

"THAT YE . . . MAY BE ABLE TO COMPREHEND . . . AND TO KNOW THE
LOVE OF CHRIST, WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE" (Eph. 3. 17-19).

SOUL FOOD

A GOLDEN TREASURY
OF DEVOUT THEMES
FOR THE QUIET HOUR

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BELOVED, I WISH ABOVE ALL THINGS
THAT THOU MAYEST PROSPER AND
BE IN HEALTH, EVEN AS THY SOUL
PROSPERETH (3 John 2).

NOW HE THAT MINISTERETH SEED
TO THE SOWER, BOTH MINISTER
BREAD FOR YOUR *FOOD*, AND MULTIPLY
YOUR SEED SOWN, AND INCREASE THE
FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (2 Cor. 9. 10);

Foreword

BOOKS are of very many kinds, as a glance at a list of "Books of the Month" in any trade paper will show. Even Christian books can be divided into quite a number of sections. The smallest section in any list would be those of a *devotional* nature. Yet where lives the Christian, whatever his attainments, and however well read, who does not at times long for a book, apart from technicalities, discussions, expositions, and other points, yet which supplies real food for the soul—such is the present volume.

The threefold purpose of ministry—whether oral or written—is stated in 1 Cor. 14. 3 to be "EDIFICATION—EXHORTATION—COMFORT." The two former are usually well catered for, but in speaking, and more especially in writing, the latter—comfort—is often a neglected quantity.

Hence the idea of the Editor of this brochure, to select from the ablest writers, some gone to

Foreword

rest, some still active—papers which have been tried and proved as of real “comfort” to the individual soul. The selection covers a period of twenty years, and involves the choice of nineteen of the sweetest pieces from hundreds of articles likely to suit.

That the hearts and lives of many beloved of our God will be comforted, cheered, and refreshed by reading and re-reading this compilation of Heavenly Food is the conviction of the Editor, in sending forth this volume on its unique mission.

May the blessing of the Lord which maketh rich, with which there is added no sorrow, rest on every reader, as in quiet hours they gather here food for the soul.

HYP.

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“My Lord and My God.”

By Dr. ADOLPH SAPHIR,

Hebrew Christian Expositor.

“**W**ITHOUT controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3. 16). For since the incarnation of the Son of God, the darkness is past, the true light now shineth. Past is the winter with its gloom and cold; the mystery, which had been preached for ages, is at last unveiled; the promise of centuries at last fulfilled.

Then all the psalms of David, the sweet singer of Israel, all the chords of adoration and joyous faith which his many-stringed harp gave forth were heard in fuller and more mysterious melody in the Magnificat of Mary; and Zechariah, the priest, blessed the Lord who had come and redeemed His people, and extolled the tender mercy of God, whereby the dayspring from on high had visited us. From that time forth began the hymn of praise, the melody of joy in the garden of God. John the Baptist, summing up all the teaching of Moses and the prophets, exclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1. 29), and testified of Him as the Son of God, the Lord, who is above all, the Bridegroom of Israel.

The Son—the King.

Nathanael no sooner sees Him, and hears the word of the heart-searching Lord, but he confesses, “Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel” (John 1. 49). Peter, in the name of the apostles, confesses, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6. 69). The beloved disciple, who leaned on the bosom of Jesus, declared, “This is the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5. 28). Thomas, when the condescension of the risen Saviour had dissipated the clouds of unbelief and morose despondency, answered and said unto Him, “My Lord and my God” (John 20. 28); all the believing disciples, when they saw Him ascending into Heaven, worshipped Him with great joy. The Apostle Paul, latest-born, yet greatest, calls Him “God above all, blessed for ever” (Rom. 9. 5). All the saints of the apostolic age in every place called upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord; that is, invoked and adored Him as Jehovah. All martyrs, beginning with Stephen of the angelic countenance, look unto the exalted Lord Jesus as their strength and refuge, their joy and crown. To Him as Son of God, all childlike hearts sing Hosannah; of Him, the whole Church testifies that He is Lord to the glory of the Father. And He is the Centre also in Heaven; for the many angels round the throne, and the four living beings, and the four-

and-twenty elders worship Him, and ascribe unto Him, power, and honour, and glory.

The Humanity of Our Lord.

The evangelists and apostles teach clearly the real, true, and perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus. Born of a woman, He was helpless and dependent, like any other infant; He grew in stature, He was found in fashion as a man. Scripture dwells on His coming in weakness, in the likeness of sinful flesh. His body was a true human body; He was an hungered, He felt thirst, He was exhausted by exertion and needed sleep. His mind also was human. He grew in wisdom, He read the Scriptures, He observed nature and human life, He reasoned and remembered. As we see from His parables, He had a very profound and quick perception of the beautiful; He beheld with joy the works of God, and read their deepest meaning. His feelings and affections are human.

The love with which He regarded His disciples, and especially the Apostle John; the tender friendship which He felt for Lazarus and Mary and Martha; the affection with which He looked on that young man, in whom He beheld a deeper longing than expressed itself in his words of self-righteousness, bring before us the human heart of the Lord Jesus. He was filled with joy and astonishment at the great, strong faith of the centurion and of the Syro-Phoenician woman.

He felt heaviness of spirit, sorrow and grief at the hardness of heart which He encountered; He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4. 15).

To go still deeper, look at Him in His spiritual life. It is human. He prayed, He lived by faith, He leaned upon God: “*I live by the Father*” (John 6. 57). He prayed for guidance, light, strength. He was a true and real Man.

Manifest in Flesh.

He was born of the Virgin Mary, and like any other babe, depended on the love of His mother, and upon the guardianship of Joseph, her husband; but a multitude of angels come down from Heaven and declare, not that a babe, but that Christ the Lord (Jehovah) is born; and as all nature is obedient unto the Word, the star directs the wise men from the east to Bethlehem, and they fall down and worship the Child, and are not guilty of idolatry, for this Child is none other than “the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9. 6).

True, He grew in stature and in wisdom, like any other child, and when He was twelve years old His parents took Him unto the feast in Jerusalem. But the boy is God; not that He gradually develops into God, but He who was God, and always must be God, became man, partaker of flesh and blood. He says, “How is it that ye

have sought Me? Must I not be in the things of My Father?” (Luke 2. 49), making a wonderful distinction between Himself and the most devoted and God-fearing Israelites.

At Jordan—In the Wilderness.

We see Him on Jordan’s bank, coming unto the Baptist, and, like any other Israelite, in humility asking of him to be baptised. But He is God, for the Father says, “This is My Son,” and the Holy Ghost Himself as a dove descends, announcing Him the Anointed. We see Him in the wilderness, tempted of the great adversary, laying aside His divine power and authority, and as a man born of a woman, and under the law, availing Himself only of the Scriptures as His weapon. But He is God. Immediately after He had conquered the enemy the very angels of God came down and ministered unto Him.

As man we see Him in the ship, laying His head upon the little pillow, for He was tired and overcome with sleep; but He is God, He arises and rebukes the storm; He is that Divine One of whom the prophet had written in the book of Proverbs that all the winds and waves are in His omnipotent hand. It is true He is man, and lives by faith, and prays unto God, and performs His very miracles simply by dependence upon the Father; but He is God, for no created being ever prayed unto the Father as He prayed, “Father, I will;”

and no created angel ever was able to say, “My Father worketh, and I work” (John 5. 17); and no prophet or angel was ever sent to show forth *his own glory* that men may believe in Him.

In the Garden—On the Cross.

He is Man in the garden of Gethsemane, when, overwhelmed with the sense of that agony which was before Him upon the Cross, He was praying unto God, and with strong crying and tears commended Himself unto the Father; but conscious of His Deity, knowing that He came from God and went again to God, and that the Father would send Him twelve legions of angels if He asked it; and such was His majesty that the men who came in order to take Him captive fell back, awed by His presence. On the Cross He opens the Kingdom of Heaven to the penitent thief in the words of divine power and love: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23. 43). Behold His Deity in His lowliness and humiliation; from the manger of Bethlehem to Golgotha He is God.

The Deity of Our Lord Asserted.

Let me now remind you of the direct assertions of Christ’s Deity, and of His eternal and filial relation to the Father, which all the evangelists attribute to the Son of Man, who was meek and lowly in heart, and never sought His own honour.

The disciple who leaned on His bosom, and who was nearest and dearest to Him in His humanity, testifies most clearly and abundantly that Jesus is the Son of God; and in the last and culminating book of Scripture, the Apocalypse, the divine glory of our Lord shines forth most brightly.

As in the Gospel of John, Jesus frequently speaks of Himself as the I AM (John 6. 8, 10, 11, 14, etc.), so in the Revelation He is called emphatically the First and the Last, the Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. He is represented as the Searcher of hearts, the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, the Lord; adored by angels and saints, the Judge of all men, and the glory and light of the Heavenly Jerusalem. He is from everlasting to everlasting, GOD.

As He Spake He Acted.

There is no evil that He does not meet as a conqueror. Is it sickness? He heals it. The storm and tempest He rebukes. He conquers death by resurrection. He delivered men possessed by demons; He came to destroy the works of the devil. All power is given unto Him. He is none other than the Son of God, who came to deliver us from all evil.

When the Lord Jesus Christ had fulfilled His life and course upon the earth, and looked back upon the past, different from any other human being that had ever been here below, He was able

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to say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17. 4).

There is not a single word that He wished unuttered, or a single step retraced, or a single duty that had been omitted. He was the only man that had ever lived upon earth who *walked* with a firm, steady, and rhythmic step; never faltering, never erring, but going on from strength to strength; He was the just Man, whose path was "as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4. 18).

His Deity in His Death.

At last, when He came to die, in His very death He manifested His Deity and His glory. Unto this death He had been looking forward from the very commencement of His life upon earth. The very first time He appeared at the Passover He spoke about the temple of His body, that it would be broken; He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, to suffer and die there. He was not like other men, who spake of the work and mission of their life as finished at death. Christ looked upon His death which He should accomplish at Jerusalem as His great work, nay, *as the commencement of His true and real life.*

He knew that "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12. 24). Thus He went to death as His great work; the Son

of Man was to be glorified. Of His own free will, in perfect liberty, He laid down His life.

His death was an act in which the greatest energy was manifested; it was the offering up of Himself by the concentrated energy of His holy and loving spirit. In the garden of Gethsemane He felt overwhelmed with the prospect of that cup; yet after His Father had heard His prayer He went forward as a strong man and never altered.

From the garden of Gethsemane to His last moments on the Cross, all betokens infinite strength and majesty, as well as love. He forgave His enemies. He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to the penitent thief. He commended His mother Mary to the care of His beloved disciple; and then entered with perfect strength into that unuttered and unfathomable agony, in which He was forsaken by a thrice holy God.

And here notice His Deity.

If He were Not the Son of God,

but only a mere man, a prophet and a witness, sealing His testimony with His death, suffering for the sake of righteousness, truth, and purity, all the tenderness of God would have descended to embrace and support Him; all the consolations of a faithful and loving God would have streamed from Heaven into His heart and soul. But because, as Zechariah tells us, He was the Man

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that was God's equal, therefore did the sword of punitive justice awake against Him and smite the Shepherd. Hence His agony. He is the Lamb of God, God of God, the Son of the Father, clinging with perfect faith unto God and acknowledging the righteousness and justice of His holy wrath, clinging with perfect love to us, for whose salvation He had come to die on the accursed tree.

The Coming Climax.

From His resurrection begins a new phase in the life of Christ, which extends to His Second Coming. During this period the world does not see Him; only by faith and the energy of the Holy Ghost His chosen people realise His presence and feel His love and power.

This period of the absence, this parenthesis, shall be terminated by the Coming or personal re-appearing, the Parousia, of "the Lord Himself" in His glory for His own.

But throughout this age our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary is the Source and Centre of the believer's life. He represents us above, as our Righteousness, and from Him descend all the blessings of the new covenant into our hearts. He will come again, then His glory shall be *seen*, He shall be admired in His saints, and acknowledged by Israel and all nations—JEHOVAH, THE LORD.

“Altogether Lovely.”

By Dr. C. I. SCOFIELD,

New York.

THE daughters of Jerusalem had questioned the supreme attractiveness of the Bridegroom. “What is thy beloved, more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?” Just as *unbelief* and agnosticism challenge the Christian: “What is *thy* Christ more than another religious teacher? than Confucius, or Sakyamuni, or Marcus Aurelius?” The Bride replies in that magnificent descriptive passage of which our title is the climax:

“ My Beloved is white and ruddy,
The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is as the most fine gold,
His locks are bushy and black as a raven.
His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers
of waters
Washed with milk and fitly set.
His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet
flowers;
His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling
myrrh. . . .

His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

His mouth is most sweet; yea, He is altogether lovely.

This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem " (S. of S. 5. 10-16) .

You see, as she proceeds in her description, she feels, beautiful as it is, that all this wealth of costly imagery is poor and tame as the expression of the superhuman loveliness of her Beloved, and so in a sort of despair she sweeps all possible excellence into her words, and says: "Yea, He is altogether lovely."

All other greatness has been marred by littleness, all other wisdom has been flawed by folly, all other goodness has been tainted by imperfection. The Lord Jesus Christ remains the only Being of whom, without gross flattery, it could be asserted, "He is altogether lovely."

His Humanity is Altogether Lovely.

I do not now mean that He was a perfect human, but that He was perfectly human.

In everything but our sins and our evil natures He is one with us. He grew in stature and in grace. He laboured, and wept, and prayed, and loved. He was tempted in all points as we are, sin apart.

With Thomas we confess Him Lord and God; we adore and revere Him, but there is no other who established with us such intimacy, who comes *so close* to these human hearts of ours; no one in the universe of whom we are so little afraid. He is not one of the ancients. How wholesomely and genuinely human He is. Martha reproaches Him; John, who has seen Him raise the dead, still the tempest, and talk with Moses and Elijah in the mount, does not hesitate to make a pillow of His breast at supper. Peter will not let Him wash his feet, but afterwards wants his head and hands included in the ablution. They ask Him foolish questions, and rebuke Him, and venerate and adore Him all in a breath. And He calls them by their first name, and tells them to fear not, and assures them of His love. And in all this He seems to me altogether lovely. His perfection does not glitter, it glows. The saintliness of the Lord Jesus is so warm and human that it attracts and inspires.

He receives sinners and eats with them. All kinds of sinners. Nicodemus, the moral religious sinner, and Mary of Magdala, “out of whom went seven devils,” the shocking kind of sinner. He comes into sinful lives as a bright, clear stream enters

a stagnant pool. The stream is not afraid of contamination, but its sweet energy cleanses the pool.

His Sympathy is Altogether Lovely.

He is always being “touched with compassion.” The multitude without a shepherd, the sorrowing widow of Nain, the little dead child of the ruler, the demoniac of Gadara, the hungry five thousand. Whatever suffers touches the Lord. His very wrath against the scribes and Pharisees is but the excess of His sympathy for those who suffer under their hard self-righteousness. He “healed all their sick.” And what grace in His sympathy. Why did He touch that poor leper? He could have healed him with a word as He did the nobleman’s son. Why, for years the wretch had been an outcast, cut off from kin, dehumanised. He lost the sense of being a man. It was defilement to approach him. Well, the touch of the Lord Jesus made him human again.

A Christian woman labouring among the moral lepers of London found a poor street walker desperately ill in a bare, cold room. With her own hands she ministered to her, changed her bed linen, procured medicines, nourishing food, a fire, and making the

poor place as bright and cheery as possible, she pleadingly said: “May I pray with you?” “No,” said the girl, “you don’t care for me; you are doing this to get to Heaven.” Many days passed, the Christian woman unwearily kind, the sinful girl hard and bitter. At last the Christian said: “My dear, you are nearly well now, and I shall not come again; but as it is my last visit I want you to let me kiss you,” and the pure lips that had known only prayers and holy words met the lips defiled by oaths and by unholy caresses, and then the hard heart broke. *That was Christ’s way.* Is He not “altogether lovely?”

His Humility is Altogether Lovely.

The other day I received a letter from a poor prodigal who, when he wrote, had been two days without food or bed. “At night,” he says, “I think that my Lord, too, had not where to lay His head.” What meekness, what lowliness! “I am among you as one that serveth” (Luke 22. 27). He “began to wash the disciples’ feet” (John 13. 5). “When He was reviled, He reviled not again” (1 Peter 2. 23). “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Isa. 53. 7).

But it is in His way with sinners that His supreme loveliness is most sweetly shown. How gentle He is, yet how faithful; how considerate, how sympathetic. When He speaks to that silent, despairing woman, after her accusers have gone out one by one, He uses for “woman” the same word as He used when addressing His own mother from the Cross. “Woman, hath no man condemned thee?” Even in the agonies of death He could hear the cry of despairing faith. When conquerors return from far wars in strange lands they bring their chiefest captive as a trophy. It was enough for Christ to take back to Heaven the soul of a thief. Yea, “He is altogether lovely.”

His Character is Altogether Lovely.

Did space permit we might speak of the loveliness of His gentle dignity, of His perfect courage, for there is in the Lord Jesus a perfect evenness of various perfections. All the elements of perfect character are in lovely balance. His gentleness is never weak. His courage is never harsh. Follow Him through all the scenes of outrage and insult on the night and morning of His arrest and trial. Behold Him before the High Priest, before Pilate, before Herod.

See Him brow-beaten, bullied, scourged, smitten upon the face, spit upon, mocked. How His inherent greatness comes out. Not once does He lose His high dignity.

Follow Him still. Go with the jeering crowd without the gate; see Him stretched upon the great, rough Cross, and hear the dreadful sound of the sledge as the spikes are forced through the hands and feet. See, as the yelling mob falls back, the Cross bearing this gentlest, sweetest, bravest, loveliest Man, upreared until it falls into its socket in the rock. “And sitting down they watched Him there.” Hear Him ask the Father to forgive His murderers, hear all the cries from the Cross. Think of Him from first to last and say: Is He not “altogether lovely?”

I close with a word of personal testimony. “This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.”

Will you not accept Him as your Saviour, Beloved and Friend? Tell Him —YEA or NAY.

Seven Spiritual Exhortations.

By Dr. A. T. PIERSON,

Author of "Keys to the Word," etc.

THERE are hints in many places about the inward frame, but 1 Thessalonians 5. 16-23 is the only place where we have seven distinct frames of mind presented in one paragraph.

See how marvellous is the *scope* contained in these.

The Praiseful Frame.

I. "REJOICE EVERMORE." Think of the scope of a frame that is perpetually joyful, never complaining, never fretting, never murmuring, never discontented, never dissatisfied, so that you only find in God's dealings something to concede and accede to, not only something to submit to as mysterious, but something to rejoice in as infinitely grand. This is a very unusual frame, when whatever the Lord does is an

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occasion of joy, when every contemplation of Christ affords new delight. The Lord does not tell us to rejoice in ourselves, or in our circumstances, but He does tell us to rejoice in Him.

The Prayerful Frame.

II. "PRAY WITHOUT CEASING." It is marked by three very important points:

1. It is a frame in which prayer will never be unsuitable or unseemly. If you are ever in any surroundings in which prayer would seem to be unsuitable, you had better get out of those surroundings.

2. It will find frequent expression in the act of prayer. For real prayer acceptable with God there must be a prayerful frame, otherwise it is nothing but the exercise of the lips, and so utterly superficial it reaches but a little way.

3. Those things which promote and assure faith shall be assiduously cultivated. Because we find that the Word of God helps the praying soul, we shall devoutly meditate on the Word; and because we find fellowship with saints helps prayer, we shall cultivate the fellowship of saints; and because we find a mind toned by heavenly things stimulates prayer, we shall cultivate spirituality.

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The Thankful Frame.

III. "IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS."

It is noticeable that it is added, "For this is the will of God." Why that should be added appears at first sight a mysterious thing. Are not all the other things the will of God? Why is there this emphasis on the grateful frame if it be not for this reason that the thankful frame is the most unusual of all frames?

Many people do not know what the thankful frame is; they mix up natural gratitude with spiritual gratitude. Natural gratitude is simply complacency in pleasant surroundings. The test is, when you come into circumstances not pleasant to the flesh, but manifestly circumstances into which God has thrust you; if you have the thankful frame you will thank Him just as much as you did before, a sure test of the reality of our gratitude and the depth of our thankfulness.

"In EVERYTHING," not only in things that are pleasant. It is a question whether there is a believer on earth that gives thanks in *everything*, yet this is the will of God concerning you. Then we should get such a glimpse of His love, goodness, wisdom, and tenderness that we should never

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question any of these attributes, whatever be our sense or our experience.

In the Pyrenees there was a tremendous fire which swept over 150 miles, and burned up vineyards, olive-yards, and dwellings, but which was the means of revealing the rocks and exposing great veins of precious metal. And there is many a fire that has swept over the child of God which only reveals new wealth, riches, and precious ore that he knew nothing of before the trial.

The Spiritual Frame.

IV. "QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT." The idea is that there should be such a spiritual frame that the Holy Ghost has opportunity both to manifest Himself *in* us, which is the flame burning fully, and to manifest Himself through us, that flame shining out from us. How beautiful that is brought out in Proverbs 20. 21: "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord," bright and burning. The child of God should be a lamp, "a burning and shining light." And the Holy Spirit must be cherished by the spiritually framed believer.

"Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." There is something about the mind like the subtle fragrance of a flower. You look at a

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flower, its form, its colour, its parts, but you do not know the most wonderful thing about a flower till you perceive its odour. It cannot be seen, touched, or heard; it is a mysterious spirit that seems to distinguish the flower, and you know it when you come near it. Now there is something about the mind like the fragrance of a flower, a personal quality of mind which we call the spirit. "I do not like the spirit of this or that one." What does that mean? Why, the secret fragrance or mysterious odour of character, no man can tell what it is, but something you perceive which is either attractive or repulsive.

God loves the children of God to be in such a frame as that the Spirit will never find any hindrance in His teaching, working, permeating presence.

In other words, what Paul mentions in Romans 8, a very similar phrase, "spiritually minded." A spiritual mind is a mind that is turned Godward, and that reflects like a mirror and retains the reflection like a photographic plate. A spiritual frame is one that reflects everything that is of God.

The Teachable Frame.

V. "DESPISE NOT PROPHECYINGS." I cannot but think the apostle had in mind

Seven Spiritual Exhortations. 31

here the channels through which the teaching of God often comes. By men of education sometimes, but sometimes very deep teaching comes through just the channels which are not of our own choosing.

We must have spiritual men to bring out the truth as God sees it, and to speak as God would have them. God illumines the minds of very obscure men, and if truly teachable we shall find instruction through any channel which God chooses to use. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

Let God choose His own instruments, and let us look behind the instrument to God, and behind the stream to the fountain, and behind the stammering tongue to Himself.

The Judicial Frame.

VI. "PROVE ALL THINGS." 1 John 4. 1 is a magnificent commentary on this. "Try the spirits." I cannot but think that we are in a most dangerous period of human history as far as the advice here given us is concerned. I have seen during the last forty years the most astounding system of undermining work to grow up in the midst of the Church of God on both sides of the Atlantic that has ever been

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found in its history with regard to the Word of God.

In doctrine and in practice we need the judicial mind to weigh in the scales of human judgment that which is taught even by professed teachers of the truth, and that which is practised as lawful by professedly religious men and women, and necessity is laid upon us to dare to stand.

God says to us, "Put all things to the proof," "To the law and to the testimony." And it is at your peril and mine that we let ourselves come under the influence of men who speak, or write, or hold these abominations, and who practise things contrary to the will of God. Hold the truth tenaciously with the grasp of a man who feels he is in the midst of danger and peril, when the temptation is to let go the things which have been most surely believed in the Church from the very beginning.

The Hallowed Frame.

VII. "ABSTAIN FROM ALL APPEARANCE OF EVIL." Whatever the form, no child of God should allow himself to be for one moment attached to what is evil. The Holy Spirit is a power in you to emancipate you from things which overcame you before

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your conversion. If evil takes shape in your mind, and you see it to be wrong, instantly abstain from it, avoid all appearance of it. And by that you maintain not only actual progress in the divine life, but also a holy abiding frame which is in the sight of God more than any occasional act, for God looks behind our acts, which are comparatively transient and unimportant, to that which is the habit.

The Spirit's Summary.

Now what does the apostle add by the Holy Ghost? "THE VERY GOD OF PEACE SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY." We are not left in this matter to the simple power of resolution to cultivate these seven frames which are enjoined upon us as frames pleasing in the sight of God. We shall never have them if we do not diligently cultivate them, but all our efforts, strength, and wisdom are absolutely inadequate in this inner transformation. Then God's power comes in. "Who also will do it."

The Lord Jesus Himself.

Our Past—Our Present—Our Future.

By W. T. TURPIN, M.A.

I HAVE been greatly delighted of late in contemplating the blessedness of being engrossed with the Lord Jesus; and *one* effect that the many questions, strifes about words, vain janglings and contentions which beset one on every side, have had is to drive me closer to Himself. I desire to recall the scattered and bewildered minds of saints from everything else, and to present before them an object that is worthy—oh, how worthy!—of their entire, constant, continued attention, adoration, and praise.

It is exceedingly blessed to observe the prominence which that one word "HIMSELF" has all through the Word.

Our Past: "Himself."

If the Holy Ghost would direct the thoughts to the Cross, that great judgment of sin,

the scene of that complete payment of *all* our debt, Calvary, the place of life though the place of a skull, it is by presenting "HIMSELF," and hence it is in 1 Peter 2. 24, "Who HIS OWN SELF bare our sins in HIS OWN BODY on the tree; . . . by WHOSE STRIPES ye were healed." It is "*His own self*," it is "*His own body*," it is "*His stripes!*" Oh, blessed particularity and speciality! How sweet to the heart it is! The same thing is to be observed in Isaiah 53, where it is all "*Him*," "*He*," "*His*;" the Holy Ghost would fix the undivided, undistracted gaze of my soul on "JESUS HIMSELF" as my perfect Sacrifice!

Again, HE has finished the work, He has endured the Cross, and sin, that mighty barrier standing in the road of the sinner's return to God, is taken out of the way; the mountains of my guilt, yea, "the tops of the highest mountains" of mine iniquities, having been "covered" by "THE BLOOD OF JESUS," the Saviour rises from the dead. The grave could not detain Him. He rises, He bursts the bonds of death, for it was "not possible that He should be holden of it." He presents Himself to His disciples, who, with blighted hopes and scattered prospects, are terrified and affrighted. All their hopes had been laid

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in the grave of Jesus, never again, as they thought, to rise. Consequently, when He appears, He causes fear and affright among them. And how does He reassure their hearts? What is the plan He adopts to restore their confidence and peace? He presents HIMSELF, saying (Luke 24. 39), "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I MYSELF." Then (v. 40) "He showed unto them HIS hands and HIS feet." Still, it is "HIMSELF;" it is not even a clear announcement of the proofs of what He was; it is not a recalling to their minds that He had taught them these things. No, precious as this would have been from His lips, there was something yet more touching, more melting, more convincing, and that was—presenting HIMSELF—"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I MYSELF." How blessed is all this!

Our Present: "Himself."

But there is a step even further in this blessedness, for we find the Gospel by John ends, leaving the disciples and Jesus *together*, leaving them with HIMSELF. In John 21 Peter is restored, and then, when fully restored and reinstated in office, the blessed Master says (v. 19) "Follow ME." John, we are told, was seen by Peter

“following.” When Peter inquires of the Lord about John, the reply is, “What is that to thee? follow *thou* ME.” Here we see again the blessed Lord would have the mind engrossed with HIMSELF.

And now that He has come and gone away, and that we, His poor weak ones, are left in a world that disowns and rejects Him, what has He left us to *cheer* our hearts, to *occupy* our souls, to feed our hopes? “HIMSELF.” “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto *Myself*; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14. 3); and so in kindred words of comfort does the Holy Ghost console the Thessalonian saints in their sorrow: “For the Lord HIMSELF shall descend from Heaven with a shout: . . . then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them, to meet THE LORD in the air.”

Our Future: “Himself.”

If our *past* be HIMSELF, if our *present* be HIMSELF, our *future* is also HIMSELF, and “so shall we ever be WITH THE LORD.”

Oh, the exceeding preciousness of all this! It is truly “Jesus only.”

May the Lord deliver us from every object that would seek to intrude itself

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into the place HE HIMSELF ought to have in our hearts! The devil is not wanting in skill and stratagem to draw the minds and affections of the saints to various points which are indeed connected with Jesus, but which are not "HIMSELF," and to make these (right and proper in their place) the *all-absorbing* subjects for the mind; and when he succeeds, what is the result? A manifest chill among the saints of God, a coldness which must ever be the consequence of having *any* object but "HIMSELF" next the heart. May the LORD JESUS HIMSELF give us all the grace to abide in that happy place, of which we sometimes sing:

“ Oh, that I may, like favoured John,
Recline my wearied head upon
The dear Redeemer's breast.
From care, and sin, and sorrow free,
Give me, O Lord, to find in THEE
My everlasting rest.”

Christ as an Object for the Heart.

By C. H. MACKINTOSH.

IT is a wonderfully blessed thing to be able to say, "I have found an object which perfectly satisfies my heart—I have found Christ." It is this which gives true elevation above the world.

We speak, of course, of the true Christian, of one who is not merely a Christian in name, but in reality. Alas! alas! many profess to be Christians, and take very high ground in their profession, who are, nevertheless, to be found mixed up in all the vain and frivolous pursuits of the men of this world. They may be seen at the communion table on the Lord's day, and at a theatre or a concert on Monday; they may be found essaying to take part in some one or other of the many branches of Christian work on Sunday, and during the week you may see them in the ball-room, or some such scenes of vanity.

It is very evident that such persons know nothing of Christ as an object for the heart. Indeed, it is very questionable how any one with a single spark of divine life in the soul can find pleasure in the pursuits of a godless world. The true and earnest Christian turns away from such things

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not merely because of the positive wrong and evil of them—though most surely he feels them to be wrong and evil—but because he has no taste for them, and because he has found something infinitely superior, something which perfectly satisfies all the desires of the new nature.

A Christian is a Heavenly Man.

He is a partaker of the divine nature. He is dead to the world, dead to sin, alive to God. He has not a single link with the world; he belongs to Heaven. He is no more of the world than Christ his Lord. Could Christ take part in the amusements, gaieties and follies of the world? The very idea were blasphemy. Well, then, what of the Christian? Is he to be found where his Lord could not be? Can he consistently take part in the things which he knows in his heart are contrary to Christ?

It may seem to some that we are taking too high ground. We would ask such: What ground are we to take? Surely, Christian ground, if we are Christians. Well, then, if we are to take Christian ground, how are we to know what that ground really is? Assuredly, from the New Testament. And what does it teach? Does it afford any warrant for the Christian to mix with the amusements and vain pursuits of this present evil world? Let us hearken to the weighty words of our blessed Lord in John 17. Let us hear

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from his lips the truth as to our portion, our position, and our path in this world. He says, addressing the Father, "I have given them Thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (vv. 14-18).

Is it possible to conceive a closer measure of identification than that set before us in these words? Twice over, in this brief passage, our Lord declares that we are not of the world, even as He is not. What has our blessed Lord to do with the world? Nothing. The world has utterly rejected Him and cast Him out. There is not so much as a single moral link between Christ and the world.

How solemn is this! What a serious consideration for Christians! We are passing through a world that despises and rejects our Lord and Master, and He declares that we are not of the world, even as He is not of it. Hence it follows that in so far as we have any fellowship with the world, we are false to Christ.

It will perhaps be said, "What are we to do? Are we to go out of the world?" By no means.

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Our Lord expressly says, "I pray not Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." In it, but not of it, is

The True Principle for the Christian.

To use a figure, the Christian in the world is like a diver. He is in the midst of an element which would destroy him, were he not protected from its action, and sustained by unbroken communion with the scene above.

And what is the Christian to do in the world? What is his mission? Here it is: "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." And again, in John 20. 21: "As my Father hath sent Me, so I send you."

To manifest Christ and witness for Him, such is the Christian's mission. He is not to shut himself within the walls of a monastery or convent. We are called to move up and down in the varied relations of life and to act in our divinely appointed spheres, to the glory of God. It is not a question of what we are doing, but of how we do it. All depends upon the object which governs our hearts. If Christ be the commanding and absorbing object of the heart, all will be right; if He be not, nothing is right. Two persons may sit down at the same table to eat; the one eats to gratify his appetite, the other eats to the glory of God—eats simply to keep his body in proper

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order as God's vessel, the temple of the Holy Ghost, the instrument for Christ's service.

So in everything. It is our privilege to set the Lord always before us.

He is Our Model.

As He was sent into the world, so are we. What did He come to do? To glorify God. How did He live? By the Father. "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me" (John 6. 57).

This makes it all so simple. Christ is the standard and touchstone for everything. It is no longer a question of mere right and wrong according to human rules; it is simply a question of what is worthy of Christ. Would he do this or that? Would He go here or there? "He left us an example, that we should follow His steps;" and most assuredly, we should not go where we cannot trace His blessed footsteps. If we go hither and thither to please ourselves, we are not treading in His steps, and we cannot expect to enjoy His blessed presence.

The grand question is this: Is Christ my one object? What am I living for? Has his love for me drawn forth my soul in love to Him? Can I say, "The life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me?" Nothing less than this is worthy of a Christian.

God our Father.

By JOHN R. CALDWELL.

THERE are two evidences that a man has become a child of God—**RIGHTEOUSNESS** and **LOVE**; these are the characteristics of the newly-begotten life. By nature we were “Children of the Wicked One” (1 John 5. 19) as to *parentage*, “Children of disobedience” (Eph. 5. 6) as to *character*, “Children of wrath” (Eph. 2. 3) as to *destiny*, and every man is born into this world in that condition. He is born, and is by nature, a child of wrath, a child of disobedience (or unbelief), and a child of the Wicked One; and in Scripture to be a child implies likeness, similarity of disposition. In John 8. 44 you will see how that is emphasised by the Lord Himself: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth.” Then in the 42nd verse: “Jesus said, If God were your Father ye would love Me.” Thus you

see that which characterises a child of God is *righteousness* and *love*.

“Your Father the Devil.”

The Lord Jesus is here speaking to those who did not love Him, those who saw “no beauty in Him that they should desire Him,” those who hated Him, the generation that was about to murder Him, and He said: “Ye are of your father the devil.” He was a murderer from the beginning. “He that hateth his brother is a murderer” (1 John 3. 15); that is to say, the seed of murder is in the heart, so that *love* is the test of the child of God, of those that are born of God, because “God is love.” “If ye were of God, ye would love Me” (John 8. 42), says the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture is very clear about this.

True, God at first had created man, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Paul, speaking to the Athenians, said: “As certain of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring” (Acts 17. 28). But that is in the sense of being created by God originally, when Adam was set in the garden in innocence, surrounded with every blessing God could bestow. But God said to Adam concerning that fruit which he

was forbidden to touch: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

The Need of the New Birth.

Men think of the death of the body as the great event, but the death of the body is merely an outward visible type of the great inner reality—that is the sinner dead to God.

When once you see that the sinner is dead in trespasses and in sins, then the meaning of his being called a child of the Wicked One, a child of disobedience, a child of wrath becomes apparent; then you see the need there is that he be born again—converted. To enter the kingdom of God not only must his sins be atoned for by "the precious Blood of Christ," for nothing less can atone for them, but he must be quickened into new, divine life by the power of the Holy Spirit—he must be "born of the Spirit" (John 3. 5, 6). Sin is an awful fact, and, blessed be God, deliverance from it is a blessed fact too.

Look at one other passage as to the character of those who are the children of the Wicked One. The 13th chapter of Matthew and the 36th verse: "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and His disciples came unto Him, saying,

Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered, and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom (that answers to those elsewhere called the children of God, the born-again ones); but the tares are the children of the Wicked One"—whose end is to "be cast into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," or, as in Matthew 22. 13, "Weeping and gnashing of teeth." An awful, solemn word of our Lord. Weeping everywhere implies sorrow; wailing implies despair: the gnashing of teeth implies unchanged enmity towards God.

The Great Contrast.

Now look at the contrast: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13. 43). You see how broad the distinction is between "the children of the Wicked One" and "the children of God." Why, men would make us believe that everybody is a son of God, that everybody has a right to say "Our Father, which art in Heaven," whereas only the child of God can say it from the heart.

But what I want you to notice is: Who are called "the children of the Wicked

One?" They are the "tares." Now, what is the peculiarity of the tare, or darnel, which is a better name for it? It is a sort of bastard wheat that looks so like wheat that anyone going to pull out the tares might very readily pull up the wheat. The distinction was not apparent until "the time of the harvest." It was not until the wheat was in the ear that the tares became apparent.

Christians v. Christendom.

Christendom consists of persons who have accepted the doctrines of Christianity, or they have been constituted "Christians" by the process called "christening," or it may be by education. There are many ways of becoming nominal Christians, but there is no way of becoming a true Christian but by being "born again" (John 3. 3, 7). It is the *professing* Christian that is here distinctly called the child of the devil. There are thousands in this land professing Christians, sitting in churches every Sunday, and hearing the Bible expounded, and bowing their head in prayer, singing in choirs, ministers in pulpits, Sunday school teachers, thousands who are "children of the Wicked One." They have never rejoiced in the forgiveness of their sins,

never have been reconciled to God in Christ; they have never experienced the change called "conversion;" they have never known what it is to be "born again." What an awful position to be in! These are what are called here "the children of the Wicked One." You don't see what a tare is, it is only God that sees that; not until the time of the harvest does it become manifest.

Is it any wonder the world, that wants to sleep on with an undisturbed conscience, hates the doctrine: "Ye must be born again?" Is it any wonder it loves the doctrine of "the universal Fatherhood of God?" No such thing as tares and wheat, children of God and children of the Wicked One; regeneration with them is simply an awakening to a relationship that has already existed. Therefore there is no such place as Hell, and therefore there never was such a thing as atonement by Blood. If these doctrines be true, all the Bible goes by the board.

Born Children.

"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 26). This is a simple, definite statement as to how those who are the children of God became such. It was not by creation, not by natural

descent, not by any educative process, not by the development of some inherent good, but "by faith in Christ Jesus."

John says: "Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God." That means, we were not such before; rather, we were naturally "children of the Wicked One, "of disobedience," "of wrath."

Born of the flesh, according to nature, I am a child of Adam, and I bear the likeness of Adam. Not the Adam that came from the hand of God, but the Adam who had fallen. He begat a son after sin entered "in his own likeness, after his own image, and called his name Seth" (Gen. 5. 3). Such are all his descendants; they have "borne the image of the earthy." But born of the Spirit by faith in Christ Jesus, I become a child of God. It is God's work, as it is written: "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth" (James 1. 18). This newly-begotten spiritual being is not a thing that you can see or feel; it has not flesh and bones, but it is nevertheless a great and blessed reality. In Eph. 4. 24 it is called

"The New Man."

That which is born of the flesh, which I have inherited as a child of Adam, is "the old man." That which I receive by faith

in Christ Jesus is a new Spirit-begotten life. But what is the nature of this newly-implanted spiritual life? It is "after God, created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4. 24). It is "renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3. 10). Now, God has predestinated that every one that is born of the Spirit shall be "conformed to the image of His Son." This is God's ideal. This is the end toward which He is working, and He begins by implanting the very nature of His Son in that new-born spiritual being that characterises every one who is a child of God. God sees in every believer the very likeness of His Son stamped upon that inner, divinely-begotten man. At first this new life is like that of a new-born babe. It is feeble; it requires to be nourished, like the babe, upon food suited to it, even upon "the sincere milk of the Word." It is encumbered by the flesh, which lusts against it. Therefore from its very inception it has a conflict to wage. Blessed be God, He does not any longer regard us as in the flesh; He sees us no longer as branches of the old Adam tree, but as "in Christ," even as the branch in the vine, or as the member is a part of the body, one with Christ.

New-Born Instincts.

And this new-born life has not only the lineaments, but the instincts of a child of God. The day before he was converted, if he met a Christian, they had nothing in common; he rather shies off, and is not desirous of having much to do with him. After he has received Christ there is a magnetic attraction, which draws one Christian to another—a kind of divine freemasonry, which recognises another member of the same body; the spiritual instinct of a new life, which apprehends, without knowing much about it, a new relationship; it is that of the sons of God.

The new spiritual being, begotten of God, possesses eternal life, and cannot die. Death cannot touch the Christian's life. If you were told that you were granted life, a new life, and that it would last for a thousand years, would that satisfy you? "Well," you would say, "a thousand years are a long time, but even a thousand years will come to an end, and what then?" But suppose you were told you had life for ten thousand years, would you be satisfied? "No," you say, "for ten thousand years will come to an end, and what then?" Then you try to comprehend Eternity, and

you think and think until your brain seems to reel, and you give it up, conscious that the idea of Eternity is too great for a finite mind to grasp. Yet so are we constituted by God that nothing short of "eternal life" will satisfy us. Oh, yes; the new relationship, which is ours as sons of God, is eternal: "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John 10. 28).

"Adoption."

This relationship is sometimes called "adoption." But it is not the idea of adoption. Sometimes a man who has no children adopts a child. He calls him his son, loves him, makes him his heir, gives him a legal title to his property; but all that will never make him a son. But this does not represent the Scriptural idea of adoption; it is nothing less than sonship by birth, and the relationship is indissoluble.

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4. 6). Here is something new, one of the privileges of those who are sons; the Spirit of Christ comes and unites Himself with your spirit, and thus there is abiding in the believer "the Spirit of His Son." It is thus that we know experimentally God as our Father.

It is the Spirit of His Son within us that enables us spontaneously to cry, "Abba, Father."

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the Old Testament saints were just as much children of God as New Testament believers. They were men of faith, being born of God. But this spirit of sonship was not bestowed upon them, nor was it given to them to cry, "Abba, Father." It is the peculiar language of this age, in which Christ is at the right hand of God, and the Holy Spirit has descended and made the bodies of the children of God His abode—His living temple. "Abba" is one of the untranslated words. It is just the first lisping of a little Hebrew child, very much as our little ones say "Da-da." The second word is the Greek "Pateer," and means the same thing, only in the language of the Gentile.

"My Father—Your Father."

