As to the outside, the world goes on with its religion and philanthropy; it does good, builds its hospitals, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and the like; but its inward springs of action are not Christ's. Every motive that governed Christ all the way along is not that which governs men; and the motives which keep the world agoing are not those which were found in Christ at all.

The infidel owns Christ's moral beauty, and selfishness can take pleasure in unselfishness; but the Christian is to "put on Christ." He went about doing good all the day long; there was not a moment but He was ready as the servant in grace of the need of others. And do not let us suppose that this cost Him nothing. He had not where to lay His head; He hungered and was weary; and when He sat down, where was it? Under the scorching sun, at the well's mouth, whilst His disciples went into the city to buy bread. And what then? He was as ready for the poor vile sinner who came to Him as if He had not hungered, neither was faint and weary. (John 4.) He never was at ease. He was in all trials and troubles that man is in as the consequences of sin, and see how He walked! He made bread for others; but He would not touch a stone to turn it into bread for Himself.

J. N. D.

CONFESSION AND SALVATION.

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Rom. 10. 9, 10.)

WHEN we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, it is of the greatest importance that we should definitely confess His name, that we should let others plainly know by our words and ways that we are His. God alone can read the heart, and He knows the moment we believe, and He blesses us as soon as we do believe. God is just and the Justifier of him who believes on Jesus. Righteousness is reckoned to us on the principle of faith, and being justified we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (See Rom. 3. 26 ; 4. 23, 24 ; 5. 1.) The verse quoted at the head of this paper, however, refers to another matter, salvation, and in connection therewith speaks of confession with the mouth—“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth”—which is something in addition to believing.

It is not at all infrequent that a believer is definitely hindered in his spiritual progress because he does not confess to those about him that he is the Lord's. The enemy has many arguments which he uses to try and keep us from confessing the Lord's name ; and the human heart only too readily avails itself of the reasons and excuses suggested. But we may be quite sure that unless we do take our stand as

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belonging to the Lord and confess His name, we shall be weak all along the line.

CONFESSING THE LORD'S NAME

is necessary if we are to know salvation in any practical way, because Christ has been, and still is, rejected here. The Lord of glory has been crucified. Instead of a crown of glory being His, to which He was entitled, He was crowned with thorns and robed in purple in mockery of His royal claims ! Instead of a throne of glory, the cross of shame was given Him by the rulers of this world. And, although since that day the world has assumed a christian garb, and would profess to reverence Christ, it has not changed in its real character. Let any one confess with reverence the worthy name of Christ in either a drawing room of the rich or a lodging-house for the poor, in business circles or the world of pleasure, in theatres or on football grounds, and he will soon find that Jesus has no real place here. The world's motto is, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him ?" as was long ago said by Pharaoh. Do we not often hear it remarked, "Can I not please myself ?" Now, the believer's motto of life, so to speak, is "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" The believer's course should be quite different from that of the world. One reason why we should confess Jesus as our Lord is because

CONFESSION BRINGS SALVATION.

Salvation does not only mean that I am eventually to be saved from judgment and go to heaven, but that I should now be delivered from the power of the world and the rule of sin. It is true that we shall be "saved from wrath through him" ; but, in addi-

tion to this, salvation means a present deliverance from the course of this world.

A remarkable type of salvation is seen in the history of the children of Israel. They had been in bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt, but God had promised to bring them into the land of which He had spoken to Abraham. In order for this to be accomplished they had first of all to be liberated from the bondage of Egyptian slavery. We know how God brought them out by their leader, Moses. God selected the route that led them to the banks of the Red sea. It seemed almost as if Pharaoh would overtake them; their way appeared closed, for the sea lay in front of them. But at the direction of God, Moses held his rod over the sea, which thereupon miraculously divided. We are told that it was "by faith" the children of Israel crossed the Red sea. Similarly it is by faith that we recognise that Jesus is risen and own Him as our Lord. This is the first step. We stand still, so to speak, and see the salvation of the Lord, and then "go forward" to a new position in faith. We take a spiritual journey, as they did a literal one. But in order fully to realise the benefit of this new position under the Lord we must confess Jesus *as* our Lord. If I remain but a secret disciple, that is, one who really believes but who says nothing about it and does not confess Jesus as Lord, I am likely to be overcome by my companionships or associations, and the customs of the world will soon govern my course of life; indeed, I may never get free from the power of the world. Let me illustrate this. A young man, we shall suppose, a believer, but

A SECRET DISCIPLE,

starts his business life. Leaving his home (it may

be in the country) he comes up to London or another big business centre. He obtains a situation in an office or warehouse and finds himself one among many other young men. Some may be Christians, but as yet he knows nobody.

One evening he is asked by one of his fellows in a friendly manner if he will join him for an evening's outing—a "music-hall" is suggested. The secret disciple may easily say that he does not care for music-halls, and evade the real issue. His [kindly companion, thinking it a mere matter of taste, suggests a theatre, or says, "Perhaps you would like a game or two of cards, or a quiet evening ; shall we go on the river ? " Now the things suggested may not be thought at all wrong, and certainly no one would regard another as less respectable because such things were followed. The young believer's heart really wishes to do the Lord's will, but he does not like to say anything about it. His companion has not the slightest thought of anything of the kind. He has an evening's leisure and cannot understand his friend's lack of interest, and puts him down as morose. If he accept the invitation, a difficulty arises later on, or the evening may be one given up to pleasure and Christ is not spoken of. Later another invitation is given and accepted, and in a few months the lives of the two young men are practically the same ; bit by bit the secret disciple becomes worldly ; he never speaks of Christ, his testimony is nothing.

