

Some Writings

of

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of Galashiels

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THE NAMES OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

No. 1—INTRODUCTORY.

“ And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali and Shechem in mount Ephraim and Kirjath-arba, (which is Hebron), in the mountain of Judah, and on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the Wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.” (Josh. 20, 7-8).

Names in secular affairs are largely accidental and hence they are seldom descriptive of what they are intended to denote. But scriptural names are full of meaning relative to the subject of appellation.

Some time ago listening to an address on the “ Cities of Refuge,” my effort was stimulated to ascertain the meaning of the names. I was astonished to find that they formed in their sequence, a marvellously accurate summary of the progress of a soul in the apprehension of the truth.

The following table sets forth the meanings given by various scholars :—

In the land of Canaan.

Kedesh = sanctuary.

Shechem = strength.

Hebron = fellowship.

Across Jordan in the Wilderness.

Golan = (1) discovery, (2) revolution,
(3) passage or exodus.

Ramoth = elevations and depressions
or ups and downs.

Bezer = (1) distress,
(2) fortification.

The wilderness in the Old Testament typology corresponds in New Testament thought to the realm of time

and sense, *i.e.*, relative to the body and secular affairs. The hymn writer could say :—

This world is a wilderness wide,
I have nothing to seek or to choose,
I have no thought in the waste to abide,
I have nought to regret nor to lose.

That was his personal assessment of the world, but it is expressive of normal Christianity. It is open to every Christian to have similar exercises of heart.

The vertical line separating the two columns represents the river Jordan, which is symbolical of the death of Christ in one of its many aspects.

Similarly the land of Canaan in Old Testament type does not represent “Heaven” in New Testament relation, as it is often caused to do in sentimental hymnology. “The Land” has a present bearing in New Testament doctrine with relation to spiritual apprehension of what we possess as being in Christ Jesus, having access to God the Father, and having boldness (*i.e.*, liberty or confidence), to enter the holiest and so on. “In Christ Jesus” has a technical meaning peculiar to the Pauline writings, and denotes the region of spiritual privilege and blessing.

At one time it was the fashion amongst certain Christians to reckon themselves as across Jordan and that the bulk of Christians with whom they came in contact were still in the wilderness. The idea sprang simply from ecclesiastical arrogance. If there is one form of pride more distasteful to the Lord than another we submit that it is the ecclesiastical form. The proud never get near to the Lord, whatever may be their pretension of intimacy. All Scripture is imbued with the thought: “the proud is known afar off.” (Ps. 138, 6), “God resisteth the proud” (Jas. 4, 6) and so on. But Scripture also adduces evidence that the proud are ignorant knowing nothing but doting about questions and strifes of words whereof cometh envy, etc. (1 Tim. 6, 4).

Hence the averment not only sprang from pride but also from ignorance of Scriptural teaching.

In this connection the apostolic doctrine very clearly bears out the dictum of a gifted poetess that :

“ Side by side, the gladness and the sorrow,
Deepest shadow and eternal sun,
Two lives live we, till the blessed morrow
When the life is one.”

We live lives of responsibility collaterally with lives of spiritual privilege, consequently the man who boasts about being over Jordan in “ the land ” may be an arrant grumbler in his life of responsibility just as his prototype the Israelite was in the wilderness. Only the Israelite could not both be in the wilderness and in “ the land ” at the same identical moment of time. But that physical impossibility is compassed now in the spirit.

No. 2—GOLAN.

As mentioned in the introductory section, the meanings of Golan have been severally rendered as :—(1) discovery, (2) revolution, (3) passage.

I. **Discovery.**

Many of our readers may be acquainted with the etching entitled “ The Soul’s Awakening,” where a young girl is seen with a book clasped to her breast evidently in an ecstasy. That she should be rapturously seized with extreme joy may be very good sentiment, but the artist failed to understand the truth with relation to God and eternal things. When a soul awakens to the fact that “ God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all,” and that every member of the human race has sinned and come short of the initial aspect of God’s glory, *viz.*, His righteousness, then in place of extreme joy the soul is plunged in great distress.

But it has been well said that man's extremity is God's opportunity! The ray that brings light from the sun also brings heat. Similarly in the very moment that a man or a woman has reached the bottom of his or her resources and cast himself or herself on the boundless resources of God, there comes the realisation that God is not only of spotless light but also of unconditional love as well.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3, 16), still stands as an immutable memorial to the unchanging character of God's disposition.

In Acts 2, we read that the Apostle Peter preaching with power at Pentecost brought conviction to his hearers, and they exclaimed “What shall we do”? When they realised that by wicked hands they had crucified the One approved by God and that God had raised Him up from the dead and also the import of the prophetic scripture, “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” They saw they were undone, and consequently called on One who was able to save. Peter's answer was “Repent”!