The first to use these words was the Lord Jesus Himself (see Mark 14. 36); but it was not until after His sufferings that He linked His disciples with Himself in His Sonship, saying: "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." He linked Himself with both Jew and Gentile, speaking the language of both.

and His Spirit, the Spirit of Sonship, cries in the heart of the believing Jew, "Abba!" and in the believing Gentile, "Pateer!" Thus all are one, members of one body and partakers of one Spirit, and the children of one Father in Christ, and consequent upon that they are "brethren," for it is sonship that constitutes brotherhood, and "members one of another."

But God adds to all His loving kindness this, that He imparts to His children "the spirit of adoption" (or sonship), and so we know God as our Father, confide in Him, run to Him, love Him, and are at rest in His presence. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4. 6).

The Father's Care.

Now remember, if God by His Spirit teaches me to call Him Father, that in itself is a pledge that He undertakes to fulfil all the responsibilities of a Father.

Those who are parents will understand something of what this means. The parent lives and labours for the children. Nature has placed them in their helplessness absolutely in his hands. They are entrusted to the parents as their first responsibility, and they are not worthy of the title of

father or mother who do not exert every power they possess for the well-being of their children. Not one of my children ever at any time had one moment's concern or anxiety about where their next meal was to come from. They knew their parents looked after that, and that so long as it is in their power the children shall never lack. To-morrow morning's breakfast costs them no thought.

And is my "Father in Heaven," who has begotten me and taught me to call Him "Father," going to deny His responsibility? Is He going to show Himself less worthy of the honoured name of "Father" than an earthly parent? Would I not be a foolish child to carry the burdens and charge myself with responsibilities that belong to Him as my Father? **Let us learn to take into our hearts the comfort of the Name, "our Father," "casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you" (1Peter 5. 7).**

“The Same Image.”

By Dr. A. T. SCHOFIELD,

Author of “The Life that Pleases God,” etc.

I HAVE been increasingly occupied the last few years with 2 Corinthians 3. 18, which seems to unfold fresh wonders every time it is read.

The words that specially strike awe into the soul are those three: “THE SAME IMAGE.”

They seem to me to contain so much that is impossible to conceive, they imply such a miraculous change in our spirits as to be almost incredible, and when we couple them with the expressions in the first chapter of Hebrews it is then that words fail to express the solemnity and majesty of the thoughts.

We read in Hebrews 1 of the Son, that He is the effulgence of the divine glory and the express image or complete character of God’s Person.

What is the Meaning?

With this in our minds we turn to 2 Corinthians 3. 18, and we find “the

image'' means the same complete character of the Divine, so that the one who is changed is not only changed into the likeness of the One at whom he gazes as a mirror, but into the likeness of the One of whom Christ Himself is the Image.

The very expression of such thoughts as these seems more than language can bear or ought to bear. It is indeed best to leave such in silence than to confine them by words, and it is with no idea of attempting to do so in the way of definition and amplification that I write this, but rather to inquire into the means by which this image is said to be produced.

How is it Effected?

This is by ''beholding as in a mirror,'' or ''reflecting as a mirror'' (R.v.), ''the glory of the Lord,'' which as we know is ''seen in the face of Jesus Christ'' (2 Cor. 4. 6). ''Beholding the face of Christ,'' which, I think, we may paraphrase as meaning the expression of His character, seems to be the appointed means of attaining His image; while ''reflecting as a mirror'' rather expresses the result that follows. Of course both are in fact combined in the one process.

After long consideration by what practi-

cal means the Christian soul can best study the character of Christ, it would seem that the general idea of contemplating Him as He is now in Glory at the Father's right hand is too vague for the soul, and is not even assisted by revelations of the Divine Spirit who communicates to us no details of our Lord's present aspect and position there.

Gazing upon His Life and Ways.

It has been urged, on the other hand, that we are to ‘know no man after the flesh, even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so no more’ (2 Cor. 5. 16). This is indeed true, but only has a direct application to those who had so known Him, amongst whom we cannot include ourselves; and the question remains whether by seeking to gaze upon His life and ways, as manifested to us in the Gospels, and thus to know Him after the spirit, studying with awe and wonder that perfect life, and bowed in adoration before the spectacle of the passing of that bright radiance through the darkness of this world we do not best learn our Lord's true character?

It is thus, while all the time in communion of heart with our risen Lord, and in the

power of His resurrection in the new creation, we can most effectively behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, and thus most surely reflect that glory as a mirror, and thus eventually be changed, in however small measure, into "the same image."

Observe that in the passage it is the mirror itself (our spirit) which is transformed into the likeness of that upon which it gazes, by its transforming power; and one does find practically that meditation upon Christ Himself, and Christ Himself in the only way in which His character has been revealed to us, as the Man Christ Jesus, has a force and a transforming power that is quite different in character from the blessing one derives from the study of other parts of the Word of God.

I would, therefore, most earnestly commend quiet, unhurried, and prolonged meditation upon the life of Christ as revealed in the Gospels. I have experienced this myself with untold blessing to the soul in writing a Devotional Companion to the "Journeys of Jesus Christ."*

It is only as one thus really studies our Lord's character that one finds its beauties

* "The Journeys of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." With large chart. 3/6 net, or 4/ post free, from *Witness Office*.

absolutely inexhaustible, fresh wonders being continually unfolded to the one who quietly meditates on the sacred story.

Illustrations from our Lord's Life.

Perhaps I may be permitted to illustrate what I mean. I will take two of our Lord's temptations. Observe that the temptation in the wilderness *immediately* followed the Voice from Heaven: "This is My beloved Son." And this helps us to discern the real point at which Satan aimed, which might otherwise escape our notice. He himself had fallen from his high estate by self-exaltation, and in the Garden of Eden, as here in the wilderness, seeks to destroy the first man and the second Man by the same means. With Adam he succeeded, for "ye shall be as gods" was to Adam an object of plunder, a thing to be grasped at. With Adam, also, he began his temptation by casting a doubt on the Voice of God: "Hath God said?"

In the temptation of our Lord in precisely the same way he commences by again casting a doubt upon the Voice of God, which had just said: "This is My beloved Son," and then, as in Adam's case, presenting to our Lord as an object to be grasped at His Divine Sonship. "If Thou

be the Son of God,” says Satan, “prove it, show it.”

Observe now with wonder how the moral glory of our Lord here shines forth. Here He refused to grasp glories which after all were His own. No hesitation, not a moment's doubt as to the course to be pursued to vanquish the enemy, as vanquished he was, surely and effectually, by the same simple yet divine weapon that the humblest Christian has at his disposal, without any miracle nor any recourse to divine power or means that would be beyond the resources of any of His disciples, He gained the victory. He had taken the lowly position of Philippians 2. 6, 7, and could not therefore leave it at the enemy's suggestion (as later on He could not save Himself), but from five stones (the Pentateuch) in His scrip, David's greater Son, took out one smooth stone, the Book of Deuteronomy, and with it destroyed all the power of the Evil One.

Adoration of our Lord.

It will be noticed here in our remarks that we may freely express our admiration of the beauties of our Lord's action at this time. This is right and helpful to us, that

we should give expression to the praise that arises in our hearts from such study. But it will be observed, and to me it is one of the strongest proofs of verbal inspiration, that no such license is accorded to the writers of the Gospels. Their pen is firmly held by the Spirit of God simply to record Christ's wondrous life, without a single note of adoration, admiration, or even of appreciation at the wonders that flowed from their pen. Such is the marvel of the Word of God!

I submit that it would be absolutely impossible for any pen not so restrained to write the story of such a life without constant expressions of wonder and amazement at the character that it unfolds. But I repeat, what was forbidden to them is freely granted to us, and no restriction need be placed upon the expressions of our worship when Christ is its object. The second temptation was widely different in character. He who refused to make stones into bread at the tempter's suggestion multiplied five loaves by the Sea of Galilee for the feeding of thousands. These, delighted with such a material miracle, suddenly acclaimed Him King, and would there and then, had He so permitted, have risen against the Roman

yoke, and gathering forces on their way, have raised a fierce insurrection throughout the land.

But it was not a crown that was before the eyes of Christ, but a Cross; and here again the moral dignity and the quiet strength of our Lord is displayed to our worshipping gaze. He retires at once to a mountain, apart even from His disciples, who very likely shared many of the feelings of the crowd, and finds His strength upon His knees.

This again is a resource that is open to the humblest believer, and it is in noticing that the Saviour—God as He was—refused when tempted like as we are to have recourse to any means that are not equally available to us that our praise is called forth and our hearts are touched in a very special way.

His Personal and Official Glories.

Other scenes than these rise up so rapidly before one's mind that display in so many aspects our Saviour's worth that we feel we might never stop, so bright are the moral glories of Christ. It is these, indeed, that I think we consider with the greatest profit.

His *personal* glories as the Divine and

Eternal Son are infinite, inscrutable, and beyond the measure of mortal mind.

His *official* glories as Son of David and King of Israel are concerned more especially with His chosen people.

But it is through the effulgence of His *moral* glories, which make the Gospels the most radiant books ever written, that our hearts are fullest of praise, our spirits most humbled, and yet at the same time drawn out in most earnest, prayerful desire, that we may learn to "walk even as He walked" (1 John 2. 6), seeing that "as He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4. 17), and may thus come to bear some traces of His image.

“Never Man Spake Like This Man.”

By GEORGE GOODMAN.

OUR Lord Jesus stated the principle that by his words a man is to be justified, for words are the language of the heart, and disclose a man's true character. James adds, that “if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.”

This being so, we are right in applying the Lord's own test to Himself and judging Him by His words and proving if He is indeed “the Perfect Man.” We are fortunate in being able to do so, for there can be no question as to those wondrous words that He spoke. They have been preserved to us by the inspiration of the Spirit of God in the Holy Oracles.

Four simple men were used of God to record the history of Him who called Himself the Son of Man, who walked familiarly among men, eating and drinking, and conversing with them. They tell their story in plain straightforward language, each in his own style, expressing no wonder at what they relate, scarcely commenting on what is recorded, but writing as those who narrate what they saw, and tell what they heard.

No one suggests that they have been in collusion, there are too many marks of diversity to

allow of the theory; yet it is the same Divine Person who is depicted, who speaks in the same marvellous way. It is impossible to conceive that four ordinary men writing separately could each have invented such a perfect Character or could have put such words into His lips. It is evident they told what they had seen and heard.

MATTHEW, the publican; MARK, the servant; LUKE, the physician; and JOHN, the fisherman, record for us in a candid and open manner the words of Him "who spake as never man spake."

The words themselves, as so recorded, are comparatively few. We have no long dissertations, no elaborate treatises. The longest discourse takes but fifteen minutes to read aloud.

The whole of His words could, I suppose, be printed in a pamphlet of sixteen pages, and yet those words are such that they have astounded the whole world, and established His reputation. "The same is a Perfect Man." Yea, more than this, "Truly this was the Son of God."

There is no spot or blemish in them, no confession of sin, no mistake, no uncertainty, no hesitation. Such terms as "Perhaps," "I think," "It is possibly so," or other evidence of fallibility is undiscoverable. All is authoritative, calm, and decisive. He spoke as one having authority, "I say unto you."

The style is perfect. Not a vestige appears of sentimentality, no weak emotion, no plea for

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pity, no mock heroics, no posing for effect, no lightness or trifling, no irritation or hastiness. There is no dead fly in the ointment to mar His reputation for wisdom.

These four simple writers hold up for admiration nothing that the world gloried in. It is doubtful if they had any intention or thought of depicting a hero or great man—they told a simple story of One whom they had seen and loved, and whose words had reached their hearts.

Let us take the Volume of His words in our hands and look at it. We need not be enthusiasts or devotees, we need bring no prejudice, nor look at it through coloured glasses. It bears examination. It seems to say to all: "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say" (1 Cor. 10. 15).

I. Let us judge this unique Volume first from the lowest of men's standards.

As Ordinary Literature.

We discover at once that here is narration unequalled in the world. Read the parable of the Prodigal Son. It has attained a world-wide notoriety. Note its simple pathos, its powerful appeal to the heart. Tears of thousands have been shed upon the pages. It has turned untold sinners to a new life. In order to test its excellence by comparison, search through all the great writers of the world for something to compare with it for simplicity, dignity, and excellence.

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In the Greek it contains but 396 words, not one of which could be spared as mere verbiage.

Can Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Schiller, Goethe, or the more homely Longfellow, and Wordsworth, or any of our prose authors supply anything to compete with it? We are forced to reply, "No, we find nothing so simple yet so profound as this!"

But the same gracious lips told the story of the Lost Sheep, the Good Samaritan; the parable of the Sower; the Publican and the Pharisee; the Great Supper for the poor, blind, and lame; the Ten Virgins; and the Rich Man and Lazarus. Where in all the field of literature shall we find anything to compare with, much more to surpass, these masterpieces of literary art.

Who is this that at once steps above all the world's greatest writers, to be acknowledged superior to them all, unchallenged by a single instance? Surely judged by this lowest of standards, "never man spake like this Man."

The supreme excellence of true art is strength, beauty, and simplicity. It is recorded that once Leonardo da Vinci, the painter of the famous "Last Supper," visited a young artist friend. He found his friend was absent, but on the easel in his studio there was an untouched canvas ready for use. Leonardo took up a chalk, and with one sweep of the hand drew a circle on the canvas. On his return the young artist at once exclaimed,

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"Leonardo has been here!" No one else could have drawn that simple but perfect figure.

It is so with Christ. The dignity and grace, the power and truth of the stories He told cause one to exclaim, "The Lord has been here," for "never man spake as this Man."

II. Again, let us judge the words that fell from His lips by another standard,

Their Moral Excellence.

There have been many moralists in the world, and many codes of honour, and much sound advice as to conduct. Good moral teaching has been the common property of all the sages of the past, but which of them can compare with the exalted wisdom and heart-searching purity of the Sermon on the Mount?

The ideals that have been held up to men for their admiration and emulation are quietly set aside.

The *warrior in shining armour* gives place to the blessedness of the gentle, the merciful, to the love of enemies and a desire to do them good.

The *accumulation of wealth* is rebuked as not representing truly that in which a man's life consists, rather it is in giving and lending, while no return is looked for. The Heavenly Father will supply the present need and the reward will be in Heaven, with not even "the cup of cold water" forgotten.

The *pride and show of religious display* and love

of applause are rebuked. Prayer, fasting, giving, are only means to an end, and that end not self, but a walk of communion with God, and good and loving thought for others.

The *searching demand for purity* that is of the heart, that governs even the restless eyes; and the love that regards hatred as murder; the truth that makes the "Yea, yea," and the "Nay, nay," and needs no oath to strengthen it; the obedience that hears and does, and thus builds the life on a foundation of rock.

Such is the exalted morality that places the words of Christ out of reach of any competitor, and causes us still to exclaim, "He taught as One having authority!" For never moralist attained to such things.

III. Let us judge these words once more from the standard of

Sympathy and Encouragement

and again we must exclaim, "Never man spake as this Man."

Moralists are confessedly stern men, hard in their words and harsh in their judgments, often cynical and satirical in their criticisms of their times.

But this Man, though His words are often awful in their burden (see for example Matt. 23, with its eight "Woes"), was never accused of being cold, harsh, or unfeeling. Even the chapter of "Woes" ends with tender words of compassion: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,...how often would

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I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23. 37).

The common people heard Him gladly, and marvelled at His gracious words. Sinners wept at His feet, and the broken-hearted were comforted and their wounds bound up.

Did ever man speak to sinners as He? "Thy sins be forgiven," "Go in peace," yet with no laxity of morals. "Go, and sin no more."

IV. But we have to recognise in this Volume of His words greater marvels than those. It is impossible to close our eyes to the fact that in His words we find the

Most Stupendous Claims

and a **self-assertion** that is beyond anything in knowledge or experience.

HE PREACHED HIMSELF. He claimed to be Himself, the Salvation He came to bring. His use of the words "I AM" was equivalent to the assumption of Deity. It identified Him with Jehovah who appeared in the burning bush—the "I Am that I Am"—and called forth the wrath of the Pharisees, who accused Him of "making Himself God" (John 5. 18), a charge which He did not refute, but confirmed by the words, "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5. 23).

The Jews knew and loved the 23rd Psalm as

dearly as any Christian does. "Jehovah is my Shepherd." What then must have been their feelings when they heard this Man say, "I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10. 11). They knew that this involved a claim to be Jehovah.

The "I AM" was constantly on His lips. "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8. 58). "When ye have lifted up the Son of Man ye shall know that I AM" (Luke 8. 28). "If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8. 24). Perhaps the most remarkable use of the words was in the Garden of Gethsemane, when they came to take Him. "Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I AM. As soon then as He had said unto them I AM, they went backwards and fell to the ground" (John 18. 5, 6). In that solemn hour the majesty of His word overpowered them.

His Claim as Saviour.

V. But not only is there a claim to Deity, but a wondrous declaration of Himself as God's Salvation. As we ponder the words, recorded without doubt before our eyes, we can only exclaim with Simeon, "Mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation" (Luke 2. 30).

Is a sinner seeking to be saved? He says, "I am the Door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved" (John 10. 9). Is a hungry soul seeking the bread of life? He says, "I am that Bread of

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Life" (John 6. 48). Does one long to know the way of life? He says, "I am the Light of the world" (John 8. 12). "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14. 6).

Is one troubled with the confusion of voices in this Babylon with its higher critics, its philosophers, its modernists? He quiets the strife with the word, "I am the Truth." Does one long for nourishment for the soul that shall produce fruit in the life? He says, "I am the True Vine, ye are the branches" (John 15. 1). Does one want assurance? He says, "I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep;...they shall never perish" (John 10. 14).

Do men tremble by the open grave? Then hear His words, matchless above all that even He spoke, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11. 25).

For any other to use such language was to expose himself to ridicule. Yet "this Man," who spake as never man spake, used the words with authority and undiminished dignity and grace.

His Claim as the Great Rest-Giver.

VI. Did ever man use such words as these? "*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*" (Matt. 11. 28).

Many teachers in the past have exhorted men to take their advice; to carry out their laws; even

to follow their example; but who among the sons of men ever said, "Come unto Me, and I will *give* (not *teach* merely) you rest?"

A Christian distributing tracts in France gave a text on a card to a gentleman, who read it curiously. It had upon it the words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There was no indication who had said those words, and the reader showed some surprise that he should be invited by a stranger in such terms. Looking at him earnestly, he said, "Well, here I am!" What a dilemma to be in! Who can give another rest? It took some time to explain Who it was that could give men such an invitation, for no man spake like this Man.

VII. Space fails even to enumerate the wonders to be found in this small Volume of words. Think of these as endorsing

His Claim to Deity.

HE ANSWERS PRAYER. "If ye shall ask anything (of the Father) in My Name, I will do it" (John 14. 14). Who is this whose Name is so powerful and who Himself answers prayer: "*I* will do it?"

TO RAISE AND JUDGE ALL MEN. "Many shall say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord" (Matt. 7. 21). Who would dare to speak thus? Or thus, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man,

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and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5. 29).

HE CLAIMS LIFE ITSELF. Lastly, think of this world-wide demand: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14. 26). Who is entitled to make such a claim as this? "Never man spake like this!"

We can not only wonder at the claim, but at the greater wonder that down the ages millions have accorded it to Him, for never has man been so loved as this Man, never have life and possessions been so willingly sacrificed for other, as for His sake. Truly this is the Son of God.

And sweetest of all words to His own, "this Man" who ever liveth, has said, "I will come again and receive you unto MYSELF." "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The Excellences of Emmanuel.

By A. CHARLES ROSE,

Colombo.

EARTH has her excellences; her heroes of peace and war. The scroll of time is engraven with many a name, the lustre of which shall endure as long as earth's foundations. But there is one super-excellent name destined to outlast them all. It is found written in simple majesty on the first and last pages of the New Testament, and those whose eyes have been anointed with the Spirit's salve can trace it from the beginning to the end of Holy Scripture. That name is JESUS, which, being interpreted, signifies "Jehovah Saviour."

It is in the Epistle to the Hebrews especially, by contrast and comparison, that His excellences are displayed; to the Hebrews, to whom He was unattractive and unwelcome. They gazed on the root sprouting from the dry ground, bethought them of their bygone bramble-king, and longed for the cedars of Lebanon (Judges 9. 14).

I. The inspired writer quickly gets to the heart

of things, and says, "He hath by inheritance obtained

A More Excellent Name"

(Heb. 1. 4). That is one clause in his eloquent description of our Lord Jesus, "God over all blessed for ever" (Rom. 9. 5), and truly "the noblest Man who ever lived in all the tides of time."

The excellent Name connotes the excellent character of its Owner. The Father has bestowed upon Him the "Name which is above every name, that in the Name of JESUS every knee should bow" (Phil. 2. 9, 10). By all the rights of His eternal being and atoning work He bears the grandest name that perfect love and power could bestow. Ages before the Bethlehem advent a prophet had declared "His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9. 6). But to this bright galaxy another has been added—JESUS.

True it is that wise men in their day called Him "the Nazarene," that the drunkards shouted His Name in ribald song; that often He was denied the common courtesy of a name, and spoken of as "this fellow" and "that deceiver." Yet to-day, amidst the world's upheavals, and after the wear and tear of centuries, to a countless multitude His Name is "as ointment poured forth" (S. of S. 1. 3). Time and again it has proved a talisman

triumphant over the most hideous powers of Hell. It has lingered on the parched lip of the martyr at the stake, robbing death of its sting. It lightens the pilgrim's load, and lures him onward to his goal, "the Home eternal in the Heavens."