Let us suppose, however, that instead of being a secret disciple the young believer definitely confesses Christ, and in reply to the kind invitation politely declines and *explains why*. He is the Lord's ; he wishes to serve the One who has done so much for him,

CONFESSION AND SALVATION.

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though he freely admits how much he fails in carrying out his desire. Of course he is thought old-fashioned, or odd, or morbidly religious. He may even be publicly ridiculed, possibly persecuted in a mild or severe way. One thing may be said about him ; he has

COURAGE

and is not ashamed to confess. (Ashamed ? can it be we ever are ? Shame on our cowardly hearts !) More : "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." (Luke 12. 8.) And who can tell the results of his definite stand ? The very one who had no concern as to spiritual matters may be led to inquire, "What is it makes this fellow independent of what I so much need ? He is happy, and wants none of my pleasures to give him joy ; why is it ?" He may also through *his* confession discover another believer, one who perhaps is longing for another disciple to share his joys and help him in his pathway. His worldly companions separate him from their company. But this is really an advantage spiritually ; it is a means of salvation. No one except the Lord knows what we believe unless we confess. But it is impossible not to confess in some way or other if we are to be true to what we believe.

Another matter in regard of confession is that

CONFESSING THE LORD IS A TESTIMONY

to Him. This is very clearly seen in the history of Noah. His building the ark, not only his preaching, was a testimony. Why was it necessary to build an ark ? If he were doing this, were others safe ? (See Heb. 11.) So also with one who confesses Christ as Lord. Should He be owned as Lord ? If one person

be doing so, should others not do so ? Our confession of Christ implies that others ought to own Him too. And if we confess His name, it is a testimony to the lordship of Christ, and He may use it for the blessing of others.

“Yes,” some one replies, “but . . .”

If the Lord will, we shall look at some hindrances to confession in another paper. M. W. BIGGS.

“HE KNOWETH THE WAY THAT I TAKE.”

(JOB 23. 10.)

LORD JESUS, whatever the way,
Wherever the future may lead,
With Thee as our Comfort and Stay—
Thy grace will supply all our need !

So free from misgiving or dread,
Though shrouded the pathway may be,
We peacefully onward would tread,
And trustfully lean upon Thee.

We simply would leave to Thy will
Its nature, dim windings and length,
For confident are we that still
Thou wilt be our Refuge and Strength.

Soon Thou wilt from heaven descend,
Then sweetly the home-call of love,
Our pilgrimage journey will end,
And gather us round Thee above.

Thou beautiful Star of the Day !
Oh ! herald the flush of the dawn ;
Lord Jesus, come catch us away,
And bring in Thy cloudless fair morn.

S. J. B. CARTER.

THE CHRISTIAN'S GIRDLE.

SEEING that the Spirit of God so frequently employs the girdle in scripture to convey lessons of great moment, the subject is worthy of careful attention.

As the garments worn in Eastern countries were long and flowing, they were secured by girdles, which not only served to bind the clothes to the body, but to hold them up when walking. This increased the gracefulness of their appearance, and prevented any interference with the wearer's work or movements. Hence to "gird up the loins" became a significant figurative expression, denoting readiness for service, activity, or watchfulness, while to "loose the girdle" was to give way to repose or indolence.

The Lord said to Job, "Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me"; to Jeremiah He said, "Gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak," while to the disciples the Lord Jesus said, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning."

The most touching reference to a girdle is found in John 13, on that memorable occasion on the night of the betrayal of Jesus, when He was with His disciples in the upper room to partake of the Passover with them. He "riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and *girded* himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." This

GIRDLE OF LOWLINESS

is of great significance, for He said, "Know ye what I have done to you? . . . ye also ought to wash one

another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." It would appear that none of the twelve was prepared to wear this menial girdle, but the Son of God Himself wore it as an example to all His own. There is great need to-day for this service, for many of the Lord's people are travel-stained and footsore, and need a living service of love to refresh and restore their spirits, that they may have "part with him." Our blessed Lord and Master will ever command our adoration for this act of lowly grace, and increase our desire to be more like Himself.

As the girdle encircled the body very closely, it figuratively illustrates the adherence of the servant of God to His service. Both Elijah and John the Baptist wore the

GIRDLE OF SERVICE,

and were preparing the way of God's perfect Servant, of whom it is said, "Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Never was He seen during that life of devoted service to God without that girdle upon Him. The evangelist Mark is particularly delighted to call attention to His unswerving devotedness to the will of God, and to the untiring energy which marked Him. This must ever be a great incentive to His followers to continue in energy, girded for the service of God.

As the girdle was a chief article or appendage of the warrior's armour, so to have it continually fastened upon the person is emblematical of great fidelity and

vigilance ; for it not only protected the body, but braced it with strength and firmness. This gives emphasis to the word to the christian warrior—when exhorted to put on the whole armour of God—“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.” The importance of the

GIRDLE OF TRUTH

is the more apparent as error increases, and many are departing from the faith. The truth would embrace the whole range of divine revelation in Christ Jesus as recorded in the Holy Scriptures. The Lord Himself said to His disciples, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” It is imperative that if the truth is to be valued, cherished and expressed by us, our loins should be girt about with it, and thus that our affections should be protected.