In Acts 16, another aspect is presented in the case of the Philippian jailor, awakened to a deeper sense than his being undone in the eyes of men, addressed the Apostle Paul and his associates in the exclamation, “Sirs, (lit. Lords), what must I do to be saved?” The erstwhile brutal ruffian, who had shamefully treated them, now approached them with an air of greatest respect. Their answer was simply, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.”

2. Revolution.

The Thessalonian believers “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven.” (1 Thess. 1, 9-10). Conversion or turning to God is a very real matter. There is a radical change

effected in the soul. The revolution which takes place displaces all preconceived notions. There is a turning up-side-down of the whole sphere of our thoughts. The zenith goes down out of sight and the exactly opposite nadir point comes up over the horizon of our thoughts and becomes our new zenith. We rejoice in prospect of the Glory of God! That will mean the displacement of man's day and his glory. What had been hitherto quite legitimate ambitions cease to occupy our attention.

The great Apostle could say in writing to the Philippian Christians, "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung." (Phil. 3, 7-8). Judging from secular circumstances one would have expected to hear that a man who had suffered such loss would have been in a very disconsolate frame of mind. But on the contrary he reckoned those worthy credentials in the eyes of men only suitable for the dustbin. It should be kept in mind that he was the premier man of his time. Yet everything of that order became of no account to him. His sole aim was to win an increasing apprehension of the preciousness of Christ to his soul. That is the normal character of the revolution effected in the Christian.

3. Passage or Exodus.

In the preceding section we have been dealing with the internal work of God in the soul. It is no mere philosophic change leading the convert to become a hermit in order to ruminate on new ideas. There is an external effect which proceeds collaterally with the internal change. As we grow in grace we shall be found showing that grace to those around. We shall serve the living and true or real God who is a great contrast to all the unreal Gods of our imagination, which we served in our unconverted days. But that service

has a definite issue, in waiting for the Son of God from heaven. His coming may happen at any moment and will be transacted in a moment or atom of time (“a twinkling of an eye.”) In the interval that the Lord is pleased to leave us here we are to put ourselves in line with that moment.

Therefore at Pentecost in the initial proclamation of the Gospel, the Apostle Peter abjured his hearers in the words, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” (Acts 2, 40). The outward symbol of that process would be that they would submit themselves to the rite of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Hence the salvation symbolised by the act could not relate to heaven, since it was antecedent to the reception of the Holy Ghost. Of necessity it must have applied to earth.

Probably no other subject has provoked so much acrid discussion and unkind feelings among Christians as the subject of baptism has done, yet the idea is very simple. Christian baptism is “unto” the death of Christ (not “into” as the Authorised Version reads), *i.e.*, unto the significance of His death. In this connection the death of Christ implies that the world gave Christ a felon’s death and grave. (That it was not a felon’s grave in which he was buried was not the intention of the world). Now it is incumbent on those who are associated with His name that they should cheerfully accept the place which the world gave to their new Lord and Master. Baptism then implies dissociation from the world. We can no longer go on with the course of this world. The frivolities which formerly filled our day are not now of interest to us. We cannot enjoy the pleasures of sin, because of our estimation of the riches found in the reproach or special stigma of Christ’s name, which we now bear. Baptism then signifies cutting off from the world with the object in view that we should walk in newness of life (*i.e.*, in association with Christ).

The Philippian’s jailor’s house witnessed a radical change. It was run under new management, *viz.*, that of the Lord.

That day, salvation had indeed come to his house. Henceforward they would be found saving themselves from the untoward generation around. In fact, they would be found proving true to the significance of their baptism.

All this is in view of our passage or exodus from the world. In the book of Exodus, we see that the Israelites were as safe inside the tent with bloodstained lintel as they were at any subsequent point in their history. But they could not serve God suitably in Egypt hence they were not only saved by blood but delivered by the power of God from the power and the land of Egypt (the enemy). Moses would have been esteemed an incompetent general by modern strategists in leading the people into a hopeless position on the banks of the Red Sea, when he could quite easily have led them round the end of the sea by the Isthmus of Suez. But Moses did not lead; the people followed the pillar of cloud by day which also as a pillar of fire lighted them by night. God led them so that they might test His resources and when they came to their extremity and cried out, the injunction of Moses was to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. What was salvation to the people of God became death to their enemies. Similarly God cannot allow His people to remain in the world. He will have them in separation while there, so that they may serve Him and be in harmony with the imminence of the Lord's return.