But this is not all; that pre-eminent Name, so richly merited and adorned, is very soon to be shared with those who narrowly escaped being written down in letters of everlasting infamy; those who at length answered to their rightful title—"sinners." For our Lord has pledged Himself, saying, "He that overcometh...I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the city of My God;...and *I will write upon him My new Name*" (Rev. 3. 12). Marvellous destiny for these who were "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2. 3). Well may our hearts bow in adoring worship, and yield to Him in glad surrender at the realisation of such amazing love.

JESUS dishonoured and dying, a felon on either side;
JESUS the song of the drunkard, JESUS the Crucified.
Name of God's tender comfort, Name of His glorious
power;

Name that is song and sweetness, the strong everlasting
tower.

JESUS the Lamb accepted, JESUS the Priest on His throne,
JESUS the King who is Coming, JESUS Thy Name alone.

II. "Now He hath obtained

A More Excellent Ministry"

(Heb. 8. 6). This is the burden of the Holy

Spirit's message through many chapters. He alternates from Throne to Cross. He travels from the mighty present down into the misty past, and then upward and onward to the eternal future; but there is a constancy in His task—the unveiling of the excellences of Emmanuel, “God with us” and for us (Matt. 1. 23).

Now He has traced Him back to “the right hand of the majesty in the heavens” (Heb. 8. 1), and proclaims Him the Minister of the New Covenant. Hitherto Moses had represented the high-water mark of mediatorial ministry. The Hebrews looked up to him as the author of their ancient covenant. They saw him forsaking the treasures of Egypt for the desert wilds. They reviewed his return to the court, striking terror to Pharaoh's heart, until he allowed their bondmen ancestors to march out in triumph. By faith they beheld him on the heights of Sinai, Pisgah, and Nebo, sharing their burden and blame and cheerfully dying on the very threshold of success. No wonder they revered the man and were jealous for his sake.

But now Moses' glories have paled before the meridian splendour of that other Prophet whose coming he himself had heralded. “The old order changeth, yielding place to new.” The hands of Moses were red with the blood of his Egyptian foe; the hands of our Lord Jesus with His own precious Blood. Moses descended Sinai with gleaming countenance the Lawgiver of Israel.

Christ ascended Calvary with a visage marred more than any man's, the Lover of a lost world. Moses struck the second rock with loud complaints. Christ was stricken, and reviled not. Moses died on Nebo in utter silence and secrecy. Christ died on the hill-top in utmost publicity and pain. Moses' task ended with his decease; but our Lord Jesus entered on a fresh phase of service which has made Him a bright reality to every pilgrim heart. It is good to magnify His manger birth, His peerless Manhood, and His dying love; but forget not His excellent ministry, apart from which we were miserable indeed.

How nobly He performed His task down here! How nobly He perfects it yonder! He is not only the Friend at Court, He is the Advocate proud to hold a brief for every needy soul, and no case committed to Him can ever be lost. Happy those who are beginning to know His worth and enjoy His matchless ministries. Still His delights are with the sons of men. That great heart has not changed since the night when He waited, a towel-girt King, to wash Peter's feet. The motto on the banner of His love is still "I serve," and that amazing promise stands, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that *He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and minister to them*" (Luke 12. 37).

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III. Finally, we consider His

“More Excellent Sacrifice,”

of which Abel's is a symbol (Heb. 11. 12).

By virtue of His Godhead the Son summoned creation into being, and sustained its vast concerns. His dwelling place the Father's bosom; His Person the sum of all perfection; but even ~~He~~ He could not bear the name of JESUS, or fill the vacant post of Daysman, to bridge the gulf between a rebel world and a righteous God, until He qualified Himself by becoming truly man in order to bear in His own body the relentless stroke of justice. Wherefore, behold the stainless Judge arraigned in the felon's dock, condemned to suffer the felon's doom! See Him grappling with that unheard-of combination of woes—the wrath of God, the sin of the world, the hatred of men and demons. Suffering an eternity of agony in a few hours, yet dying to conquer, rising in triumph, in every detail pleasing His Father and securing an honourable place in His family for every penitent sinner. Heaven's occupied throne is proof positive that there are no outstanding claims; but, wondrous to relate, that excellent sacrifice is the pioneer of a countless host of acceptable offerings, each one a sweet savour of Christ. On His behalf the apostle pleads, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living

sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12. 1).

What heights and depths of grace are these! How heartening the prospect to those who are determined to walk in that "more excellent way" of love (1 Cor. 12. 31), the short cut Home! How glorious to hear His well-known voice ringing above the strife of tongues, saying to the erstwhile slaves of sin:

"I WILL MAKE THEE AN EXTERNAL EXCELLENCE; . . . THE WORK OF MY HANDS, THAT I MAY BE GLORIFIED!" (Isa. 60. 15, 21).

The Central Place of the Cross.

By HAROLD ST. JOHN,

London.

Read Galatians 1. 4; 2. 20; 3. 1; 5. 11; 5. 24; 6. 12-14.

THREE centuries before the Apostle Paul lived and suffered there was a migration of Celtic tribes from Gaul, and these, passing across Europe, settled in Asia Minor (now Turkey-in-Asia), and gave their ancient name to their new home (Galatia simply being a corruption of Gaul-(in)-Asia); thus France and Turkey were first linked in human history.

In the light of this it is interesting to notice how the familiar traits of

The Modern French Character

may be traced in this Epistle, written to their forefathers: chivalrous and self-sacrificing love, a tendency to fickleness, revelry, and vainglory, may all be found in Galatia as clearly as in Paris to-day (4. 15; 1. 6; 4. 18; 5. 21, 26).

To these districts came St. Paul, driven by the power of Damascus, and preaching "his Gospel" with wide acceptance and success. But shortly

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after he had left, other teachers entered and sowed tares in God's wheat fields, and the Galatian Churches found themselves facing the dire and dual peril of a mutilated Gospel, taught by time serving teachers.

On hearing of this St. Paul came to the rescue, and by this Epistle flung the whole weight of his power into the task of proving, first, his own consistency in contrast with the vacillations of Peter, the instability of Barnabas, and the cunning carnality of those who would pervert the Gospel of Christ, and after devoting two chapters to this, he then reveals

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in the faith of the Church, as well as in the salvation of the soul.

I want to write of his interpretation of the Cross, as given in this Epistle (so well styled "a letter about Calvary"), because the same peril that threatened Galatia is overshadowing modern Church life, and to-day even good men misunderstand the Cross, while bad men emasculate and degrade its teaching until we are left with merely "a supreme example of self-sacrifice."

The truth is that, while the Resurrection is the highest physical miracle, the Cross is the deepest moral wonder in history; it is not merely a martyr bearing appalling bodily suffering, not simply a Man offering Himself as a target for Satan, nor

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even He who was God, manifest in Manhood, suffering the awful sense of moral distance from One whose Fellow He had been from all eternity and thus experiencing spiritual woe.

The Cross contains all these, but, more profoundly still, we see in it

An Ordered Crisis in the Godhead

on the one hand God in unsullied holiness, on the other, Deity standing in the place of sin.

It is righteousness in God demanding satisfaction and a sacrifice, love in God freely offering itself as a victim.

It reveals the Father suffering as, from the heights of His holiness, He surveys the sorrows of His Son; and that Son suffering as He is made sin, and from the depths of His abasement, looks up to see a darkened Heaven and Himself forsaken.

It declares that God in Christ loved me so deeply that He gave His Son to die for my sake, and that that Son entered the atmosphere of the curse (like a miner who enters an area of choke-damp) and dying there in the dark rose in triumph in the power of an indissoluble life. So swiftly does one follow the other that one is reminded of an arctic sunset, in which the light dies away in the west and the watcher turns to the east to find that the first shafts of dawn are already rising on the horizon.

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The reception of such a message must involve an earthquake in the experience of its recipients, and my aim in this paper is to show how the Cross readjusts certain relationships of life in ways which appear to have been in the mind of the author of this letter.

1. The Cross as a Coronation Stone for Christ (chap. 2. 20).

I cannot remember where I read or heard the above phrase, but it seems to enshrine the idea of this verse.

Turn to the story of the "days of His flesh" and see how three times He deliberately chose the Cross—at His baptism, when He was numbered with the transgressors; in Luke 9. 51, when He set His face to go to Jerusalem, and again in John 12. 27 when He declared "for this cause came I unto this hour."

Again, three times He was tempted to turn aside and to take a short-cut to glory, namely, in the desert, at Caesarea Philippi, and in Gethsemane; in these cases the voices of Peter, Satan, and His own will were heard, but He held on His way, rejecting the apostle's well-meant words, the seductions of Satan, and choosing the Father's will and not His own.

To those who have worshipfully weighed these things only one course is open, and that is to abdicate life's throne (1 Peter 3. 15, R.V.) and to crown Him as Lord; as we descend the steps

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He ascends, and Tennyson's longing finds its fulfilment:

“Oh that a Man might arise in me,
That the man I am might cease to be!”

St. Augustine tells us how, in the early days of his Christian life, passing along the streets of Milan he saw one of the companions of his old dissolute days coming towards him. Immediately the future father of the Church began to run in the opposite direction; his former friend gave chase, crying, “Augustine, Augustine, why do you run? It is I!” Looking back over his shoulder he called to her, “I run because it is not I.”

He knew that Christian life means the substitution of Christ for self, and that is still our highest wisdom.

Are you afraid that an enthroned Lord would make demands upon you that would shatter your life-plans and crush your cherished hopes and ambitions? This may well be if these are unworthy ones, but while I can say nothing as to what He may do I know this, that—

“He is stronger than the strongest,
He's far better than the best,
And His love has lasted longer,
It has stood the hardest test.
The sinfulest may trust Him,
Nor their welcome ever doubt,
For He's pledged His faithful promise
That He never will cast out.”

So much for the sinner, and now what for the saint?—

“He is tenderer than the tenderest,
He’s the fairest of the fair;
He will be thy soul’s Defender,
Thou mayest rest in safety there.
Though fierce enemies surround you,
And you sink in life’s alarms,
He will surely place around you
His strong, everlasting arms.”

II.—The Cross as a Caustic for Sin (chap. 5. 26).

I use the word caustic in its ordinary medical sense, as a corrosive substance used to destroy diseased tissue (for specimens of such tissue, see vv. 19-21).

In the days of John Bunyan’s imprisonment there lived at Bedford a wicked old man, named Ned Bratt, with his equally evil wife, and they tell us how one day, when the justices were sitting in the Bedford Assizes, there was a great tumult at the door of the court, and presently old Ned Bratt and his wife walked in hand-in-hand, groaning and weeping, and although a case was being tried begged to be allowed to ease their conscience by telling their crimes to the court; and on permission being given they told how they had been to the prison and had seen a certain tinker there, and how his words had so pricked their hearts that they must immediately cleanse

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themselves of their sins by confessing to murder and a whole heap of black and evil stuff.

When we stand in the presence of John Bunyan's Lord, and in the clear light of His Cross, we, too, are naked and ashamed as we learn that not hammers, nor nails, nor Roman soldiers held Him to the tree; that these were merely blind material instruments of His agony, but that it was love for me and hatred for my sins that brought Him to such a place; then, I say, I begin to hate sin, and apply the burning caustic to all life's "diseased tissues," and rejoice that "sin shall not have dominion over me." "I live, and yet not I."

The results of this are given in the immediate context of our passage; in the lives of those who have crucified the flesh is produced the fruit of the Spirit, and they "walk in the Spirit."

I remember how, in South America, on one occasion some engineering works had been begun, but owing to malaria had to be abandoned; the ground was thickly wooded forest land, and before leaving the engineers set light to a broad belt of land, hoping thus to cleanse the infected area, and for months the brushwood was smouldering; about two years after the workmen returned to resume operations and were surprised to find the blackened ground covered with a new and unknown type of plant with an exquisite blue flower.

Specimens were gathered and forwarded to the Botanical Gardens at Washington and elsewhere, but no one could identify this apparent product of the action of the fire. How many times have I seen this in the realm of the soul, a crucified, cauterized life giving birth to new flowers and fruit of the Spirit.

III.—The Cross as God's Frontier between the World and the Christian (chap. 6. 14).

Here Paul reproduces the scene of Calvary and shows us three Crosses: one, that of our Lord Jesus Christ in the centre; by its side another on which the world is hanging like the impenitent thief, nailed there by the hands of Paul; finally, on a third is seen Paul himself, crucified by the world and looking across to His Lord.

The life of Paul was that of a crucified man, and there lay the secret of his success; too often ours is not. We try to make the best of both worlds, plowing with the ox and the ass in one yoke, sowing our fields with divers seeds, and wearing vestures of woollen and linen.

And yet, thank God, here and there surrendered hearts are finding out the reality of Christ's Lordship and, pushing back the near horizon, cede more and more territory to Him and less to the world. Once we wrote our letters when and how we would, now we have to bow our heads first and ask what He wants us to say; once we read what we pleased, now He stands over against our bookshelves;

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once we went to preach wherever we willed, but now we can only go where He sends us; once we ate according to our appetite, now we remember the restraint of His presence; once we built up our businesses according to the world's standards, now we are content to be undersecretaries to His praise.

There is a price to pay for these deep joys. Thomas said to His Lord, "Except I see the marks of the nails in His hands I will not believe;" and the world says it still, not to Christ, but to Christians, and she has a right to demand these "marks of the Lord Jesus" in us (v. 17). Our faith is not a mere genial picnic, begun and ended with a reckless forgiveness of the past, but a crusade in which our Leader demands unqualified and unreserved obedience.

There is no future for any movement unless it can count on the support of people who are willing to suffer for it, and we must know where we stand; if we are able to trust Him and one another we may expect times of costly blessing, but "if one member suffer (or sin), all the members suffer with it."

"Dole not thy duties out to God,
But let thy hand be free;
Look long at Jesus, His fair love,
How was it dealt to thee?
The perfect way is hard to flesh,
It is not hard to love;
If thou wert sick for want of God
How quickly would'st thou move?"

The Great Work and the Doer Thereof.

A Meditation on Isaiah 53.

By HENRY PAYNE,

Barcelona.

THIS chapter opens to our vision a subject too vast for human comprehension. Its depths cannot be fathomed. The words which describe it fill the spirit with awe and wonder. A voice seems to reach us bidding us take our shoes from off our feet, for the ground is holy. Were it not for other prophecies, and for the Gospels which declare the Person spoken of, our immediate question might well be that of the Ethiopian, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" But on further consideration we should discover from the prophet's own words that he spoke not of himself, nor of any other of our fallen race, for in v. 6 he says, "All we like sheep have gone astray," thus including himself with all mankind. But here he is speaking of One who stands out in contrast to all others, of One who did no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. But ponder, O my soul, these words, most simple, yet revealing an unfathomable mystery!

We must connect the last three verses of chapter 52 with this chapter 53. There we have Jehovah's servant acting wisely and exalted; also there is portrayed His deep humiliation as being beyond that of any man. We have also the announcement that nations and kings shall see and consider, and be dumb before Him. But then the prophet sees at once in vision that the report of Jehovah's servant is treated with utter contempt; so that the question is asked,

1. **"Who hath believed our report?"** and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" These are questions of astonishment.

2. **"He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant."** That is, Jehovah's servant, of chapter 52. 13, shall grow up before Jehovah as a young shoot full of sap. Then how strange! **"As a root out of a dry ground."** This is one of the paradoxes of Scripture which can only be explained by the Gospels which speak of Him as the One who was always the well-pleasing servant of Jehovah, growing up before Him, never affected by any thing that surrounded Him to give Him a bend or a twist. At the same time the men of His generation said of Him that He was "a gluttonous man, a winebibber," "a Samaritan," and even, "He hath a devil." Ah, indeed, a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness!

The word "form" is from the previous chapter (v. 14). It is specially used when beauty is

referred to, as in Genesis 29. 17: Rachel was beautiful of form, and beautiful of countenance, or visage. Again, Genesis 39. 6, the same words are used of Joseph as of Rachel. But Jehovah's servant had "no form nor comeliness." The Hebrew word here translated "comeliness" is in Psalm 45. 3, 4, translated "majesty," and in Proverbs 20. 29 "beauty." To God and to the eye of faith His form and His majesty were unequalled; to man alienated from the life of God He possessed neither.

2. **"And when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him."** The Hebrew word here translated "beauty" is the same as translated "visage" in chap. 52. 14. See how the prophet puts himself with his people in this their unbelief and blindness of heart: a proof that his eyes have been opened to see his native state as a sinner, while theirs were not.

3. **"He is despised"**—that is, spurned, a word implying great contempt—"and rejected of men." This second word translated "rejected" does not imply such active contempt as the former one; but rather forgetfulness. It is used by Job, chap. 19. 14, "My kinsmen have failed," that is, they have forsaken me, they have given me up, as though I were not. **"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."** Such a state usually calls forth what sympathy there may be in the human breast, but in this case of the Man of

Sorrows, "we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."

4. **"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."** The same Hebrew words for griefs and sorrows as in v. 3, but here they are declared to be *ours*, those which rightly belong to us, because of our sinful state. O wonder of wonders! He who had no griefs or sorrows of His own, for He had no sin, came into this world of sin, and bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.

The atonement is hardly brought in here, but rather that which shows how He suffered as He passed on from Bethlehem to Calvary, becoming daily more and more acquainted with the griefs and sorrows of the people about Him.* He turned not away from the sad sights of suffering and distress which continually met His holy eye, **"yet we did esteem Him, stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."** He, because of His

* See Matthew 8. 17, and the Greek particle *hōpos* which marks some fulfilment that falls within the scope of the prophecy, but not the direct object of it. Some have supposed on the ground of this verse that the Lord bore our sicknesses on the Cross, as He bore our sins; therefore we should not be sick. Such an interpretation is altogether forced. In healing the sick of the multitudes who thronged Him in the days of His flesh, He did indeed take their diseases, they pressed upon His burdened heart, and even more so when they were not healed, because of their unbelief. But this is something very different from making His soul an offering for sin.

pitying love in bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, became so bowed down that men, failing to see the cause of His sorrow, attributed His bowed down appearance to the judgments of God upon Him. Oh, the blindness of the natural man! But did they not see? At the gate of the city of Nain did they not behold a proof of His tender heart toward the widow bereft of her only son? Did they not hear His groans and sighs as He witnessed the ravages which sin had made in the blind and dumb, in the lepers and in the dying? Did they not hear His groans at the grave of Lazarus? and did they not observe the stream of tears (so is the Greek word for *wept* there) which flowed down His visage marred? And did they not hear that bitter cry over Jerusalem, accompanied by an outburst of weeping? O, my soul, beware of reading lightly the words of the Gospels which describe such a life lest thou become hardened and blind as were the men of that generation, and so fail to see in "the Man of Sorrows" One who is "the fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely."

5. **"But He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities."** This verse falls into two parts, each of which is again divided. The first part contains wounding and bruising; the latter, chastisement and stripes. The Hebrew word for "wounded" here implies to pierce, to thrust through with a sword; while
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the word "bruised" means crushed. Thus we have here four different words showing us suretyship, *wounded*, *bruised*, *chastisement*, *stripe*. He had come to stand in the sinner's stead.

The appropriateness of the words used in this verse is striking; they could not be changed without loss. "*Transgression*" is a stronger word than "sin." It is a direct breach of a given command. Where there is no law, there is no transgression. The corresponding punishment for transgression is wounding, the thrust of a sword. The Hebrew word for "*iniquities*" implies perversity, depravity, guilt contracted by sinning; as for example, the iniquity of the fathers, the iniquity of the Amorites. Hence in this plural word here there is not so much the thought of so many transgressions or breaches of a command, but of a continual sinning from a crooked, perverse nature, thereby accumulating untold acts of perversity.

The corresponding punishment meted out for iniquities is bruising, or crushing. When we reach the other side, and stand in the holiness of God, beyond the power and deadening effect of sin, then we shall understand more fully how our many transgressions and constant perversities affected our surety to His wounding and crushing.

5. "**The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.**" The first part of the verse shows what our Surety suffered and why; the latter part,

in addition to sufferings, shows what we have, what we gain by them. Is peace our portion? Then it is because Another has been chastised for us, in our place and stead. But we go a step further and not only learn that we have peace with God, but that there is healing for our sin-stricken souls; and this healing has come about through the stripes inflicted on our Surety. In the margin of our Bibles we have bruise for "stripes." The word implies that a rod has been used.

6. **"All we like sheep have gone astray."** This verse likewise falls into two parts: (1) Our wanderings, in which the prophet includes his own, and (2) Jehovah's work of causing our iniquity to meet on Him of whom the prophet speaks. The words, **"turned every one to his own way,"** show us in the first place the crookedness of our disposition, and then the great diversity of the same in that every member of the human race has chosen "his own way." But all these innumerable perversities are, as it were, brought from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and by Jehovah's appointment they meet on Him. But the iniquities are now seen as forming one mass, so the word is used in the singular number, "the *iniquity* of us all." Who can read this chapter and not see in every line the tracing out, according to the foreknowledge of God, in marvellous exactness, the great work of our Surety?

7. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth." This verse also falls into two parts, expressing two states to which the Lord submitted Himself, and His conduct while so submitting. The Hebrew word translated "oppressed" implies to urge, to drive as a slave-driver his slaves, or as a creditor demanding the payment of debts, or an exactor of tribute which is due.