A girdle of surpassing interest to every one who would draw near to God is that worn by Aaron's sons of “fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needlework.” (Exo. 39. 29.) The various graces of the Lord Jesus are symbolised in those materials which formed that

GIRDLE OF PRIESTHOOD,

and as the sons of Aaron—typical of believers as the holy priesthood—engaged in their priestly activities, they would set forth under the eye of God the beauties of Jesus and of His moral glories.

The service of the priests necessitated the girdle, so that with priestly grace and energy the service of the sanctuary might continue unceasingly. It is a joy

to discern believers thus girded to-day, so that the graces of Christ are seen and the worship of God is maintained in holiness and power.

Though the day has not yet arrived for the Christian to "loose the girdle," it is not far distant when at home in the Father's house he will ungirded enjoy the holy affections that fill that scene. Meanwhile may each be found girded with lowliness, continuing in service, loyal to the truth, and exercising priestly privileges until the Lord comes !

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind,
be sober, and hope to the end for the grace
that is to be brought unto you at the revela-
tion of Jesus Christ."

Northampton.

F. S. MARSH.

UNEQUAL YOKES.

THERE is to be no fellowship with unbelievers or with unrighteousness, whatever form it may take. "Wherefore come out from among them." God said that He would walk among His people and dwell among them.

This is not only when we are together, but also in our everyday relations. He goes into our houses, our businesses ; He is walking among us. So He says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate . . . and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." It is the Fatherhood of God in relation to our ordinary circumstances. He takes up our cause in times of distress ; indeed, He

is a Father to us in every way, considering for us in every circumstance. God provides for a separate people ; they are at certain disadvantages because of their separation from the world, but God's care more than balances this ; thus we are maintained in the enjoyment of what is spiritual, and not damaged by the cares of this life. To this end He says, "I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." He takes up this relation to us, so that we are protected and cared for as we could not be otherwise.

J. T.

From "Spiritual Refinement," pages 51 and 52.

CHILDREN BORN FOR CRISES.

IT need scarcely be remarked that God knows of a coming crisis long before it can suggest itself to the mind of man. Moreover, He prepares beforehand for it. This is interestingly seen in the children who were born in view of certain crises, notably Joseph, Moses, Samuel and Saul of Tarsus. Each of these is seen as bearing marks of his future appointment.

JOSEPH.

When Joseph was born, Jacob seems to have had the impression that he was no ordinary child, hence his anxiety to get away from Mesopotamia back to Caanan, the land of promise. His interest in Joseph was maintained when in the land to which he returned, as is evidenced by the care and affection he shewed to him and by the coat of many colours which he gave him, and which distinguished him from the rest of his

brethren (the coat suggesting the various glories of our Lord Jesus Christ).

The crisis foreseen by God was shewn to Pharaoh by a dream which was interpreted by Joseph. It foretold a time of famine. Under the hand of God Joseph was the man prepared for this crisis, so that the miseries of famine might be averted by his wisdom, discretion and administrative control. He was raised up to be the Saviour of the world, as well as the preserver of his brethren, and thus is a striking type of Christ.

How good it is to see Joseph moving with the approval of God in the face of cruel and adverse circumstances, until the time when God brings him out from obscurity to be lord over all the land of Egypt, the one to whom all men must bow in order to be *blessed* !

The next child to which I will refer is

MOSES,

who when he was born was hid of his parents because they saw he was a goodly child. It was evident to their faith that at all costs he must be saved from death. They were assured of his being "fair to God" (goodly, that is, in form "good"), and they took God's way for his preservation. The very means the enemy had devised for the extinction of the Israelites became in the hands of God his means of salvation. We read that his mother took for him an ark of bulrushes, and laid the child therein, and put it by the flags by the river's bank. She left him to God.

In this connection we are reminded of the scripture, "Through death he might destroy him that had the

power of death, that is, the devil." The Lord triumphed over His adversaries in death, proving His victory in resurrection.

Pharaoh's daughter finds the babe Moses, and there-upon we get the training of Moses. In the ways of God he is to learn the emptiness of the glory of Egypt on the one hand, and on the other, doubtless through his mother's training, to value what is of God. His training was long, forty years, the full period of trial; but in due course it came into his heart to visit his brethren. After much preparation by God in the desert (another forty years) he is to deliver God's people.

The destruction of Israel by Pharaoh was averted at the due moment. God had foreseen the *crisis*, and had raised up a deliverer. When the children of Israel were almost overwhelmed by oppression, affliction and sorrow, Jehovah intervened. "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people," He says, "and am come down to *deliver* "; and He tells Moses He will send him unto Pharaoh that he may bring forth His people out of Egypt. (Exo. 3. 7-10.) Moses thus born for this crisis becomes deliverer, prophet, and king in Jeshurun.

Stephen in his day, speaking full of the Holy Ghost says, "This Moses . . . did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer."

SAMUEL

next comes before us. Samuel was prayed for, born, and given to the Lord in view of a crisis—a crisis foreseen of God but unseen by man.

For four hundred and fifty years the judges ruled, during which time every man did that which was right

in his own eyes. The end of such a course was a state of chaos marking even the priesthood. Things were so bad that the word of the Lord in open vision was so rare as to be *precious* when such vision was given. The priests' lips were to keep knowledge ; but in the absence of moral conditions, the Lord could not impart it.