The word may have a very wide application as regards our Lord. The meek and lowly One, living in the midst of a self-seeking and self-exalting people, must have been the subject of continual exaction; but His invariable habit was that of opening not His mouth, or, in other words, of letting His yieldingness be known unto all men, when this yieldingness did not encroach on His faithfulness and obedience to God His Father.

Possibly the word would allow us to apply it to the demands which were made upon Him in the righteous judgment of God, when, as the Surety, He restored that which He took not away.

7. "And He was afflicted." In the book of Psalms, and especially in the prophetic Psalms of the suffering Messiah, a word is frequently used, derived from the root used here, and translated "poor," as in Psalm 109. 16, 22. In Psalm 22 the same word is translated "afflicted." There is commonly the added thought in it of meekness, or gentleness, a state which prefers to bear injuries

rather than return them. See the same word in Numbers 12. 3.

In the second part of the verse there are also two closely connected thoughts expressed by the lamb and the sheep. The *lamb* is led to the slaughter where its life is taken away, and the *sheep* before her shearer where her covering is taken from her. In this connection the words are repeated, "He openeth not His mouth."

8. **"He was taken from prison and from judgment."** See marginal reading. The word translated "prison" is from a root signifying to shut, to enclose, to restrain, to hinder. May there not be a combined thought in the two words, restraint and judgment? For this is exactly what did take place. Pilate was held firmly in the grasp of the chief priests and scribes, by whom he was compelled to give a judgment according to their will and counsel, a forced judgment.

8. **"And who shall declare His generation?"** There are two thoughts conveyed by the English word "generation," that of succession in natural descent, as the generations of Adam (Gen. 5. 1); and the people of the same period, as "in this generation" (Gen. 7. 1). But these two ideas are expressed in Hebrew by two distinct words, as in Genesis 6. 9, "These are the generations of Noah," that is, the descendants of Noah. But again, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation," that is, among the men of his own

time. The word used in Isaiah 53 is the latter, and consequently excludes the thought sometimes expressed on this passage, supposing that the spiritual seed of the Lord shall become vast beyond the possibility of declaring it. The thought is true, as we know from other passages of Scripture, but not conveyed by this one.

A marvellous description has been given of a perfect Man, perfect in His obedience to God, perfect in His love and pity for mankind, perfect in His service of ministering to their needs, and perfect in behaviour when oppressed and cruelly treated, even unto death. After such a description how appropriate is the question, "Who shall declare His generation?" that is, His contemporaries, who, after witnessing such a holy, self-sacrificing life in healing their sick, in feeding their hungry, in comforting the distressed, that they should join hands, rulers and people, and with one voice cry out, "Crucify Him!" Who can write a history which shall declare the character of such a blind and Satan-led generation?

8. **"For He was cut off out of the land of the living."** That is, they carried out their evil purpose, not only in securing an unrighteous judgment, but the victim of their infuriated enmity was actually put to death. With wicked hands they crucified and slew Him. They could do no more. Thus to all succeeding generations the deed of that generation has stood, and will stand,

as the blackest crime that has ever been committed. But that generation is but a representative of others to show what man is capable of when brought into contact with God manifest in the flesh.

That generation said, If we had been in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Other generations have said, If we had been at Jerusalem in those days we would not have joined with the Jews in shedding the blood of the Just One. But this only proves that we are as ignorant as they were of the nature of sin which dwells in us.

8. **“For the transgression of My people was He stricken.”** What a marvellous exhibition of grace is given in this short phrase added to the verse! It takes us behind the scene in Pilate’s hall, and behind the jeering crowd that pass by Calvary’s hill, to the hand of God, and to the cause of the stroke, reminding us of such passages as Acts 3. 14, 15, 17, 18; also Genesis 45. 5. Our manifold transgressions needed to be brought together as in one mass; and that we might escape our doom, as the consequence of such breaches of the divine law, a stroke must fall on the Surety who took the place of the guilty. That stroke fell.

... O Christ, it fell on Thee,
Thou wast sore stricken of Thy God,
There’s not one stroke for me;
Thy tears, Thy blood beneath it flowed,
Thy bruising healeth me.

The darkness is passed! "IT IS FINISHED!" has been uttered. The victory has been gained.

Our meditation on the former part of this chapter led us up to the victory gained, when the Victor, through death, destroyed him that had the power of death. We now proceed:

9. **"And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death."** The Revised Version has, "And they made His grave." No doubt this expresses more clearly in English what is understood in Hebrew. There is no pronoun accompanying the verb in this case; the verb, however, is in the singular number. Thus no importance is given to the person, or persons, who made the grave; some one made it. The fact which stands out prominently is that it was made, and it was intended that the One, over whose head had been placed the superscription, "THE KING OF THE JEWS," should be buried with the wicked (plural). Graves were made that day for three bodies, or it may be that one grave was made for the three, thus confounding that "holy thing" born of the virgin with the bodies of two "malefactors." But this was not to be, for different reasons.

Step by step, as the Man of Sorrows proceeded along His course, and more particularly as He drew near to the Cross, when He was accused of crimes worthy of death, it became necessary that His innocence should be borne witness to, and that

when brought to stand at the bar in the place of a malefactor it should be seen that He was ever "separate from sinners" (Heb. 7. 26). Thus Judas was compelled to bear witness of Him to the chief priests in his memorable words, "I have betrayed the innocent blood." When the Lord was brought before Pilate, Pilate's wife sent unto him, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just Man." Later, Pilate himself said, "I find no fault in Him." And further, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person." Later still, the centurion rendered his testimony, "Certainly this was a righteous Man." But even so, with all this weight of testimony to the innocence of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ, no steps were taken that we know of by the governor to rescue the body of the righteous One from the grave of the malefactors, and the time was short; for with the Jews the next day began that evening at 6 o'clock, in less than three hours, before which it was important that the bodies should be removed.

This urgency was however foreseen by God, provided for, and prophesied of; for Joseph, the rich man of Arimathaea, came forward and "boldly" went in to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, and laid it in his own new tomb. Thus another testimony was added, and that by an honourable counsellor, of the innocence of the Lord by his timely rescuing the body from the burial which the soldiers were about to give it.

9. **“And with the rich in His death.”** Notice here the exactness of the prophetic statement. The word “wicked” in the Hebrew is in the plural number, for it had reference to the malefactors whose bodies had to be buried. But the word “rich” is in the singular number, for it had reference to the rich man of Arimathaea. This gracious act of Joseph came as a proper act, because our Lord “had done no violence, neither was deceit in His mouth.” The innocence and the righteousness of the Holy One of God demanded that His body should not be confounded with those of the malefactors.

But another strong reason for it was that a clear proof of the resurrection might be given; and in no other way can we conceive of this being done more effectively than by the body being laid in a new tomb hewn out of a rock, and then sealed and guarded by soldiers.

10. **“Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.”** This deeply solemn expression can only be understood when taken in connection with the word “pleasure” in the same verse. The work of redemption is the work of Jehovah’s pleasure, and that this might be accomplished Jehovah’s servant must be bruised. His soul must be made an offering for sin. Henceforth it is only right that He who at such a cost wrought redemption should be entrusted to carry the work and purpose of Jehovah to a successful issue.

We have in this verse the words "bruise" and "grief," but both from the hand of Jehovah. There were many sufferings of the Lord Jesus from the hand of man ; there were also sufferings which He endured, as we have seen, entailed by His very nature, as the Holy One of God, moving about in the midst of sinful men, suffering the consequences of their sinful course. But in this 10th verse the bruising and the grief are undoubtedly in righteous judgment when a sin-avenging God demanded payment to the full from the hands of the Surety. The next clause in the verse proves it: "**When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin.**"

It is very remarkable that there should be such a change in the pronoun here from the third person to the second. There are other examples of the same sudden, unexpected change, and when they occur a climax is reached. See Deuteronomy 33. 2, 3 ; Psalm 23. 1-4 ; Micah 7. 19 ; Zechariah 14. 5. The things spoken of are so great and marvellous that the soul is, as it were, caught away unto God Himself.

The phrase, "an offering for sin," is expressed by one word in the Hebrew—"asham." It is frequently used in the book of Leviticus and elsewhere to express "trespass" and "trespass-offering." At the time of this wondrous transaction, to which all the shadows of the Levitical sacrifices pointed, and on which the eternal salvation and happiness of sinners depended, the

prophecy declares that He should see (His) seed. In the first place, we may be sure that it was the eye of faith which saw the seed.

The prophecy answers somewhat to the words of the apostle, "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross" (Heb. 12. 2). But it is also true that by the side of our Lord in that solemn moment there was nailed to another tree one of the seed, whose confession must have administered to the spirit of the Lord of Glory no small measure of consolation.

10. **"He shall prolong His days."** These words point on to "the length of days," the days of Eternity, even life for evermore, mentioned in the Psalms and agreeing with different expressions in the Epistles, as "He ever liveth," "He continueth ever."

10. **"And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand."** The word here translated "prosper" primarily means "to ford a river," and it is one so used in 2 Samuel 19. 17; not in verse 18. Hence its significance, to go on well, to prosper, to succeed. It supposes the complete success of an undertaking through the midst of opposing elements.

How exactly does this describe the work of redemption! How terrible have been the opposing power of darkness against every step taken in faith by the redeemed for nearly six thousand years! The floods of wickedness, like a great

swelling river, have continually been threatening to carry the children of God down its stream. To the eye of the natural man the victory seemed to be on the side of Satan. But "Jehovah sitteth upon the flood; yea, Jehovah sitteth King for ever. Jehovah will give strength unto His people; Jehovah will bless His people with peace" (Psa. 29. 10, 11). Because of the sustaining power of Jehovah who sitteth above the water-floods, therefore His people triumph.

The victory that overcometh the world is our faith. Abel triumphed by faith, but he was slain. Joseph triumphed by faith in Potiphar's house, and went to prison, where he continued his prosperous career (Gen. 39). The 11th of Hebrews gives us a list of triumphant believers who were led from victory to victory by the Captain of their salvation. To this list, time failing to give their names, are added those who "were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented."

And what shall we say of the triumphant ones of the present dispensation which is to be wound up with the triumph over the Antichrist? Will it not be seen that our Captain has led His people through floods of tribulation, and that not one will have been lost. Jehovah's pleasure shall prosper in His hand, notwithstanding the raging of the waves of the sea.

11. **“He shall see of the travail of His soul.”** We are now ascending. The lowest depths have been reached, the billows have passed over Him, but out of them the Redeemer has risen, and His course is now one of continual ascending. This verse, while being one of joy and pleasure, is also one that calls to mind the sorrows and burdens of His life and death; but they have passed, no more to return, but never to be forgotten. Their fruit will give eternal satisfaction and pleasure; for the many sons which shall be brought to glory to fill the Father’s house will be there in virtue of the travail of His soul when He bore their iniquities. Well may it be asked, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died” (Rom. 8. 33, 34).

12. **“Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great,” etc.** Some have supposed that Satan is referred to here under the words “great” and “strong,” with whom the Lord Jesus is to divide the human race. But such a thought is entirely foreign to the whole of Scripture, and contrary to the teaching of this very passage. The “great ones” are the “many” of verse 11. The Hebrew word is precisely the same, and in both verses in a plural form. His redeemed are both many and great. They have been made great by His gentleness. They are also strong. This word also is in the plural number. The Word

of God abideth in them, therefore they are strong, and have overcome the wicked one. See passages in the book of Revelation which speak of the overcomers through the Blood of the Lamb. Here also the triumph of the great and the strong is closely connected with the death of the Messiah in a fourfold phrase of unmistakable language. Because:

He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bare the sin of many,
And He made* intercession for the transgressors.

Having come to the close of this marvellous portion of Scripture, I feel like one who has been handling precious stones without knowing their value. So I have need to go over the chapter again, and yet again, until I shall know more of the unfathomable mystery of the death of Jehovah's Servant, whose soul was made a trespass offering, whose days have been prolonged, and in whose hand Jehovah's pleasure shall prosper.

* Or, "will continue to make."

The Attitude of Christ to the Scriptures.

By J. B. WATSON.

London.

THE record in the Gospels concerning the life of our Lord divides itself into three well-defined epochs: one of thirty years, another of about three years, and a third of forty days' duration. That is, thirty years of privacy and seclusion in His life at Nazareth, three years in the blaze of publicity that attended His ministry, and forty days of His wonderful risen appearances. By far the greatest part of the record is devoted to the central section—the ministry of our Lord. Dr. STALKER has divided those three years for us into a year of obscurity, a year of public favour, and a year of opposition.

Let us consider our subject along these lines.

1. The attitude of our Lord to the Scriptures in that long period of thirty years of privacy.

2. His attitude in the Temptation that preceded His ministry.

3. His attitude to the Scriptures in His public ministry.

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4. His attitude in that supreme sorrow which closed His ministry.

5. His attitude to the same Scriptures in His risen life.

I.—In the Years of Preparation.

Apart from the three years of the public ministry of Christ, there are no years that have ever rolled over this old world of ours which so attract one as the thirty years which prepared Him for that ministry. Yet the Spirit of God has kept those sacred years wrapped in secrecy. "Only one flower has come to us over the wall of that enclosed garden" (Stalker), and it is so exquisite that it makes us long to see all that was enclosed therein.

"And when He was about twelve years of age they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days... the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem" (Luke 2. 42, 43). You remember the story too well for it to be necessary to repeat it in detail, how that His parents found Him, after three days of search, in the colonnades of the temple amongst the groups of learners that clustered about Israel's teachers, hearing those learned men who spent their lives in seeking to expound the ancient Scriptures to their fellow-countrymen; and how those teachers were amazed at His understanding and His answers. "His combinative insight and His discerning replies" (Edersheim) showed that

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already the 119th Psalm was having its perfect fulfilment in Himself. They bore evidence that here was One who was bringing to Holy Scripture a mind so purely spiritual, and an inward eye so clear and so strong that the Scriptures conveyed profounder meanings to Him than to any son of Adam's race who had ever pored over the Word of God.

Almighty God chose for His own dear Son a pious, lower-middle class home, a village environment, a station of lowly toil, in order that during those years of silence, with that clearest of all spiritual visions,

He Should Read Three Books:

The Book of the Scriptures, the Book of Nature, and the Book of Man. With that library for ever before Him, slowly and silently the Son of Man, according to Luke's own word, grew "in wisdom"—intellectually; grew "in stature"—physically; grew in the "good pleasure of God"—a perfect spiritual Man.

When the thirty years were at an end, and on a certain Sabbath, He stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth to read, it became plain how well-spent all those quiet and unrecorded years had been, for He knew where to open the Scriptures and read—He knew *how* to read them, too, for in those days that had passed He had been every day finding Himself in the Scriptures—and having

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read, and given the Book back again to the attendant, could say, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

The attitude of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Scriptures during that first great preparatory period of His life was that of a delighting and reverent student. Those words in the 119th Psalm were never so true of any man as they were of Himself. He had more understanding than all His teachers because God's testimonies were His meditation.

II.—In the Temptation.

Even if one had the ability one cannot now attempt to peer into the mystery of the temptation in the wilderness, but will simply quote Scripture words concerning Him, that He was in all points—with one deeply emphasised and underscored exception, *i.e.*, apart from the temptation that comes from sin—tempted as we are; and again this word: "He Himself hath suffered being tempted." Remember that the Evil One chose his time, watched his opportunity, and brought all his powers to bear and all his subtlety into play in the temptation that our Lord endured in the wilderness. Scripture having told us so much also makes us aware how it was that He emerged triumphant. He was the Man who knew how to wield Holy Scripture.

It has been noted that all the three replies He

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gave to Satan's suggestions lie upon one open page of our Bible (Deut. 6-8) as though from a single day's reading of Scripture He found all that was needful to give Satan his rebuff and to overcome him. There, girt about with truth, stood our Lord, wearing the breastplate of righteousness, His feet shod with alacrity to do the will of God, helmeted with salvation's mighty purpose, upholding faith's shield, grasping the saying of God and with it putting to flight His foe.

Our Lord's attitude to the Holy Scriptures in the hour of His temptation was that of complete confidence therein and complete dependence thereupon. He used the Scripture as the warrior uses his sword. He trusted it as the soldier trusts his weapon.

Thus in His private life He was the reverent student of the Scriptures, and in His wilderness temptation He was the One who was characterised by a wholehearted and simple dependence upon, and confidence in, the written Word.

III.—In His Public Ministry.

Next come and see that fruitful period of His life, the period of His public teaching. What place and what part had the Scriptures therein? How did He use them when He began to utter the divine Oracles in the ears of men?

It is sometimes claimed that in the Sermon on the Mount He relegated Moses altogether to a back

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place and superseded all that Moses had ever written. The truth is that He spoke in that wonderful discourse in no sense as Moses' critic, but as the first worthy interpreter that Moses ever had; as the One who looked into the law that God had given and saw it in all the breadth of its spirituality; saw its holiness and justice and goodness, and regarding it could say, again out of the 119th Psalm, "I have seen an end of all perfection; but Thy commandment is exceeding broad."

Have you met that man who, rejecting the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ—salvation through simple faith in a Crucified and Risen Saviour—tells you that his religion is

The Sermon on the Mount?

If ever a man is to be pitied, that is the man, for in that discourse our Lord, a greater and higher than Moses, reveals how hopeless it is for the natural man to rise to all the spiritual requirements of the Law of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ then, by means of the place He gave the Old Testament Scriptures in His teaching, showed the height and breadth of the requirements of God. Remember this word: "He that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, is like unto a man that built his house upon the sand" (Matt. 7. 24).

The Sermon on the Mount is fuller of all that drives the sin-awakened soul close up to the Cross

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of Christ than almost any other part of the Scripture. Its lofty standard fills the heart more with the sense of its own sinfulness than do all the thunders of Sinai, and makes it flee to the riven Rock of Ages as the only place where a poor sinner may find peace of heart indeed.

In His public ministry Christ made it plain that He believed the histories of the Old Testament to be entirely true. He spoke of some of the Psalms, and some of the very Psalms that the critics relegate to later dates, as being indeed the Psalms of David. He insisted in the clearest words upon the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, saying, "Moses wrote of Me." He quoted from nearly all the historical books. He, as it were, looking down the ages as though seeing that certain of the prophets would be called more into question than others, gave His confirming word to those very books, notably Isaiah, Jonah, and Daniel. He set His seal thus to the dependableness of the Old Testament and to

The Veracity of Its History.

He accepted its miracles as facts. It may not be exactly and technically correct to describe such events as Jonah's experience and the Flood of Noah's day as miracles, but ordinary folks who look upon such unprecedented events as being miraculous perhaps will agree to put them in that category. Our Lord Jesus Christ con-

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firmed His belief in both. That manna was given from Heaven for forty years was a fact for His simple acceptance. That Naaman was cured of his leprosy He never calls in question.

He relied upon the verbal accuracy of the Old Testament, and by His use sometimes of a single word put to flight His opponents in controversy. In the 22nd Matthew He depends upon the tense of a verb in order to demonstrate the great truth of resurrection. In the same chapter, dealing with the 110th Psalm, He uses the phrase "David's Lord" as the crux of the problem He set the Pharisees: "How is it that Messiah is not only David's son, as you believe, but David's Lord also?" In John 10. 35 He based His argument against His opponents upon a brief phrase in one of the Psalms. Thus, everywhere, our Lord Jesus Christ in His teaching accepted the histories of the Old Testament, believed the records of its miracles, assumed the dependableness of its very words and phrases, and showed Himself to be the One who used and honoured at every turn the Sacred Writings. He used them constantly to end and to overcome in the controversies that were thrust upon Him by His foes. His word of rebuke to His critics was this, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures" (Matt. 22. 29).

IV.—In His Supreme Sorrow.

What shall we say as we approach that closing

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hour, that greatest of all hours in the world's history, the hour of His supreme sorrow? His foreknowledge of the Cross made its horror for Him none the less; His soul was troubled as it approached. But when the hour itself was upon Him those same Scriptures which in earliest days He had been taught, of which He had been a student in all those secret years, which had been His strength and stay before the subtle attacks of His great enemy, which He had used in such a wondrous way in His teaching and ministry, were now His support and stay.

"The Psalms in Human Life" is the title of a well-known book. The Psalms never had a place in any human life such as they had in His; they never had a place in any death such as they had in His death. We hear Him speaking from Psalm 69 upon the Cross. In order that the Scripture might be fulfilled "they gave Him vinegar to drink." John says He uttered those words, "I thirst," for He had so found Himself in the Scriptures that He had not failed to find also His Cross there, and had foreseen all the horrors that were wrapped about that Cross. He saw all those prophecies that had been written aforetime pointing to His atoning and vicarious death, marching forward in that darkest of all dark hours to their sure fulfilment.

When His grief was deeper than words can tell, when His loneliness was such as our hearts shall

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never understand, when the world reeled and rocked and hid itself in the kindly dark, unequal to the task of looking upon the dying agonies of its Creator and Upholder, then it was that the Scriptures gave Him words in which to utter His sorrow and trouble, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?"

The Psalms Came to Him Then,

and those same old words that had been His strength and stay in many another hour came to His support in that hour of His heaviest grief. All through that 22nd Psalm He lived until at last its closing words filled His lips, and triumphantly He cried: "IT IS FINISHED." It was also a Psalm (Psa. 31) that gave him His last words as death's Conqueror. Ere he descended into death's domain to wrest from it its keys and to take away its sting He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

He leant upon the Scriptures when He was enveloped in unimaginable sorrow, and they failed Him not. We who stand at a far-off distance to look upon those unique sorrows of His know this full well, that those self-same Scriptures will never fail us in our far lighter sorrows.

V.—In His Risen Life.

What was our Lord's attitude to the Scriptures in resurrection? *He reaffirmed in resurrection*

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all He had ever said of them in the days of His ministry.

It is painful even to think of the things that are said about our Lord by many who would admit all that we have so far said as to His endorsement of the Old Testament Scriptures. In speaking about our Lord's holy humanity, they so misuse and misapply the word "limitations." It is distressing to read the things that are said in many quarters to-day about His "accepting the current mistaken notions of His day." Even though we conceded all that—which we have no intention of doing—to those who say and write such things, there is still this question to be faced: Remembering that He is now in the glory and power of risen life, and that all authority is His,

What does He say about the Scriptures now?

Does He begin to put right all those "mistaken notions?" Does He say that it was not Moses who wrote the Pentateuch? Nay; but this is what He said at one memorable risen appearing: "Oh, fools, and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24. 25). You can make what you like of that word "fools;" you can water it down and make it gentle, if you like; but it is idle to attempt to get rid of the idea of rebuke out of it, and it is a solemn thing to be rebuked by the risen Son of God. His rebuke was this, not that they believed so much, but that

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they did not believe enough: "Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe *all*."

So that from Genesis to Malachi the risen Christ reaffirms the absolute dependableness of all that is written, and He calls men fools who dare to blue-pencil Scripture and who presumptuously undertake to sub-edit and abridge the Living Oracles of God.

It was a wise Christian who gave this advice to a younger Christian about the Bible: "*Fear*—not to believe it; *fear not*—to believe it," and when we recollect that our risen Lord puts His own stamp upon all that the Old Testament says, from first to last, and says:

"You Must Believe it All,"

then we feel that our wisdom and our profit is to take it *all* at His valuation.

What the disciples had done was this—there were a great number of prophecies that spoke of Christ in Glory and of the Coming Kingdom, and they grasped these eagerly; but there were some other very inconvenient ones that spoke of a suffering Christ, of a rejected Saviour, and these did not fit in at all with their expectations, so they set them aside or turned the pages over quickly when they came to them, and turned to the more congenial ones. Therefore Calvary found them at a loss. Now, the Lord says, Your folly was in not believing *all*, for in God's good

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time the things that your poor minds could not reconcile, blend together, and fit and dovetail into each other, perfecting in His divine purposes.

Christianity in its practical aspect is simply

Loyalty to Christ;

if it is not that, what is it? Our personal fealty to a living Lord—that surely sums it up.

We have seen that in His private and secluded life our Lord's attitude to Scripture was that of delighting and loving study; that in the hour of fierce trial and temptation His attitude was that of complete dependence; that in His life-work He was the great user of Scripture, He honoured it at every turn; that in the time of His sorrow it was His comfort and His stay; that in the hour of His triumph He took it and re-endorsed it all. How can we be loyal to Christ and take up any other attitude than that to Scripture?

He has given us a greater Bible than He Himself had, greater and richer and more wonderful. It does not hold only promise, it holds fulfilment; not prophecies of Him alone, but the glowing facts of His accomplishments in the fields of redemption. Himself walks before us in the Volume that is in our hands. Shall we not use Scripture as He used Scripture? In our private and secluded life—that life of ours that is hid from the eye of man—shall we not so live that we

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can say with Him, "Oh, how I love Thy law, it is my meditation all the day?"

In those hours that come upon us all, those hours when the assaults of the enemy are most felt, those hours when Hell itself seems to be let loose upon us, shall we not also stand, girt about with the truth? Shall we not learn like that warrior of David's day to grasp the sword and to wield it till it cleaves to our very hand, and to conquer, crying, "It is written?" Whatever public service He has given us to do in His Name, shall we not fashion all our activities by the precepts that are written therein? Is it not our business to make known the great central message which this grand Book conveys? Surely so!

Then it will be that in our hours of sorrow too, when lies heavy upon us the cross, that we will still find our solid comfort and our sure support in the same living oracles that have made a soft and downy pillow for the heads of many a generation of dying saints.

"The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with His name."

Sad for us if we so neglect and so undervalue Scripture that there shall come a day when words that have been sweet to believers gone before are robbed of their reality and are idle to us, and we cannot feel our hearts lifted Heavenward amid the gloom when we sing:

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“Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.”

Last of all, dare we be heedless of His warning against piecemeal acceptance of these holy writings?

“ALL the Scriptures,”

let us remember that word of His, and let us guard against what is worse than folly, allowing ourselves to submit to the sub-editing of the divine library to meet the conceptions of an unspiritual and blind Modernism.

The whole matter seems to be aptly summed up in some well-chosen words set down by the late Dr. HANDLEY MOULE. Every time I have read them I have felt constrained to add to them my humble but sincere “Amen.” I invite you to add your Amen to them also. These are the words:

“When my Lord Christ first became a living and an unutterable Reality to me, I remember that one of my first sensations of profound relief was this: *He absolutely trusted the Bible*; and though there are things in it inexplicable that have puzzled me so much, I am going, not in a blind sense, but reverently to trust the Book because of Him.”

That is it—to *trust the Book because of HIM*. How could we do less?

“To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.”

Turning Promises into Facts.

By Dr. NORTHCOTE DECK, F.R.G.S.,
Solomon Islands.

OUR Christianity is stillborn if it is not practical, if it does not profoundly and continually influence life and conduct. For Christianity is a life rather than a mere profession, a life to be lived daily in Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost. But if it is to really yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness" there is a certain definite reaction of the soul which must be realised and consciously practised. I refer to the *habit* of daily definite *acts of faith* so needful throughout the believer's life.

Yet, consciously or unconsciously, many Christians have *two* Gospels; a Gospel of *faith* for conversion, to be followed by a Gospel of *works*, or of self-effort, for sanctification in after life. With some, indeed, this is deliberate. They must perforce yield, and leave the heavenly future in God's hands, when they become children of God by faith; but they are often unwilling to surrender the earthly present into those same wonderful hands. To such I would solemnly say, it is terribly possible to have a saved soul, and yet to have a lost,

An Entirely Lost Life.

Thus though salvation depends entirely on Christ and His finished work, our enjoyment of that salvation depends largely on ourselves and on our daily yielding and appropriating His fullness. And to the carnal soul who will not yield, who disdains to "walk by faith," there can be no real enjoyment of Christ.

But there are many who are not consciously rebellious, who pray much, but who are yet really living lives of self-effort, and are only too conscious of powerlessness and defeat. To such, "having begun in the spirit are ye now made perfect in the flesh" (Gal. 3. 3), is God's searching question of this, which is literally a Gospel of works, by which men, justified by a definite saving act of faith in the Son of God, are yet really seeking to be

Sanctified by a Process

of their own efforts.

Yet we are warned of God: "The just shall *live* by faith" (not merely believe and be saved by faith). So, though "try" must be the believer's best motto if he does not walk by faith, yet "trust" must continually be his method if he is to harness and appropriate the resources, the power of God. It may be humbling to the flesh, but it is one of God's certainties that the great

wonderland of grace and of glory and of God can only be possessed by a life of faith. And a "life of faith" implies a series of conscious definite repeated daily acts of faith, by which we take God at His Word, believe His promises, claim them for our own in spite of feelings or appearances, and so turn them into present blessed facts. So *holiness by faith* is the only logical sequence of *justification by faith*.

It has been beautifully said that every true believer walks continually through life upon a pathway literally

Paved with the Promises of God.

And these promises are the most far reaching and particular and comprehensive it is possible to imagine, so that wondrous possibilities are open to each of God's pilgrims. Now from time immemorial the foot, the human foot, has been the most ancient and significant standard of measurement. And for us wayfarers who to-day walk the Celestial Pathway, the believer's foot may be just as definite a measure of spiritual things.

It is said of WILLIAM PENN that his integrity so won the confidence of the Indians that they offered to give him all the land his foot could cover in a day. So he set off one day and walked nearly thirty miles, encircling and so gaining possession of the whole area that Philadelphia now occupies;

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and one of the Indians shrewdly said to him:
"The pale face has made a very long walk to-day!"

AND GOD? Why, God has promised to each of us the very same! Shall we not take Him at His Word? He says: "Every place (and so every promise) that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto thee" (Joshua 13). So a human foot, measuring, taking possession of God's promises by faith, has possibilities which are quite incalculable. Yet in spite of this spiritual pathway of promises many true believers continue to be literally

"Spiritual Paupers, "

to the scorn, the derision of the world. "All things are yours" is so clearly, so tragically untrue for them.

They pathetically remind one of the original owners of Mount Morgan, in Queensland, who toiled for years on its barren slopes, eking out a miserable living, never knowing that *underfoot* was one of the richest mountains of gold the world has known. Here was wealth, vast, unimagined, yet unrealised, unappropriated. Yet every believer has, in the wealth of God's promises, a spiritual Mount Morgan under his very feet only waiting to be recognised and claimed and so appropriated.

The heart of the matter may be best explained by the old illustration of walking on *two* feet. In all our spiritual progress there are two elements

in each act of faith, *first asking*, and *then taking* from God. Thus if a child asks me for a present, and I hold out a shilling, it is no use for the child to go on *asking* any more. The shilling is already proffered; it must now *take* in order to possess it. Even so, many believers are good at asking, but fail to take, to appropriate. They go on praying, and praying, and praying for some blessing God is trying to let them to receive. They are, as it were, hopping round on one foot, praying, and praying, and praying. But hopping is a laborious mode of progress, never intended by God, and so is such praying.

For, strange as it may seem,

There is a Time not to Pray,

a time when prayer can do no more. And that is when it is *time to act*. "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou upon thy face?" was God's command to Joshua when he was praying to him for guidance and help (Joshua 7. 10). What! Not pray? No, not when it is time to act. For as God's intended way of progression for man was walking on two feet, first the one foot, then the other, even so it is in spiritual things. We must ask and then take, ask and then take, and so we shall advance joyfully and continuously in the normal appointed way. But taking, appropriating, must always be the sequel to asking, just as the left foot follows

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the right. So, literally, we shall learn to "walk and not faint," and so acquire the blessed habit of "obtaining promises." Are you daily walking on two feet spiritually? Have you learned the happy art of asking and then taking the treasures God is longing to pour out? If so, then you really know how to turn His promises into present facts.

It is recorded of HUDSON TAYLOR that on a day of deep depression, in his daily reading he came across God's significant statement of the believer, "My cup runneth over." "Yes, Lord, if *Thou* dost say so, it must be true, but yet it really is very far from running over, for there is not enough money for the missionaries." And he read again, "My cup runneth over." "Yes, Lord, Thou sayest it, but there are dissensions among some of the missionaries." But again, "My cup runneth over," and still other very real burdens and difficulties came to mind. "But, Lord, Thou art eternal, and Thy Word is eternally true. So, in spite of appearances, it must be true just now for me.

'My Cup Runneth Over!'

I do now believe it and count it true, and thank Thee for it." So by God's grace that burdened, heroic missionary was enabled in a time of great difficulty to rest upon that gracious statement and promise of God, and to appropriate it as true for

him just then. So he "obtained" (Heb. 11. 33) that promise, and turned it into a present happy fact by a definite act of faith. And the effect was very much more than the mere subjective effect of cheering his own heart. For God very soon showed him that it *was* literally true at that moment by dissolving all the difficulties in His own wonderful way, so well known to us in the mission field. That, to me, is a perfect instance of turning a promise into a present fact by an act of faith, by a man who had learned to walk on both feet, by praying and believing, by asking and then taking.

And it is a habit one can most humbly and thankfully recommend after some years of experience, as most practical and profitable, indeed as being often the only pathway open to the burdened believer. How very often in years past in the conflict of the mission field spiritual defeat has only been changed into victory by a deliberate taking hold in faith, and by

Holding on in Spite of Feelings

to some such promise of God till He has intervened and given deliverance. And deliberately practising this blessed habit continually tends to enlarge our expectations, so that, as with GEO. MULLER, asking and then expecting in faith becomes almost automatic, and prayer becomes asking and *accepting*. So gradually, graciously,

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after repeated experiences there is developed in the believer that *supersight of faith* which is God's most precious gift to His children, so that we may learn to

"Feel through all this fleshly dress,
Clear sights of everlastingness."

And when a promise is so realised by an act of faith, I like to think of the joy to Him, and I seem to see the blessed Master turn His gracious face as of old to ask again, "Who touched Me?" "Somebody hath touched Me." And there is love, not censure, in His look and tone; love and gladness at His child's boldness and confidence in Him. For it is just that very tangible act, that touching in faith, that *taking* in confidence, that touches the Saviour's heart as well as His garment, and opens His hand of bounty.

Oh, often put out, even tremblingly, thy hand of faith, and touch, and so take! This is the happy life of faith. And as we read in the long and luminous portrait gallery of the Bible, and find there the paladins of faith, and listen to the cadence of their triumphant voices as they "subdued kingdoms,...obtained promises;...out of weakness were made strong." May their mantle descend in some humble degree upon us; may our hearts be stirred to like expectations as we deliberately set ourselves to turn God's promises into present facts!

On the Deity of Christ.

By JOHN NELSON DARBY.

CHRIST was the Jehovah of the Old Testament who could say, "Before Me, there was no God: I know not any." All the fullness of the Godhead dwelt (and dwells) in Him "bodily." He was "Immanuel"—His Name called "Jesus" (*Jah*—the Saviour), for "He shall save His people from their sins." When Isaiah saw the thrice-holy Jehovah of Hosts, he saw, says John, Christ's glory, and spake of Him (Isa. 6; Dan. 7. 9-22; 1 Tim. 6. 15; Rev. 19. 11-16).

I read, "In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1. 1). Wherever my mind can go back to as a beginning as to time, there He was. "He was in the beginning with God"—always a distinct person. And lest any inferiority should be alleged Paul tells us, "All the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him" (Col. 1. 19), for this is the true force of the passage. And so

The Fact is Declared to Have Been,

"For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9). As a person He

"emptied Himself." He could not have done so save as God. A creature who leaves his "first estate" sins therein. The Sovereign Lord can descend in grace. In Him it is love.

He is, though unchangeable in nature as God, yet in His path a dependent Man. He lives by "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4. 4)—is sealed by the Father; the glory He had before the world is now given Him of the Father. Now in this state of obedient Servant, with a revelation which God gave to Him, the day and hour of His judicial action was not revealed (Mark 13. 32). "It is not for you," He says to His disciples, "to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts. 1. 7). And to this exactly Psalm 110 answers: "Sit on My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." When? Sit there in this place of divine glory *till*—no more is said. Now

I do not Pretend to Explain

(God forbid I should) how is this!

I know He is the Son, I know He is "I AM," "the true God." How to put this together I do not know, though I see and know they are together. Did I know, I should have lost that divine fullness, which, if capable of being fathomed when in manhood, was not truly then divine.

God, through grace, I know; man too, I know, in a certain sense; but God became a Man is beyond all—even my spiritual thoughts. Be it so; it is infinite grace, and I can adore. I am sure for my soul's blessing He is both, and the Son of the Father too—for the persons are as distinct as the nature is clear. Say to a Christian, The Son sent the Father; he would instinctively revolt at once. That the Father sent the Son is the deepest joy of His soul.

“From Everlasting to Everlasting.”

By J. W. JORDAN.

UTTERED by Himself, “I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST” (Rev. 1. 17), this is one of those beautiful “I AM’s” of our Lord Jesus, so clearly demonstrating His Godhead, because we find the same words in Isaiah 41. 4; 44. 6; and 48. 12, connected with the name of God, Jehovah, and the King in relation to the generations, creation, and prophecy. In Revelation 22. 13 this title is classed with two others which are similar, “the Alpha and Omega—the Beginning and the End,” and yet each appears to have its own special teaching.

The First and the Last in Isaiah 44. 6 is linked with that grand statement, “Beside Me there is no God,” so that this name, “the First and the Last,” very clearly establishes the Godhead of the Lord Jesus Christ, both in reference to His being God and Jehovah. How fitting was this declaration to John in Patmos, who, being banished there

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for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, is given that wonderful revelation of the Lord as the glorified High Priest, and in the description of Him when John reaches the climax, “His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength,” he fell at His feet as dead. Then came the precious assuring words to John, “Fear not, I am the First and the Last.” Such a statement would at once direct the apostle’s thoughts to Isaiah’s prophecy, and give him the assurance that although everything here appeared against him, the Lord Jesus as the only God, both First and Last, was with him as his mighty upholder to comfort and sustain.

“The Beginning and the End.” This title would appear to be more used in reference to Christ as the Beginner and Ender of the purposes of God. The word Beginning is similar to Prince (Acts 3. 15; 5. 3), Captain (Heb. 11. 10), and Author (Heb. 12. 2), and all these names are used by the Holy Spirit in reference to our Lord Jesus fulfilling the counsels of God both in Creation and Redemption.

“The Alpha and Omega.” It is generally known that these are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and they would encompass the whole of that alphabet which was used by the Spirit of God to write the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ. This accordingly connects the title with our Lord as not only fulfilling

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the whole Word of God, but as being "The Word." He is therefore the Alpha and Omega of the Written Word and the Living Word.

The First as to Our Lord's Deity.

From the Hebrew root, "the First" means Principal, Chief, Head of a river, as such our Lord Jesus fulfils all these, because He is the Source of all things. Speaking of Him as Wisdom in Proverbs 8. 23 the Holy Spirit writes: "*In beginning*," also in John 1. 1, "*In beginning*," no article in either case, indicating no definite point of time, but looking back into the past eternity, as in the words of Psalm 90. 2, "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God."

In the list of names given of Christ in Isaiah 9. 6 He is called "the Everlasting Father," or more literally, "the Father of Eternity," so that our Lord Jesus is not only the Everlasting One from all Eternity to all Eternity, but He is Eternity itself; in the words quoted, the "Father" of it, and apart from Him there is no Eternity. If we consider this sublime subject through another of His names, the title Jah, which expresses God as the Triune God of the Eternal Present, we find this same truth is set forth in relation to Christ in Colossians 1. 17, where it is stated, "He *is* before all things," not He *was*, but He *is*, thus showing Him to be the Blessed One to whom the past, present, and future

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is one eternal present ; so that in the past “*He is*,” in the present “*He is*,” and in the future “*He is*” the Father of Eternity, the God of the Everlasting Now.

The First as Creator of Principalities and Powers.

We read, “He is the firstborn of every creature,” or of all creation (1 Col. 1. 15, R.V. and Alford), as setting forth His pre-eminence, because all things were created by Him and for Him; and in Revelation 4. 11 it is said, “Created by Him and for His pleasure.” From these portions, therefore, we are taught that all principalities, powers, and the angels are the work of His hands, and have been brought into being for His own eternal joy.

The First as Creator of Man.

It is written in John 1. 3, “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made;” and in Ephesians 3. 9, “God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” We therefore learn that whether in the work of creating, forming or fashioning, our Lord Jesus, as the First or Originator, caused everything we see in creation to come into being, and manifested in all this wonderful work His omnipotent power, His exquisite wisdom, and the harmonious perfection of His divine handiwork.

The First as Redeemer of Mankind.

God having entrusted the work of creation to the Lord Jesus, which He so perfectly accomplished, He subsequently takes up the work of redemption. In Psalm 110. 4 we read, "Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." This oath being from everlasting was a divine compact of the ever blessed Trinity that Christ should be the Redeemer of mankind, and therefore as the Lamb of God "He was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1. 20). Redemption accordingly was not an afterthought with God, but ever present with Him, and in His counsels long before the fall of man, so that in this we perceive Christ as the First.

In Hebrews 12. 2 He is spoken of as "the Author and Finisher of faith," or the Beginner and Ender in the path of faith; in this again He is the First, and has set us a perfect pattern of true faith in God. Then as to the whole of His life in this world He stands out as God's perfect Man, who always did those things that pleased Him (John 8. 29) and glorified God on the earth (John 17. 4). Again, when that precious One was nearing the Cross, and the world was making away with Him as one not fit to live, was there none to give a true testimony concerning Him, because it is written, "Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled" (Matt. 26. 56). Yes, God justifies His Son, and

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raises up the most beautiful testimony that man ever gave concerning Him out of the lips of the dying thief in those words: "This Man hath done nothing amiss," or rather, "This Man hath not done one thing *out of place*" (Luke 23. 41, Newberry). It is not a testimony to the fact that He did no sin, but goes beyond that in that it is a witness to the truth that in the whole of His life *nothing was out of place*, but everything was in perfect order, which again affirms Him to be God's perfect Man—the Chief, the First.

The First in Resurrection.

Our Lord Jesus takes the pre-eminence in resurrection, "He is the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15. 20). Thus fulfilling the Old Testament type of the wave sheaf (Lev. 23. 10, 11). Again, He is called the first begotten from *among* the dead (Rev. 1. 5, Newberry). The disciples believed in resurrection, but what they evidently failed to take in was that Christ would rise from *among* the dead; this we gather from Mark 9. 10, "Questioning one with another what the rising from *among* the dead should mean" (Newberry). And also in the fact that they were found at the sepulchre on the resurrection morning.