It is to be noted that during the period when the judges ruled, only four persons receive honourable mention for their faith, namely, Gideon, Barak, Jephthae and Samson, though of them time fails to record in detail their achievements, as we are told in Hebrews 11.

In due time Samuel comes to the front as a man of God and an "established" prophet in Israel, who discloses the mind of God for the moment, bringing about a deliverance for Israel and preventing them from being wholly given over to the enemy and idolatry. He shewed his ability to be a spiritual guide, under Jehovah, to the prospective king, Saul, setting his heart at rest as to his difficulties, and shewing that all the desire of Israel was toward him, and not the least, disclosing to him also in the stillness of nature's activity, the word of God that he should be king, telling him at the same time what he ought to do. (1 Sam 9. 10.) Although God's will was not done by Saul, it was accomplished in David, who superseded the man of flesh, and was "a man after God's own heart."

Thus the object of Samuel's advent was to restore things for God which had been lost ; not only as to the priesthood, which was resumed in Zadok, as superseding Eli, but also in bringing in a house "ordered in all things and sure." The material for the temple

also was prepared in days of affliction and in the power of affection by David and was brought to fruition in Solomon. Samuel introduced the anointed of Jehovah, a man after God's heart, who conquered enemies and prepared materials for the temple.

We have now to consider

SAUL OF TARSUS,

another born for a crisis. He was separated from birth, we read, and later called by God's grace. (Gal. 1. 15.)

The rejection of Israel as a nation, provisionally, in the ways of God, left the world without a vessel of testimony as to the living God. But herein lies the foresight and wisdom of God. He had foreseen, and now meets the crisis by the provision of a "man of God." Saul—afterwards Paul—is sent with the gospel of the glory to the Gentile world. The best wine, which the Lord Himself provided, was to be enjoyed to the full, kept till the last ! I do not overlook that the church was set in the place Israel had previously occupied. I merely refer to individuals whom God raised up and how He used them to meet crises.

The character of the blessing now was such that it could not be limited to one nation, but must go out to all men, for it was light as to the disposition of God towards all men. Three things are definitely referred to : (1) the gospel of the grace of God, (2) the kingdom of God, and (3) all the counsel of God (Acts 20.), the church being a subject of divine counsel. God cannot be defeated by the unbelief of man, or by the breakdown of His earthly people Israel. He will be known as a Saviour God, whose desire is that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.

One might refer to the minor crises in the Apostle

Paul's life, such as the attempt to blend law and grace (Acts 15)—a deadly error, which Paul was instrumental in crushing. Again, when the preaching was in danger, as recorded in Philippians, of being suppressed by Nero, and the gospel (figuratively personified) was put on its trial, Paul was seen to be for its defence, for we read in Philippians 1. 17 that he was set for the defence of the gospel. The result is seen in 2 Timothy 4. 16, 17, "At my first answer [or defence] no man stood with me. . . Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by *me* the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion [Nero]."

The world to-day is looking for a superman to meet a crisis such as never has been seen. But it looks in vain. Though, alas! it will have its man, the man of sin, in due time. God always has His man ready for any emergency prepared even from birth, then educated and made equal to the occasion as it rises, shewing how verily God is God!

West Hartlepool.

W. TURNER.

GENTLENESS.

FARADAY, the great scientist, has told us that there is more latent energy stored in a dew-drop than is liberated by a thunderstorm. So "a soft answer turneth away wrath"—its moral and hidden power is divine—more than do "grievous words" of retaliation and reproach, though they be a thunderstorm of invective and noise.

S. J. B. CARTER.

CONTINUING.

WE are increasingly made to feel that we are now in the "last days," of which the Apostle Paul speaks in his Second Epistle to Timothy (chap. 3), where he reminds us that difficult times shall come. We are not to expect the path to become easier. Indeed, it increasingly becomes a test as to whether we are really prepared in fidelity of heart to the Lord to continue to the end.

In this connection we may well note the apostle's final word to Timothy. Having sorrowfully to unfold much that is connected with the last days (a witness indeed to the public ruin of the church) he exhorts to continue. "Continue thou," he says, "in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." (2 Tim. 3. 14). Support and power for the testimony will be proved as we continue.

Hence the apostle reminds us, being himself about to depart, how *he* had continued, and that in spite of Demas having forsaken him and Alexander doing him much evil. He is able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." The earnest desire of his heart for Timothy was that he should be found continuing in the same path.

Such conditions remind us of Elijah and Elisha's day. (2 Kings 2.) It is interesting to note that we have not there the twelve tribes, or even two, but two men only who are prepared to go on to the end. In the face of the outward apostasy and public failure Elisha says to Elijah, "I will not leave thee," "so they two went on."

How encouraging for us in our day! If things were

even reduced to two in a locality it would still be possible for us to go on if we are morally with the Lord. For does not scripture say, "For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them" ? (Matt. 18. 20, New Trans.)

What a joy it was to the Lord Jesus to look round on the few disciples at the close of His pathway here, and say of them, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." (Luke 22. 28.)

Such a path must involve sacrifice, and may lead to suffering. May we all be encouraged to continue to the end, "looking stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith: who, in view of the joy lying before him, endured the cross, having despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12. 2, New Trans.) Continuance is the test. May the Lord give us all grace to continue.