The Church and the Old Testament saints will be the next to rise from among the dead (1 Thess. 4. 14-17), after the pattern of our Lord's resur-

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rection, and in consequence are called “A kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1. 18). There was the resurrection of some in the Old Testament, and our Lord raised Jairus’ daughter, the widow’s son, and Lazarus, but all these died again, not so our Lord Jesus. He was the firstfruits unto God from among the dead, and accordingly was the first in resurrection.

The First in Heavenly Glory.

In Ephesians 1. 20, 21 we read, “Which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from among the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the Heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.” From this passage we learn that the highest place of glory and honour to which God could exalt His well beloved Son has been given to Him. Down here He was degraded by this world, valued at the price of a common slave, and placed on the Cross between two thieves, indicating that He being the worst they would put Him in the midst. But God has vindicated His dear Son, and in Revelation 5. 6 He is seen in the midst of the throne, occupying the first and centre position of highest exaltation.

The First as Head of the Church.

The Church in Scripture is viewed under the

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similes of a building, a bride, and a body, and our Lord's relation to each of these is always as the First. “He is the Head of the body, the Church, who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, that in all things He might become pre-eminent” (Col. 1. 18, Newberry); also in Ephesians 1. 22, “And gave Him to be head over all things to the Church.”

In the type of Christ and the Church, as seen in Adam and Eve (Gen. 2. 21-23), there is first the deep sleep of Adam answering to the death of Christ; then the rib is taken from Adam's side, and with it the Lord God builded (margin) a woman; then Eve is brought to Adam in the morning. The rib taken from the side of Adam so very aptly reminds us of the blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of the Son of God when on the Cross by which His Bride, the Church, has been purchased, cleansed, and quickened. Eve was not taken from Adam's feet; that would demean her; she was not taken from his head, as being on a level; but from his side, pointing to the heart, and in the antitype it is written in Ephesians 5. 25, “Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” She is therefore the outcome of His love unto death, whilst at the same time it is also written, “He is thy LORD, and worship thou Him” (Psa. 45. 11). Thus as the Bridegroom we behold Him as the First.

The First as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

When our Lord was upon earth the kingdom was offered to Him by Satan in the forty days' temptation (Luke 4. 5-7). It was also offered to Him by man after He had fed the five thousand with the five barley loaves and two small fishes, as recorded in John 6. 14, 15, but He would not receive it from either of these. He is the man in the parable of Matthew 13. 44, who, having found the treasure (the Church) hid in a field, selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Our Lord, therefore, having bought the field, which is the world (Matt. 13. 38), by His precious Blood, He will righteously receive the title-deeds from the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7. 13, 14, and Rev. 5. 5, 6), which are handed to Him as the Lamb as it had been slain. One of the elders said unto John, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book," and when John looked for the Lion he saw a Lamb. beautifully indicating that as the Lamb slain He purchased the kingdom with His precious Blood; because it had been sold to Satan by Adam in the garden (Luke 4. 6.)

In Revelation 5. 3 Heaven, earth, and hell are searched for one who was worthy to open the book, and John wept because no one was found worthy; then the Lamb in the midst of the throne comes forth and is proclaimed worthy to open the book,

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and this proclamation by song commenced in Heaven is taken up by earth and hades, establishing the fact that God will have His dear Son, who on the Cross was crucified as One not fit to live, vindicated, honoured, and acclaimed by all as the only One deservingly fit and righteously worthy to receive the Kingdom. Having therefore received the title-deeds in Heaven, He then comes forth as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, as seen in Revelation 19. 16, bearing the name, King of Kings and Lord of lords, with His Bride, the Church, to *possess* the kingdom.

The First as Judge of the Living.

When our Lord comes to earth, apparently the Antichrist, False Prophet, and Satan are first dealt with, and those with them. Then He sits upon the throne of His glory (Matt. 25. 31-46). Possibly this will be in the valley of Jehoshaphat (see Joel 3. 12). And before Him will be gathered the living nations, this being the judgment of the quick; the judgment of the dead will not take place until a thousand years after this (2 Tim. 4. 1).

Our Lord separates the saved from the lost, placing the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. Similarly the Cross of Christ divides between the believer and unbeliever to-day. On the one side is eternal glory, and on the other side is everlasting punishment, so that from that

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Cross one thief went up to Heaven, but the other thief went down to Hell. Evidently the goats, representing the wicked in this judgment, are sent away to their *eternal* doom, so that they do not appear to be before the Great White Throne for judgment, which is for the wicked dead. Their doom is very terrible, like all the lost, and it is pronounced by the lips of the Lord Himself. Everlasting fire (v. 41) and everlasting punishment (v. 46). Our Lord said, "My words shall not pass away," accordingly these two declarations altogether dispose of any annihilation error, because if the wicked were annihilated there would be nothing to punish, and in consequence the punishment would end; where as our Lord says, "*everlasting punishment.*"

In all these matters we behold the Lord exercising His power as the Highest, from whose sentence no appeal is possible, which designates Him as the First.

The First as King Reigning in Righteousness.

The government of this world was entrusted by God to ADAM, as seen by the names he gave to everything (Gen. 2. 19. 20), and this is verified in Psalm 8. 4-6. But Adam, through disobedience, sold all into the hands of Satan, and lost his position of dominion over creation. The second Man, the Lord from Heaven, when here proved that He never lost this power, because in Mark 1. 13 we

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read that He was in the wilderness with the wild beasts, but they could not molest Him.

After the Flood God made a covenant with NOAH (Gen. 9. 1-17), and placed the rule of the world in his hands; but in Genesis 9. 21 it is recorded that he planted a vineyard, and drank of the wine, and was drunken. Here again we behold failure in man, because one who cannot control himself is totally unfit to govern others.

The third man to whom God delegated the government was NEBUCHADNEZZAR, as it is written in Daniel 5. 18, 19, "Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down." His kingdom was typified by the head of the image seen in his dream, being of fine gold (Dan. 2. 32), gold being the king of metals. Failure, however, came through pride, and God had to abase him (Dan. 4. 30-33).

It now awaits the fourth man to come forth and possess the kingdom, four being the number of earthly completeness, denoted by the four seasons, also the four quarters of the globe. And the fourth ruler will be none other than GOD'S MAN, the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1. 31-33). He passed through this scene, and learned by experience the deep need of frail sinful man, and will be in every way fitted to govern this world, which He will do in righteousness and peace. The present groaning creation will then be delivered, the

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Millennium glory of this earth brought in, and the rightful King upon the Throne as God's First, ruling the whole according to Psalm 72.

The First as Judge of the Dead.

At the close of the Millennium, when the Lord Jesus takes His place as Judge on the Great White Throne, and His face assumes the awful majesty of inflexible righteousness, immediately the earth and the heavens flee away on account of their unclean condition. Then the wicked dead, having no longer Hades to shelter them, stand in their sinful condition before the rejected Saviour God to receive their final doom and consignment to the place of eternal suffering, the Lake of Fire. Herod and Pontius Pilate, who presumed to be the judges here, will then meet Him as their Judge, and will understand as they never understood before the meaning of Pilate's question to our Lord when he asked Him, "What is truth?" (John 18. 38).

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WE have been considering our Lord Jesus as the First, we will now proceed with a meditation of Him as the Last. He is

THE OMEGA, THE END, THE FINISHER,

and in Revelation 3. 14 He takes the name of the **AMEN**, which is the name used of God in Isaiah 65. 16, "God of truth, or God of the Amen" (R.V.),

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thus giving further testimony to our Lord's Deity. He is the Last in all the purposes of God.

The Last in Creation.

We read in Genesis 2. 1, “Thus the heavens and the earth were *finished*, and all the host of them.” And it is well to remind ourselves that the whole of the work was completed to the entire satisfaction of God, there being nothing neglected or left wanting, but everything was finished to the standard of divine perfection. This is fully endorsed by the testimony which God gives in Genesis 1. 31: “And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was *very good*.” The last act in the work of creation was man, made in the likeness of God. The likeness, however, has been lost through sin, but the last act of our Lord in man's redemption will be that “when we see Him we shall be like Him” (1 John 3. 2), who is the exact expression of God's person. Accordingly man is brought again into the likeness of God by Christ, as the “Last” in His work of redemption.

The Last in Redemption.

This wonderful work was not only commenced by the Lord Jesus, but it was *finished*, as we learn from those memorable words which He uttered on the Cross, “IT IS FINISHED” (John 19. 30), and these agree with His other statement in John 17. 4: “I have *finished* the work which Thou

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gavest Me to do." He is therefore not only the First in the work of redemption, but also the Last.

Our Lord, as God's perfect Servant, was the only one who could say, "I have *finished* the work." When the believer departs to be "with Christ" there is always something left undone that he intended doing, and the work lacks completion, but whilst we cannot say, "I have finished the work," the next best thing is, like the Apostle Paul, to be able to say when nearing the end, "I have finished *my course*" (2 Tim. 4. 7). This was his constant desire, "That I might *finish* my course with joy" (Acts 20. 24).

The Last in the Regeneration.

At the present time the Lord Jesus is seated on the Father's Throne (Rev. 3. 21), wearing the Victor's crown as the Overcomer, and He is waiting to possess His own Throne, which He will do when He reigns during the thousand years' glory of this earth. "Then cometh the *end*, 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. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15. 24).

In the Millennium kingdom righteousness *reigns*, but in the new earth righteousness *dwells*. Christ must therefore reign in righteousness until everything is brought into subjection. Then as

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God's Last He finishes up the old creation by consuming the whole with fire, thus purging the earth that had been stained with His precious blood when He was murdered at Calvary.

The Last in the New Heavens and Earth.

In Revelation 21. 1-8 God has been pleased to give us a little unfolding of the eternal state, when our Lord will make *all things* new; as we read also in 2 Peter 3. 13, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Following the declaration of the new creation in Revelation 21. 5, we have that remarkable expression, "IT IS DONE," reminding us of His last utterance on the Cross, "It is finished" (John 19. 30), lending thought to there being a connection between the two, because it will be by virtue of the precious blood shed at Calvary that there will be a new Heaven and a new earth. Then after the words, "It is done," His titles of Omega and the End are mentioned, once more giving testimony to Him as the "Last," the Accomplisher of all the purposes of God.

In 2 Corinthians 1. 20 we find it written, "All the promises of God in Him are *yea*, and in Him AMEN," bringing to mind the two pillars placed at the entrance of Solomon's temple, the Jachin and Boaz, whose meaning is, "He shall establish," and "In Him is strength." So that as God's

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Jachin He becomes the YEA in establishing, and also His Boaz in fulfilling by His strength all the promises of God in Him to the very end, being the AMEN to accomplish the whole in perfect performance according to the infinite value of the sacrifice of Calvary. Then when He has for ever purged every taint of sin, and brought into being the new heavens and earth, God will be able to dwell with men, and the condition of Eden before the fall, when God held converse with Adam, will be renewed, heightened and lasting, because established upon redemption. Also the disciples' prayer which our Lord gave them when on earth will be fulfilled, "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. *Thy Kingdom come.* Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven."

Thus will the Son have carried to the finish, as God's Last, the work the Father gave Him to do. And then to the ages of the ages all the actions or doings of God will bear the stamp of the scars in the hands of our precious Redeemer, the ways or goings of God will have the imprint of the pierced feet of Calvary, and the riven side of the Lord Jesus will manifest to an adoring new creation the way opened at the Cross to the very heart of God. "Before whom and after whom there is no God" (Isa. 43. 10). With adoring hearts we say,

" Lord Jesus Christ, the First and Last;
Alpha, Omega, God alone;
Beginning, End, Infinite, Vast,
Pre-eminent upon the Throne! "

The Eternal Hallelujah.

By W. H. BENNET.

IF the first Psalm may well be regarded as a fitting introduction to the whole book, we may surely say that Psalm 150, the last Psalm, is as suitable a conclusion. The first brings before us the two classes that are found throughout the book, often in conflict, always distinct; the last carries us forward to the time when, these two classes being for ever separated, there shall rise to Jehovah from "the congregations of the righteous," and from every part of a new creation, one unbroken and eternal Hallelujah. Between the first and last Psalms we not only see the course of the righteous and the course of the wicked traced; we discern also in prophetic language the humiliation, the sufferings, and the triumph of that One through whom alone any child of Adam can know "the way of the righteous," and

"Praise God in His Sanctuary."

The hundred and fifty Psalms are divided into five books, and each book, except the last, has appended to it an expression of praise that belongs not simply to the Psalm to which it is attached, but to the book which it concludes. In the fifth book the last Psalm takes the place of

the briefer doxology, and fitly concludes the whole. It is quite possible that these books represent different collections made at different times, the whole being finally arranged in its present form by some servant of God in later days. The Jews attribute this final editing of the Psalter to Ezra, whose interest in and love for the Word of God is so evident in the book that bears his name and in that of Nehemiah.

The Divisions of the Psalms

and the concluding Doxologies are as follows:

1. Psalms 1-41.

"Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel,
From everlasting to everlasting,
AMEN, and AMEN."

2. Psalms 42-72.

"Blessed be Jehovah, God, the God of Israel,
Who only doeth wondrous things.
And blessed be His glorious Name for ever:
And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.
AMEN, and AMEN."

3. Psalms 73-89.

"Blessed be Jehovah for evermore.
AMEN, and AMEN."

4. Psalms 90-106.

"Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,
From everlasting to everlasting:
And let all the people say, AMEN.
Hallelujah!"

5. Psalms 107-150.

The last book begins and ends with praise.

There is something very suggestive in the simple fact that each division thus closes with praise, and that in the end of the whole book everything gives place to praise. The book of Psalms is a book of deep and varied experience of the ways of God. We find in it the experiences of Christ and His people. The sufferings and glories of Christ are set forth very clearly in many of the Psalms. In others we see the chastenings, the repentings, the sorrow, humiliation, triumph and final glory of the true Israel. And though there are some Psalms which the Church of God, by reason of her peculiar calling, cannot fully take up as her own language, yet most of them serve as the utterances of saints of God of every dispensation. But whatever the unfoldings of God's ways may be, or whatever the experiences of Christ or His people,

The End of All is Praise.

They are not simply followed by praise, but they lead to it, and the deeper our experience of God and His ways now, the richer will be our eternal song.

The natural path of the child of God in a world that "lieth in the wicked one" (1 John 5. 19) is a path of tribulation. "The way of the righteous" is of necessity a narrow way, and must be a way of conflict so long as foes, seen or unseen, withstand him at every step; but all must soon give place to rest, triumph, glory; and that for ever.

Not only so; the children of God need discipline, and therefore, in the ordinary circumstances of life and its daily events, the hand of God is often upon His people, to humble them and to train them. Their ways are at times hedged up with thorns to save them from snares of which they are yet ignorant, and they are made to feel the emptiness, the uncertainty, and the vanity of earthly things, that they may set their heart more truly upon what is heavenly. And thus God leads His people to a knowledge of Himself, His care, His tenderness, His power to sustain and deliver, which but for a wilderness pathway they could never have had.

Never-ceasing Praise.

But present discipline is a pledge of the holiness that shall be ours (Heb. 12. 10), "for surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off" (Prov. 23. 18). That end is unbroken peace (Psa. 37. 17), undisturbed joy, and never-ceasing praise. Therefore as we reach the close of the book of Psalms, everything gives place to praise. The humiliation of Christ had led to His eternal glory; the many tears of His people have been wiped away by the hand that alone can dry them up for ever; the enemy and the avenger has been for ever silenced (Psa. 8. 2); the groan of creation has been hushed; and Heaven and earth are filled with the praises of Jehovah.

Each of the last five Psalms begins and ends with the word "Hallelujah," and each sentence in the last Psalm is a call to praise. It begins thus:

"Hallelujah.

Praise God in His sanctuary:

Praise Him in the firmament of His power."

That Holy Word Hallelujah

is, alas, in our day sadly trampled in the mire, and we cannot too often be reminded that it is a word for God's sanctuary alone, and should never fall from our lips without our being in spirit there, where irreverence or lightness never enters. Nothing can be more joyful and stirring to the spirit than these Psalms, yet solemnity and reverence characterise every expression in them; for deepening joy in God of necessity leads to growing reverence in worship, which is the fruit of joy. The sanctuary below was but a type of that above, in which the Lord's people are now called to worship in spirit, and will soon worship in resurrection glory. And the praise which begins in the sanctuary, where redemption is fully known, will extend to "the firmament of His power."

"Praise Him."

But He Himself is the theme of praise as truly as its object, and therefore we read:

"Praise Him for His mighty acts:

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness."

In His mighty acts His excellent greatness has been displayed. Creation was a mighty act, but for the full display of His excellent greatness we must look to His *new* creation. Hence when the resurrection of Him who is the Beginning of that creation is spoken of we have a wondrous expression of omnipotence. In Ephesians 1. 19 three words are used, of which the literal meaning is "the *energy* of the *power* of His *might* which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." And He who raised up the Lord "will also raise up us by His own power" (1 Cor. 6. 14). Then shall we know our God as we have never known Him before, and growth in the knowledge of Him means growth in worship.

The Energy of Praise.

The following verses (3-5) set forth the energy with which God is to be praised:

"Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet:

Praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance:

Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.

Praise Him upon the loud cymbals:

Praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals."

All classes of instruments are specified, and the summary is expressive of the putting forth of all our powers in this great ministry. It was as much in accordance with a ceremonial worship to use instruments of music as it is in harmony with the simplicity of the present dispensation to dispense

with them. Disregard to dispensational truth has led many to argue that because God appointed an elaborate tabernacle, and afterwards a magnificent temple in which to receive the worship of His people in former days, He is now pleased with splendid buildings and ritualistic worship; and with such an idea the introduction of instrumental music is quite consistent. But all such arguments ignore the fact that the Cross of Christ has set aside the old order of things, and has introduced a new order which is essentially *spiritual*. The only worship recognised in the New Testament is that which is rendered by those who, standing in the relationship of *children*, are able to give thanks unto the Father (Col. 1. 12). Even in the closing verse of this Psalm we pass

From Lifeless Instruments to Living Voices,
by which alone acceptable worship can be rendered to Him who is worthy of the adoration of all His creatures:

"Let everything that hath breath praise Jah.
Hallelujah!"

There is something very grand in this final call to universal worship, and we know that the time will come when the response to it will be perfect. In Revelation 5 we see the worship beginning in the sanctuary by those whose place is nearest the throne, and then the circle extends till it embraces every spot of God's new creation.

Of that new creation "the lake of fire" is no part; the abode of the lost is called the "outer darkness," as being outside the sphere of light and love; it is the one spot of the universe that can never be gladdened by a ray of light from His glorious presence. Redemption from this deserved and awful doom will ever be remembered by all His redeemed as one of the mightiest of God's acts, and the remembrance will never fail to call forth a joyful and sacred

"Hallelujah !"

With this deep note of the sanctuary the book of Psalms closes. May every one possessing the knowledge of God as revealed in the Cross of His Son be able from the heart to say, "AMEN!"

"Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. PRAISE YE THE LORD."

The Ministry of Tears

By L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

MAN was created in God's image, after His likeness, and of him it has been truly said that his chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever. Yet one of man's most common experiences in life is that of weeping. Indeed he usually begins life weeping, for weeping is one of the first signs of life in a newly born babe, and the entire path of life is in measure sodden with tears.

We may rest assured that this is not God's purpose for man. Nay, an enemy hath done this. God placed man, His perfect creature, in Eden. Man found in God everything that his sinless nature could desire. Man was perfect; his environment was perfect; his joy was perfect. God joyed in man, and man joyed in God. Heaven stooped to kiss earth, and earth rose to welcome the embrace of Heaven. Thus the bridal of earth and Heaven was consummated in joy and ecstasy.

But, alas, a malignant being beheld that blessed scene with hellish hate, and pur-

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posed its destruction. Quickly he compassed man's fall; and by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Man's fair paradise has been lost, and this world has been turned into the valley of the shadow of death and

The Vale of Tears.

Sin has not only affected man, it has affected God. Sin has moved the Godhead as nothing else in the universe has done. Sin brought the Son of God to earth; sin was the occasion of His being here in human form to ransom and redeem. His life below bears witness to God's deep concern on account of the woes of mankind.

Three times at least it is placed on record in Scripture that the Son of God wept during the days of His flesh. Surely the fact that He, the Source of life and joy, should stoop from His Godhood glory and shed human tears on this sin-burdened earth tells of grace and compassion that surpass comprehension.

I. TEARS OF SYMPATHY.

"JESUS WEPT" (John 11. 35). More wonderful words than these are nowhere to be found in Scripture. The verb translated "wept" is unique in its employ-

ment here. It is not found elsewhere. Literally it is: "Jesus shed tears." These were tears of sympathy with the bereaved—Heaven's gems sparkling on the cheeks of Emmanuel, God with us, revealing to mankind the very heart of the Eternal.

The Lord stood by the tomb where a loved and only brother had been laid, and where two broken-hearted sisters mourned their loved and lost. Could He not have prevented this sorrow? Yes. Could He not have come earlier and robbed death of its triumph? Yes. But this sorrow was permitted for the glory of God. How true the words of the sisters: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died!" For His own His absence makes death and sorrow possible. Death cannot abide His presence nor can tears flow there.

Why Tears are Permitted.