Thornton Heath.

E. C. MUGGLETON.

OUR STRENGTH AND OUR RESOURCE.

"THE soul lives out of itself and in the object of its affections," said St. Augustine, long ago.

The same dear saint sweetly prayed, "Lord, give me strength to do what Thou dost command, and then command me to do whatsoever Thou would'st have me do."

Thus did He own a Saviour God as the strength and the source of all true service.

S. J. B. CARTER.

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL.

WHAT is moral has reference to matters of good or evil ; what is spiritual lies in the region of the Holy Spirit, and relates to what is apart, or distinct from what we are "in the flesh," or in flesh and blood conditions. This distinction is illustrated in the Epistle to the Romans and that to the Colossians. The Epistle to the Romans takes up man's condition as it is affected by good and evil, righteousness or sins ; it deals with moral questions. The Epistle to the Colossians, on the other hand, views saints as "risen with Christ," and as made to live together with Him. The distinction is also observable in the Gospel of Luke as compared with that of John. Luke's gospel contemplates the Lord Jesus in His relation to the conditions prevailing among men, and deals with man's moral recovery for God ; whereas the main theme of John's gospel is not so much the solution of the question of good and evil, as what eventuates when that question has been settled, and what was in the mind of God before that question was raised.

The question of good and evil has been solved once and for ever in Jesus, and the results flowing from such a solution are that sinners who believe are justified and reconciled, and the Holy Spirit is given. Adam took of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but was unable to deal with the task it imposed. Centuries of attempts on the part of man have proved his utter inability to settle the question of good and evil. Happy they who realise their total depravity and sinfulness, and rely on Christ alone, who is the only One who could and who did take up the great moral question and settle it for ever !

Man could not touch the tree of life when once he had fallen. But Jesus having settled every moral question has brought life and incorruptibility to light. The Son of man has been lifted up as Moses had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness ; for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John in the development of what is spiritual brings in heavenly things on earth—the days of heaven above the earth. (Deut. 11. 21, New Trans.) Hence, though there is no return to the tree of life in the paradise of Eden, access to the tree of life is now possible in Jesus. “I will give him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev. 2. 7.)

Ryde.

L. O. LABETT.

FRAGMENTS.

FAITH is present dependence upon a present God ; it cannot live out of His presence.

When is faith most wanted to sustain the soul ?
When all visible evidence of power is removed.

We are never so near failure as when we have acted faithfully. We can hardly trust God in two consecutive instances.

The whole course of a Christian should be truthful. If we sin, the truthful place is confession.

The Girdle of Truth.

AM I THE LORD'S ? HAVE I CONFESSED HIS NAME ?

IF we have not confessed that we are the Lord's there is evidently some hindrance or reason why we have not done so. One very obvious one may be that we may not be quite sure that we *are* His. If in our hearts we cannot truly say, "Whose I am," it is of course useless, and, indeed, it would be unreal for us to say so with our lips. There are some that say, "Lord, Lord" ; but in a coming day the Lord will say of them, "I never knew you." But let it be stated in the plainest manner possible that if you, dear reader, are not the Lord's, if you have not believed on Him, there is no reason whatever why you should not believe on Him now and so be His. Do you remember how the jailor at Philippi came trembling and inquired, "What must I do to be saved ?" How simple was the reply, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." When we believe, we may well confess that worthy name.

Another possible hindrance is a sense that we think that we are not now, or may not be in the future, quite true to what we should profess. "Better not say anything," it may be argued, "than make a profession and be untrue to it." But while this sounds very plausible, it is really the enemy's suggestion. Would the Lord ever tell us to hide our light ? Has He not said just the reverse ? Did He not say,

*"Let your light so shine
before men" ?*

If in our ways we are not now true to what we believe, the remedy is not in being silent and hiding our light, which would in fact to be still more untrue, but to get to the Lord about our failure, and confess to Him and judge ourselves for our inconsistency, and count upon *His* grace for power for both confession and conduct. If we think we may not in the future be true to our profession, the remedy is again not in silence. That is what the enemy desires—anything to keep Christ in the background or out of sight altogether. Are we to rely upon what *we* can be? Can we not trust the Lord? Is it not written, “He will keep the feet of his saints”? (1 Sam. 2. 9.) If He has said confess, may we not count upon Him for power and grace to support us if we do so? Most surely we can! How very encouraging the Epistle of Jude is in this respect. “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen.” (Jude 24.) Confessing the Lord’s name in itself imparts a moral stimulant to the life of the one who confesses, and only those who confess know how really the Lord helps whenever they do so.

Another hindrance is the

FEAR OF WHAT OTHERS MAY THINK

of us—a nervous, timid feeling. The enemy uses this weapon of his with terrible results. It is a phase of mind found sometimes in people who in other matters are as bold as lions. This fact shews how truly Christ is rejected here. It also reveals that in such instances we have ourselves before us. Nicodemus came to

Jesus by night. Thank God he came. I am perfectly certain he never regretted it. But he came by *night*. To have been *seen* coming to Christ probably would then have been too much for the ruler of the Jews. The situation, however, became difficult later on, and he politely raises an objection to what his confrères in the Sanhedrim say. (John 7. 51.) But how brightly his conduct shines in the acute circumstances accompanying the crucifixion of the Lord ! How happy he must have then felt ! Only those who confess Christ, only those who definitely and openly declare their allegiance to Him, know the blessed and holy joy it imparts, and only they prove the Lord's powerful support.

What would "they" think of me ? What did "they" think of Christ ? Would they think worse of me than they thought of Him ? Do I wish that the world should think other of me than it thought of Him ? What *do* they think of us ? How the question exposes us ! Have we really faced what we are ? What are we (but for grace) ? If only what we really are (apart from what God's grace has made us), if what we are as of Adam's stock were exposed, what would others think of us, and what would we think of ourselves ? Thank God for the cross. Where should we be without it ? With hearts out of which can proceed the evils enumerated in Matthew 15. 19, what can we think of ourselves ? And if the cross has for ever removed from God's sight what we are, and the Lord Jesus suffered there for us to that end, shall we be afraid to confess His blessed name for fear of what others may think of us ? A definite and clear confession of the Lord brings to an end all this terrible self-saving, and in its place gives a humble sense of our own nothingness and of His greatness.

It may be urged, however, that we must be opportune. We must surely. And if I am employed as a gardener or a clerk, my righteous obligation is to fulfil my duties as such, so as to

“ADORN THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

our Saviour in all things.” (Titus 2. 10.) What a really remarkable expression this is—“Adorn the doctrine.” That is to say, we are to set it out in beauty. But when the moment comes and the opportunity does occur, what shall we do then? Many well know that it is not long before the opportunity does come. Let us be faithful to the Lord in our daily toil, let us be true to Him at all times, and we shall find many opportunities of confessing His name and shewing that we are His.

Another plea against a definite confession of Christ is that our *lives* should speak. They should, indeed. The enemy triumphs if only he can get us to deny in our lives what we affirm with our lips. The daily practical life of the believer is important to a degree. But we are told, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Now, it is quite obvious that if I am not known as a believer, my conduct, if right and marked by grace, may be attributed to mere kindness of disposition, and the tendency will be that those who note my ways will merely think well of *me*. This is a great danger and an evil. If the result of our conduct be that people only say nice things about us, we have sadly failed. How is it that they heard nothing of Christ? Note the words of scripture, “Let your light so shine . . . that they may glorify *your Father*.” By all means let our lives be consistent. Indeed, the

practical life of the believer should according to his measure have the same result as the wonderful and holy life of Jesus, as it is said, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." But His testimony resulted in the people leading Him to the brow of the hill to destroy Him. And *our* testimony if faithful may have a similar result.

To use the argument that "life" is better than "lip" in order to keep our lips closed, so that Christ is not spoken of, is a subtle effort of the enemy to prevent testimony to Christ. We must not hide God's righteousness, but declare it; nor must we conceal His lovingkindness, but make it known. Otherwise our lives have no real testimony about them, whatever our conduct may be.

"THE FEAR OF MAN,

bringeth a snare." (Prov. 29. 25.) This fact may well warn us of another possible hindrance to our confessing that we are the Lord's. The remedy for this evil is to be "in the fear of the Lord all the day." (Prov. 23. 17.) "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die . . . and forgettest the Lord thy maker?" (Isa. li. 12, 13.)

How truly God knows our hearts. How naked and open all is to Him. What words of comfort He gives to our timid spirits. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee." (Isa. 41. 10.)

As we have seen, a definite confession of Christ brings with it a most confirming sense of His support. The timid and uncertain feelings of the secret disciple are no longer experienced; but in their place the soul possesses a deepening sense of power from on high.

Moreover, fear takes hold of those in whose presence we confess ; for how do they stand in regard of our Lord ?

We may well regard confessing that we belong to Christ as an honour, an honour indeed ! Let our concern be to walk humbly with self-distrust, but with increasing confidence in Him whose name we confess ; for scripture says, "Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed." (Rom. 10. 11.)

M. W. BIGGS.

THE VOICE OF JESUS.

WHAT voice is this, that wakes the shrouded stillness,
That finds its answer from the echoing hills alone ;
That rises o'er the dark and swelling waters—
What voice is this, that Calv'ry's sorrows own ?

Deep calls to deep, the heav'ns release their thunders,
Fierce surge the billows in their fell destroying might.
What voice is this of woe and anguish'd feeling,
That rends the solitude of unaccustom'd night ?

" My God, My God " ! That cry, through Time's unfolding,
Arrests and holds enrapt the Spirit-quicken'd ear.
O " Why, My God," why " Me hast Thou forsaken ? "
Nor shall it want reply till stars shall disappear !

'Till stars are gone ! Yea, not till days unnumber'd—
Till that eternal day, the " day of God," shall die !
Ten thousand, thousand times ten thousand voices,
Shall ever, EVER tell the answer to that cry !

Harrogate.

W. LAWRENCE.

THE YIELD.

IT has ever been the mind of God, and it is due to Him, that all His activities should yield fruit for His own pleasure and glory. This principle is introduced on the first page of the Holy Scriptures, for there the voice of God is heard, saying, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *yielding* seed, and the fruit tree *yielding* fruit after his kind." So, too, when God first blessed His creature man, He said unto them, "Be fruitful."

This thought of a yield for God is maintained throughout the whole of the scriptures, even to its closing page, where mention is found of "the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and *yielded* her fruit every month." But, alas! man fell, so that instead of a yield for God, there has been fruitlessness, sin and death. Like the barren fig tree, God has "found nothing thereon but leaves only."