Here, then, we find it clearly taught that God permits death and sorrow to come upon His loved ones that He may be glorified thereby. This is a fact worthy of deep pondering. Had Lazarus not died these words would never have been written, "Jesus shed tears." Had Lazarus not died these silent witnesses to the anguish that tore His heart in view of human loss

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and sorrow had never flowed. Had Lazarus not died this special revelation of the heart of God had never been granted to men to support them in the hour of anguish and sorrow. The death of Lazarus has enriched the race with a vision of God, the glory of which can only be discerned through tear-dimmed eyes.

These sisters had seen Him oft. They had ministered to His wants; they had listened to His words. They loved to welcome Him to their home and to gaze upon His face. He brought the sunshine of Heaven with Him, and diffused its peace around. They rejoiced with Him, and He rejoiced with them. He touched them in their joy; can He touch them also in their sorrow? They had seen that face radiant with holy joy; they must see it likewise clouded with anguish and behold the tear-drops coursing down. Thus would He teach them, and us, how to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12. 15).

The Brotherhood of Tears.

Fellowship in tears ought to be an easy matter for the sons of men, for tears, sooner or later, are the lot of all. We reach a common bond in the brotherhood of tears.

I weep with my brother at morn; he weeps with me ere night. May the tears of the Son of God at the tomb of Lazarus not appeal to our hearts in vain! He has placed a holy dignity upon tears.

The tears of the Lord at this time are all the more wonderful as we contemplate the fact that He knew He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead and restore him to these sisters and thrill their hearts with an unexpected joy. Not for them alone, therefore, were these tears shed. They were shed to assure our hearts that He sees and understands. For true it is that

“Our fellow-sufferer yet retains
A fellow-feeling of our pains;
And still remembers in the skies
His tears, His agonies, and cries.

In every pang that rends the heart
The Man of Sorrows had a part;
He sympathises with our grief,
And to the sufferer sends relief.”

Of nothing are we better assured from Scripture than that the Lord is still able to enter into the sorrows of His people, as He did during the days of His flesh, to sympathise with them in bereavement, and to send them divine succour from on high. To this very end did He suffer when here below. It behoved Him in all things to be

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made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest.

The words of the angels to the disciples after His ascension were: "This same Jesus" (Acts 1. 11). He sits upon the throne of God, having been absent in person from our world for nearly two thousand years, but these words prove that He is still unchanged, that He abides the "same Jesus." True it is that He now is where tears can never flow, but the compassion that caused Him to shed tears in the days of His flesh remains unchanged, and by the Spirit He draws near to assure our hearts of His divine sympathy.

II. TEARS OF PITY.

"When He drew nigh, HE SAW THE CITY, AND WEPT OVER IT" (Luke 19. 41). The word "wept" in this case differs from the one found in John 11. 35. There the evidences of His grief were alone to be seen in the silent tears that rolled down His cheeks. Here, however, the word implies that His grief was accompanied with outward signs of mourning and lamentation. In John 11, however poignant His grief, He knew that presently that sorrow would be turned into joy; but here is a grief upon whose night no ray of light shall

ever shine ; and the shadow of that darkness oppressed His soul and caused Him to weep and lament.

His omniscient eye could scan the future, and the unparalleled woes that were to overwhelm His people , because they knew not the day of their visitation, were all unveiled to His gaze. The appalling spectacle oppressed Him ; the city destroyed, the temple burned, the people slain, the remnant scattered ; and yet how often would He have gathered them together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but they would not. The light of God they had deliberately rejected ; their doom was sealed ; the things that pertained to their peace were for ever hidden from their eyes.

The Fellowship of Tears.

The Lord is not alone in His grief and tears on account of the impenitence of men. His servants in all ages have been permitted to share with Him in this fellowship of tears.

Pre - eminent in this respect was JEREMIAH. What his eye beheld affected his soul (Lam. 3. 48, 49), so that he could say: " Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

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Mine eye poureth down and ceaseth not, without any intermission.”

The apostle PAUL frequently refers to his tears: “Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with many tears” (Acts 20. 19). “I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20. 31). “I wrote unto you with many tears” (2 Cor. 2. 4). “Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ” (Phil. 3. 18).

The tears of TIMOTHY on the apostle’s behalf are also placed on record: “Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears that I may be filled with joy” (2 Tim. 1. 4).

Such, then, was our Lord. Such were His apostles and prophets. They served God with many tears. How, then, shall we account for the dearth of tears in our day in this respect? A modern writer has said: “We have tears for all things else than the infinite loss of those who have rejected the Gospel. For this, alas, no single drop trickles along the dry watercourses. We are smitten with a terrible drought, our hearts a very Sahara, our water-springs frozen by remorseless cold or scorched by relentless heat. In losing

The Power of Tears

we have lost one great power of causing them. It is by broken hearts that hearts are broken, by wet eyes that eyes are made to brim over with the waters of repentant sorrow." The picture here is not over-drawn. Tears are practically unknown.

Is it that the dangers which assail the Church of God are fewer than in the apostle's days when he warned every one of them night and day with tears? Is it that the hardness and impenitence of men have passed away, and that they are more urgent in their response to the pleadings of God? Nay, verily! Is it rather that the preaching of old was impelled by a dread "woe is me," coupled with the constraining power of the compassions that filled the heart of Christ, and that the preaching of to-day is too often degraded to the level of mere professionalism? Yet the promise stands true: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Though he goeth on his way weeping, bearing forth the seed, he shall come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psa. 126. 5, 6). Oh! might not a revival of apostolic tears yet bring to us a revival of apostolic power! Might not a revival of prophetic weeping yet bring to us a revival of prophetic vision!

III. TEARS OF AGONY.

“Who in the days of His flesh, having offered up PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS WITH STRONG CRYING AND TEARS unto Him that was able to save Him out of death” (Heb. 5. 7). Our Lord wept *in sympathy* at the tomb of Lazarus; He wept *in pity* over doomed Jerusalem; He wept *in agony* in Gethsemane. This latter is a weeping in which we cannot share except in so far as we yet are enabled by God to weep with Him who wept. The agony that caused His anguish with strong crying and tears must be borne by Himself alone. The dreaded hour has come, and the dark shadow of Calvary presses upon His soul. His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, and in this agony He wept and prayed. Moreover, He looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but He found none. Yes, we may not enter here; but we may, with unshod feet, draw near to gaze and search the depth of all His wounds, the secret of His woes.

There were two companies around the Cross. “Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy”

(John 16. 20). The world's joy ends in sorrow; our sorrow issues in joy. It is clear from these words that the disciples did weep and lament for their Lord. They wept with Him who wept. He had won their hearts, and in His death their hopes were crushed.

This aspect of the fellowship of tears is an extremely blessed and touching one. To us also is given the opportunity of weeping with Him who wept. He must be a strange Christian whose heart has never been touched to tears as he contemplated the sufferings of Christ. He is a strange Christian who has never wept out his worship at these pierced feet. Ah! here perhaps is the point at which the tide of tears has too long been stayed, and where again that tide must flow. Surely there is abundant room and opportunity for

A Revival of Tears

in view of the love of Christ, the sufferings of Christ, and the Cross of Christ. Then were it easy to weep over a doomed world and to shed tears in sympathy with every human woe.

The Lord's words to the disciples were: "I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice" (John 16. 22). This points to the

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resurrection morn. The first words placed on record as spoken by our Lord in resurrection were not addressed to any of the apostles, but to a lone woman desolately weeping for her lost Lord. They were: "Woman, why weepest thou?" (John 20. 15). "There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh" (Eccles. 3. 4), and in their place joy and rejoicing are as fitting as weeping is in its place. And Mary's weeping was turned into joy as she gazed upon her risen Lord, and heard from His lips these cherished words: "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and My God, and your God" (John 20. 17). As with her so with us, "Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30. 5).

"Why weepest thou?" thus saith the Saviour still,

And speaks to thee, O heart, by sorrow's
tempests torn;

Soon, in the glory, joy thy heart shall fill,

On darkest night of woe there dawns the
brightest morn."

Heaven in Preparation

By GEO. F. TRENCH, B.A.

WHEN we are exhorted in the Epistle to the Colossians to "set our mind upon the things that are above" (R.V.), it is obviously of great importance that the mind should have as much material upon which to concentrate attention as may be found in Revelation. And yet when we open its pages we find singularly little description of the "things above," so little that it may be truly said that there is no stronger desire among the children of God universally than for food for the imagination of faith in this respect.

If the cause of the omission is sought it may not be easy to give a complete answer, and yet the precious words of Rutherford touch a chord in all our hearts, and may afford us sufficient present enlightenment on this point:

"The Bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of Grace."

God would attract our heart and hope to Himself, and spare us the distraction that a full publication of the glory of Heaven would cause. "Show me Thy glory" (Exod. 33. 18), said Moses. "Show us the Father" (John 14. 8), said Philip. "Draw me," saith the King's Bride, "we will run after Thee" (S. of S. 1. 4); and when the Queen of Sheba had seen all the glories of Solomon's house, and heard his words, she bore no testimony to his majesty or his surroundings, but only to himself, his wisdom, and his justice. "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom" (1 Kings 10. 8). So may it ever be with us; and if little is told of the palace where we shall dwell, yet may we satisfy our hearts in Him whose presence shall be its chief and highest glory.

And yet another thought may be suggested by way of accounting for this absence of detail, for in John 14 we read, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." Heaven is still in preparation. It is not finished. When it is so Christ will come again. Oh, grand and glorious thought!

The Lord is busy ever since He left us adding to the attractions and perfections of that heavenly inheritance which He thus prepares for our reception. He is not resting, merely waiting till some long-settled moment comes. He is at work, at work for us; at work of love to construct a home of infinite beauty, joy, and peace for those whom He "loves to the end."

Blessed occupation! Sweet business of the heart and hand of Christ! "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you." And yet not mansions enough, or mansions complete enough, or fully furnished, for He adds at once, "I go to *prepare* a place for you." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God *hath prepared* for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. 2. 10); and yet there is "more to follow," there is all that nearly 1900 years of the almighty love and power of the risen Christ could add to those glories of God already prepared for His people.

There are, when we consider these preparations of Christ, three features of our

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earthly career as His Church which render them necessarily continuous and as yet incomplete.

Preparation for Increasing Hosts.

I. There are souls being added to the Church every day, and just now in numbers so great as perhaps to exceed the recruiting energy of any previous age. For each of these added souls new preparation may be, and indeed would seem clearly to be, required. The tastes, the energies, the bent of mind, the interests of men are various, and the combination in no two men is the same. Yet Heaven will provide a glory adapted to each of the untold millions whom grace saves. See what a work the Lord foreshadowed when He said those simple words, "I go to prepare a place."

Preparation for Developed Capacities.

II. Then there is the growth in grace and the divine life of every saint to be taken account of. The watchful eye of the great Architect is observant of the development in every soul of spiritual capacities for the great future, and He makes preparation accordingly. The parable of the pounds teaches how full of duty Heaven will be, that active responsi-

bility of a high order and active service will be the rule of the Kingdom. No mere life of meditation, or even of praise, will be that life. Men will have work to do for God (ask not yet its character), and none will be idle there. Life on earth is but a school time for the realities of the hereafter. The wisdom we learn, the victories we gain, the powers we develop, the energies we exercise are all destined for an eternal harvest of work. Not an hour, not a minute can be wasted on earth but will unfit us to some degree for a possible destiny of usefulness. Not a temptation can be yielded to, not a bunch of spiritual fruit withered by neglect but involves a corresponding loss in Christ's presence and service. Oh, how solemn this is!

"I go to prepare a place for you!" What sort of place are you aiming at? Quite right, you had rather be a doorkeeper there than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. But this is not now the question. Would you prefer to be a doorkeeper to being an ambassador? Would you prefer to serve self, and pleasure, and wealth on earth, and be of little or no use hereafter; or to live for Christ heart and soul, forgetting things and pressing on toward the mark, keen and strong, "for the *prize* of

the high calling of God in Christ Jesus?" (Phil. 3. 14). Which?

Christ is preparing your place. He is for that end watching your course on earth. Hear what the sons of Zebedee demand, to sit on the right and left of the King Himself. Do not follow the other disciples in their anger at this request. It is well to aim high. It is contemptible to seek merely to "get saved." But note our Lord's reply: "Can ye drink of My cup, and be baptised with My baptism?" (Matt. 20. 22). Ah, that is it! We are carving out our own destiny every moment. The Judgment Seat of Christ will settle all. There will be no respect of persons there. But the faithful servant will take higher place and portion, and the slothful and worldly will be saved, that is all.

And yet God will be sovereign in His gifts. He is sovereign in His grace to strengthen character here, sovereign in His glory to give corresponding bliss up there. Said Christ, "It is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is *prepared* of My Father" (Matt. 20. 23). It is a solemn thing for God's children to think lightly of that upon which the heart of the Father and the Son are occupied, to have no ambition to be

fitted for the Place prepared. And many that are first shall be last in consequence of sloth; and the last in the world's estimation shall be first in the mansions of God.

Preparation for Distinctive Groupings.

III. But it is not only personal characteristics and personal attainments that demand our Lord's continuous activity of preparation. Is it not manifest that collective harmony and adaptation will be provided also? "In My Father's house are many *mansions*." A mansion is the abode of many, not of one, and he who delights on earth "to set the solitary in families" will not bring us up to solitary confinement in Heaven. The preparations of Christ, then, include the arrangements of the several groups into which He will gather us. For we can well believe that while perfect freedom will be the very air of Heaven, those whose capacities will ever be limited, however they may be magnified in resurrection, must expect to move habitually in a circle limited by their own powers of enjoyment. In forming these groups new considerations will come in.

The suitability of mind to mind, the sympathy of spirit with spirit, the com-

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munity of interest and inclination, and the perfect harmony of the working of each group or family will be His care. It is not fair to say that our present Church instinct, so to speak, our recognition of the social and corporate place we fill, our largeness of heart for God's saints as such, our activity of service in their service will greatly govern the formation of the groups. Narrowness, selfishness, indifference to others, want of love, of ministry, of hospitality, of faithfulness, of all the gifts of the Lord for mutual edification and blessing will go to unfit us for the *mansion* life of Heaven, and will circumscribe our future lot in probably exact proportion.

Anticipation of Special Glory.

On this point I would remind you of Paul's anticipation of his particular glory and joy in the presence of the Lord at His coming. "Are not even ye?" said he, addressing his children in the faith at Thessalonica. That was the group in which he felt he would have His part. And may not every simple gospeller in *this* day refresh his heart with like expectations of meetings and greetings and groupings in *that* one? I wot that some of our faithful preachers will move in a large place up

in Heaven if God gives them the joy of association for ever with all those whom on earth they have led to Christ. But this will be pre-eminently true of the faithful pastors of God's flock. Thus, for the reasons I have touched on above, *development* of Christian life, even more than life itself, will be a leading factor in the preparation now going on for the eternal state.

In these considerations we may learn with profit, I trust, how to turn our desires for information about Heaven into practical channels, and do what is better for ourselves than *knowing*, namely, *providing*, what shall be our portion.

I'M but a stranger here—
 Heaven is my home.
 Earth is a desert drear—
 Heaven is my home.
 Danger and sorrow stand
 Round me on every hand,
 Heaven is my fatherland—
 Heaven is my home.

Therefore I'll murmur not—
 Heaven is my home.
 Whate'er my earthly lot—
 Heaven is my home.
 For I shall surely stand
 There at my Lord's right hand,
 Heaven is my fatherland—
 Heaven is my home.

Our Coming Lord.

By Dr. THOMAS NEATBY.

“FOR our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. 3. 20, 21).

Our calling is to be a heavenly *people*, our hope is a heavenly *Saviour*. You cannot have the one fully without the other. We are not looking for events, we are looking for Christ from Heaven.

“Our conversation is in Heaven.” That is, our citizenship, or “our commonwealth,” I think the Revised Version gives it. The conversation of the Christian, his deportment, should be the result of the fact that his commonwealth is in Heaven. We are altogether a heavenly people if we are Christians; we are something like the sheet that was let down to Peter (Acts 10).

It served its end, and it was taken up into Heaven again. Christians, saints of God now, are a people that belong to Heaven, but are sent down as Christ was sent down to work on earth for a little while, and at the proper moment, held in the hands of God, they will be taken away from earth; they do not belong to it. They as little belong to it as to their calling as Christ did. He came into this earth to do the will of God in a perfect life, then to do His will fully in the perfect sacrifice of Himself, to which you and I owe everything. He testified that the deeds of this world were evil. He had no place to lay His head in it. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1. 11). And Christians when they lose the hope of the Lord's return lose, too, their unworldly character, and seek, in proportion to the absence of the "hope," to make themselves comfortable in this world.

The Promise of His Coming.

"From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." The Lord in going away left us the hope of His return in the most blessed, yet simple language that you can conceive. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come

again and receive you unto Myself'' (John 14. 3). Some feel a great difficulty as to arranging prophetic truths, but here there can be no difficulty. Christ says, ''I am going away.'' He went. ''If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again.'' He goes to the Father's house. ''In My Father's house are many mansions.'' It is Heaven, no doubt, but He does not call it Heaven, He calls it ''His Father's house.'' Why? He is going to prepare a place for other children in the Father's kingdom. He is going there to prepare the place which He has as the Son of God for other sons of God, those that are made children of God by faith in Christ Jesus through His sovereign grace. He is there preparing our place; that is to say, His appearance there is the taking possession of the Father's house in the name of the children. When Christ comes to reign He will have much to do with antichrist and the beast, and I don't know what. But there is nothing of antichrist and the beast here, thank God for it. It is simply a question of His coming again personally as He went; coming to receive His saints to be with Him where He is. His object is to receive the Church for which He ''gave Himself.''

The Power of His Coming.

How is it that the hope of Christ's return has so little power upon the Church of God to-day? It is want of communion with earth's rejected and Heaven's honoured Christ. If we had every day in our souls heart-fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, if we knew more of what it is to walk by the faith of the Son of God, "who loved me, and gave Himself for me," if it was a reality to me that He loved me, that He gave Himself for me, that He looked right down to me every day, that I am before His eye, that I was in His heart when He took that awful cup from the hands of His Father when He drank it, forsaken of His God, then the hope of His Coming would be more of a reality to us. Ah, if Christ had more hold of our hearts His Coming would be more a necessity to our souls. We do not want so much the doctrine of the Lord's Coming as a living fellowship, a living association with Christ every hour of the day. We want to know Christ in the circumstances through which we pass.

"From whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ." The apostle has spoken in the preceding chapter of the time when he was on his way to Damascus to blot out

the Name of Jesus from under Heaven, and, lo, Jesus appears to him. He would not have been more surprised to see a person he had known to be dead for twenty years than to see Christ in His glory looking down upon His enemy, His persecutor. "If a man finds his enemy, will he let him go well away?" and Christ has found His enemy; but He reveals Himself in such grace to Saul of Tarsus that Saul says, "Yes, Christ Jesus my Lord." It makes a complete change of everything in the whole life of Saul of Tarsus. Before, he had followed righteousness which is of the law, now he sees his righteousness only in a Heavenly Christ. He sees Christ his righteousness, Christ his hope, Christ his living joy, Christ Jesus his Lord. Do you think of Christ Jesus after this fashion when you speak of waiting for Christ? If we did, we would be waiting for Christ as the apostle was waiting for Him. We want to know Christ, to wait for Him more singly, more simply.

Christ came the first time to accomplish the work whereby we can be saved. He accomplished it by dying; we have life by His death. But the salvation is only partially accomplished. Man consists of body and soul. The soul is saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no

question about the salvation of the soul, but the body is still unchanged. God has redeemed the whole man, has paid the price for the whole man. He has made it good as to the soul, and He is going to make it good as to the body. Christ can then, as Saviour, change the body of our humiliation (it is a body of humiliation, a body of vile materials, but not a vile body; it is a body of disease and weakness, subject to disease and death), and make it like unto His own glorious body.

The Person Who is Coming.

Our hope is to see Christ Himself. Blessed word of the apostle's, "Christ Himself!" Ah! yes, He will not have removed the marks of the passion through which He went for you and me. Every thorn mark upon that holy brow will be more glorious than any part of His face unmarred. Oh, to see His face as it is. What a thought! And then to be like Him, just to bear His image. We have borne the image of the earthy well, we shall bear the image of the second Man, the last Adam. Oh! it is God's purpose, let us cherish the hope.

"Wherefore," he says, "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4. 18). Yes, it is a comfort when it is a question of

seeing Christ, of seeing the One "who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Do you think that I should fear the joy of seeing again my dear father and mother? Surely not. Fear! What for? Why, I think it would be an unspeakable joy to me to see them now. But, oh, my Saviour has loved me a great deal better than my father or mother ever did, and I want to see Him. I want to see that face that was once so marred for me. It will be Heaven to gaze upon Him.

Oh, what a hope it is to see Him "as He is." How is He? Just as when Thomas was bidden to behold His hands, to put his hand into His side, that is how He is. Blessed be His Name! Thomas did not put his finger into the prints of the nails, and he did not thrust his hand into His side. No, he said, "My Lord, and my God" when he saw Him.

May we each be kept for that Day, to see at length the Bridegroom of our heart.

He is coming! He is coming!
Let us "occupy" for Him,
With our eyes fixed on the glory,
Making earthly things look dim.
Seeking only His approval,
Waiting only for His smile;
Thus forgetting all the suffering
Of the present little while.

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