But when Jesus came into the world, there was from Him a marvellous yield for God's good pleasure. Beyond any human comprehension **THE LIFE OF JESUS** was fruitful to God. Although of its visible results He said, in the words of the prophet, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought," yet under the eye of God that life was the most fruitful and fragrant that has ever been lived upon earth. Eternity will not exhaust the joy of God, and of all who love Christ, in the contemplation of the sweetness and fruitfulness of that perfect life of devotedness to the will of God.

Mighty, too, was the yield of the harvest that resulted from

CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

The universe of glory and bliss will be the yield from that precious atoning sacrifice. The countless host of the sons of God will be the living witness to the magnitude of the results of Christ's finished work at Calvary, and of His triumphant resurrection. Jesus Himself said as to this, that "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth *much fruit*."

What living and eternal fruit will result from the coming of THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, consequent upon the glorification of Jesus at the right hand of God ! By the Spirit's power the GOSPEL has been preached through the centuries that have passed, and the vast yield for God in the deliverance of myriads from the power of sin and death is only known to Him.

Then consider the yield for God as the result of the formation and continuance of

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LIVING GOD

on earth. What worship by the Spirit of God, and joy to His heart as His children cry, "Abba, Father." It was the contemplation of this which caused the apostle to exclaim, in that beautiful doxology, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end."

In the light of all that has thus yielded fruit for God it surely behoves His children earnestly to consider the question, What fruit has there been from my heart and life for Him ?

The crucial test of every life is its *yield* ! Even as a farmer measures the success of his year's labours by the produce of his harvest, as the fisherman estimates the result of his night of toil by the worth of the catch, and as the man of commerce assesses the value of his

business by the measure of its profit, so the Christian can only rightly test his present life by the quality and quantity of

ITS YIELD FOR GOD.

Has the heart engaged in holy worship Godward ? Have the affections moved in devotedness to Christ and His interests ? Has there been a confession of His name, bringing results for Him ? These are the true tests of the success or otherwise of a believer's life !

It may be that in love, the Father of spirits may apply DISCIPLINE to produce fruitfulness, even as a tree is pruned to increase its yield ; but He would give comfort by the word, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless afterward it *yieldeth* the peaceable *fruit* of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

It is greatly encouraging also to consider the yield from

SERVICE.

Many a great tree has grown from a very small seed : many a gospel booklet handed tremblingly, but with a secret prayer that it may yield fruit for God, has been abundantly blessed by Him, and "the day will declare it." Often has a visit to the bedside of the sick and dying yielded eternal results in blessing : many a gospel preaching in conscious weakness has been owned by God to produce a great yield for Him in the salvation of souls. Often a simple word of ministry has caused hearts to be touched, affections awakened, and spirits stirred, so that there has been fruit with abiding consequences for God's glory.

With such possibilities may each be enabled to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being FRUITFUL in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

F. S. MARSH.

A SIGNIFICANT FACT.

PAGAN Rome tolerated every religion save one. Persecute the Jews, at times, she did ; but her hostility was not stirred by religious caprice or intolerance, but by the repeated insurrections of that turbulent race. Yet, during the first three centuries of her monarchy, Rome shewed no mercy to the gospel and its adherents.

Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" gives various reasons, which, however, can all be reduced to one, namely, the rigid *separation* of the early Christians from the world and its pursuits, pleasures and politics.

The fact is significant only because it proves again the hatred of man's heart against Christ. "The carnal mind *is* enmity against God" : it instinctively opposes both His grace and His truth. *Grace* wounds the susceptibilities of its pride ; *truth* exposes the guilty chambers of its conscience. Every human religion appeals to and more or less exploits the flesh, and hence the flesh can tolerate such ; but Christianity "crucifies the flesh with its affections and lusts." Thus the natural man refuses to bury the hatchet, and wages continual war with a religion which refuses to see and own any good in him.

S. J. B. C.

STAGES IN SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

IN the actions of the Egyptians in Joseph's day and in their attitude towards Joseph himself, God has given to us an illustration, I believe, of some stages in our spiritual progress. Let us consider some of these. But before doing so we must note the position of dignity and power given to Joseph by Pharaoh. We read, "Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck, and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee." What honour! One taken from prison was now lord of the land, "ruler over all the land of Egypt." The result of Joseph's new position and wise administration was that not only everything in Egypt, but every Egyptian became Pharaoh's. It will be similar, only in a far more wonderful way, with our Lord Jesus. We read, "when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."

What then may we learn from the attitude of the Egyptians to Joseph?

- (1) They rendered him homage.
- (2) When the seven years of famine began, they gave their money for corn.
- (3) They gave up their *cattle*.
- (4) They sold *themselves* and their *land*. (See Gen. 47. 13-21.)

Thus, through Joseph's wise administration, all became Pharaoh's, money, cattle, land and the Egyptians themselves! Everything and everybody was

then completely under the control of Joseph, who wielded all the power of Pharaoh, and was the great administrator of all the wealth of Egypt. What a blessed type of the Lord Jesus Joseph is! All authority has been committed to Jesus and He is in full control of all the wealth of heaven!

God's thought is that Jesus should not only have the highest place in the universe, but that He should also have the supreme place in our hearts and lives.

FIRST STAGE.

Christ is Lord of all! Every believer recognises this as a matter of faith; but how few are prepared to admit the Lord into the affairs of their lives, to let Him have control there. If He were allowed a place in our hearts and lives, it would settle many a question. We should no longer say, "There is no harm in this," or, "What harm is there in that?" We would rather say "What is the Lord's will in this matter, for I do not want to displease the Lord." Let us therefore own Jesus as our Lord in practice, believing on Him, confessing His name and obeying Him.

SECOND STAGE.

The Egyptians gave their money to Joseph in exchange for corn. Does not this raise another question, namely, What are we doing with what we possess? Are we using our possessions for our own pleasure or for the Lord? Although we are in the "eleventh hour," so to speak, just before the Lord's coming, there is still opportunity to put what we have at His disposal. Christians who live in their possessions and seek to use them for themselves have many disappointments and often get much discipline from God. God is too good to let us settle down in things here and

forget Him. If we desire soul prosperity and reward in the world to come, now is our grandest opportunity. Anything we give or do on the line of self-sacrifice out of love to Christ, will certainly meet its reward, both now and hereafter. "Behold, I come quickly," the Lord says, "and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. 22. 12.)

THIRD STAGE.

When their money had gone, the Egyptians gave their cattle in exchange for corn. The "cattle" would suggest one's means of livelihood or occupation. It is a great day in our spiritual history when we are prepared to admit the Lord's claim over us in our everyday occupations, whether it be in business, the domestic circle, or in whatever sphere we may move. This requires faith, but there is no other right or happy pathway for the Christian. It is impossible to go on with worldly principles in business and maintain a good conscience. We cannot have fellowship with worldly associates and enjoy the things of Christ. We need definiteness; we need moral backbone! If we have courage to take a stand, the Lord will support us and encourage us. The world will soon understand that we do not belong to its system, and will more or less let us alone, because the world loves its own. The scripture says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6. 14.)

FOURTH STAGE.

Last of all the Egyptians sold themselves and their land to Joseph. This suggests a whole-hearted and

complete surrender. Henceforth they were to be Pharaoh's servants. From the moment of our conversion we really belong to God. He has redeemed us with the precious blood of Christ, bought us for Himself; but it is often a long time before we are prepared to surrender ourselves to God. The apostle wrote to the Corinthians, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.) What a wonderful triumph it is, that our bodies, which have been the vessels of self-gratification and selfish desires and used in the service of the enemy, can now be used for the pleasure and service of God! But for this there must be a definite committal on our part. The exhortation is, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom. 6. 13.) To yield ourselves to God means a definite surrender to God's will. Think of it! The very hands that have been used in the service of the enemy can now by the Spirit's power be used entirely for the service of God. Again, our feet, which have carried us into a course of lawlessness and self-will, can now be used to walk in a path for the pleasure of the One who has bought us. The tongue which has wrought so much mischief—"full of deadly poison"—can now be used for His praise and service, and for the blessing of men.

From the moment we definitely commit ourselves to the service of God, we shall have added power and joy, because the Spirit of God will be more free with us. We shall also know, as never before, the wonderful resources we have in the Lord, who is the divine Administrator of all the wealth of heaven.

Croydon.

H. W. ELLIS.

HOW TO LEARN !

PLUTARCH, speaking of his learning Latin, when advanced in years, says, "My method of learning the Roman language may seem strange, but it is true. I did not so much gain the knowledge of things by words, as *words* by the knowledge of *things*."

That is to say, his getting acquainted with *persons* and *events* described in the Roman language he was learning, made it easy for him to catch the meaning of its *terms* !

"Why do ye not understand my *speech* ? " said the Lord, "even because ye cannot hear my *word* [λογος]." (John 8. 43.)

Those who were willing to hear His word—His discourse, or teaching—were those who bowed to His claims as their Messiah, and it was these only who understood His speech (ῥῆμα).

Just as we "learn Christ" (Eph. 4. 20), and thus become acquainted with Him, shall we understand the hidden meaning of Bible terms—its *speech*.

Christ is the *living* Word (λογος). But to the one who knows Him not the *written word*—the verbal ῥῆμα, or speech (Luke 4. 4 ; Rom. 10. 8, 17 ; Eph. 6. 17 ; 1 Peter 1. 25)—which expresses Him, is a language, the spiritual import of which is quite foreign—he cannot decipher it.

In fine, to understand the "words" of inspiration—its verbal speech, τὰ ῥήματα (John 6. 63, 68)—we must learn the living Word, for the living Word is the divine lexicon of the written word.

S. J. B. CARTER.

“ THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED.”

THE final monthly number of GOODLY WORDS must not be issued without our recognising with thankfulness the help graciously given by God through the ten years during which the magazine has been published.

A desire has been expressed that the periodical should be continued. It was felt, however, that it would be becoming for the present title GOODLY WORDS, to cease, and remain in that respect connected in the minds of the readers with the late Editor.

A serial bearing the title *Words of Truth* will be issued, if the Lord will, as from January next. With a change of Editorship there will necessarily be a difference in the character of the magazine, though some of its features may be retained.

Many readers will recall with gratitude to the Lord, the service of our late beloved brother, Mr. Tithecott. May we all be encouraged to serve the Lord with increasing devotedness, diligence and humility of mind, knowing that He is not unmindful of the least act of service done for Him, and that in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

“ Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me do : and the God of peace shall be with you.” (Phil. 4. 8, 9.)

**M. W. BIGGS.
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