No. 3—RAMOTH IN GILEAD.

The name Ramoth means "elevation and depressions" or "ups and downs." Very soon after the young christian starts his pathway as a stranger and pilgrim, he feels disappointed with himself. The happy day of which he had sung so lustily in the glow of the new affection seems to have become clouded over in the experience of his soul. In presenting this section of the subject there would seem to be three distinct phases of the matter.

(1) With reference to spiritual apprehension it is often a long time before we arrive at the conclusion expressed thus. "For I know that in me dwelleth no good thing . . . for the good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do." (Rom. 7, 18-19). Until that is formed as a distinct conviction in the soul we are constantly being disappointed with ourselves. As every wave of expectancy lifts us up we find ourselves in the succeeding trough of disappointment. It is only when we come to the end of our looking in the wrong way in the exclamation "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7, 24). Then immediately our eyes are turned to behold the deliverer and there bursts from our enraptured lips, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." No one but He can help us. There is great advancement in the realisation of that fact!

(2) With reference to dignity and philosophic esteem, we see Saul of Tarsus, the choice man of his time, making an ignominious exit from Damascus as he was let down over the wall in a clothes basket, probably covered over with dirty clothes. (2 Cor. 11, 33). What a contrast that scene must have presented to those who had witnessed his approach to Damascus in the prime of cultured manhood, the object of admiration on every hand. A curious freak of fortune indeed had evidently intervened. But the man who was "let down" was the same man who was "caught up," according to the record immediately following, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago. . . . caught up to the third heaven." (2 Cor. 12, 2). Whether in the body or not was quite irrelevant to the question. Because "a man in Christ" signifies a condition outside that of responsibility. He heard unspeakable words. These were not unlawful words in the sense of being dreadful but in the sense of the inability of human language to express them. Obviously that unique experience must have tended to exalt the apostle. So to prevent his being exalted above

measure by the abundance of the revelations there was given to him an intelligible counterbalance, *i.e.*, a thorn in the flesh. It was evidently something which the Apostle thought he could do well without, because he besought the Lord thrice to have it removed. But the answer received was "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." So as the strange enigmatic scroll of the Lord's providential dealings with him became opened out and on his realising the great gain of the process he gladly acquiesced in the administration. Most gladly therefore he boasted in his infirmities rather than in his exaltation, so that the power of Christ might rest on him. (2 Cor. 12, 9).

So he began to take pleasure in the deficits of life, *viz.*, infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, distresses for Christ's sake. In secular affairs men do not like to have discounts taken from their substance. They all want to be on the premium line at compound interest. But that is the experimental direction which leads to what he unfolded earlier in the epistle as "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." (2 Cor. 4, 7). What was that treasure? The light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Subsequently to the passage was the apparent paradox of being troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed, that is fully explained by the apprehension of its context.

(3) With reference to material supplies. In the Old Testament the man who was true to God as a general rule was blessed in a temporal way. His harvests were bountiful. His flocks and herds multiplied greatly. But when we come to the New Testament we find that rule by no means of universal application. Indeed the Philippian Epistle was written by the Apostle from a Roman dungeon. So that his loyalty to the Lord had not advanced his cir-

cumstances. A Roman prison was a wretched place, well calculated to break down the strongest will. Yet we do not find the writer of the epistle despondent or in a grumbling mood. He said, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am to be content." . . . I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4, 11-13). The expression "to be content" is used in the classics with reference to a country not requiring imports. That is a phantasy in secular affairs conjured up by political philosophers to the present detriment of the nations. Recent events have proved that no nation or individual can live to itself or himself. It is only in Christianity that all the supplies come from another region. It was no hallucination of a diseased imagination which led the apostle to be so confident about his resources.

Later on he wrote, "my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by (in) Christ Jesus." Now observe he does not say "our God" he says "my God." That is the one he had proved amply sufficient for himself. But he was not concerned about himself. He was concerned about the needs of the Philippians. In the old dispensation the man of God had at his hand the cattle on a thousand hills; because the earth was the Lord's and the fulness thereof. But the Apostle invoked help from a far more transcendent sphere than that of creation. He appealed to the wealth of God in Glory in Christ Jesus, *i.e.*, the sphere of blessing and privilege.

The Christian blessings are all spiritual and so cannot be counted. The evangelical hymn which invites the Christian to count his blessings, may be good sentiment, but is futile. Simply because blessings and statistical method are in different regions altogether.

No. 4—BEZER.

The name Bezer bears the somewhat contradictory meanings of (1) distress, (2) fortification. But it is in-

dicative of the "Pilgrims Progress." These apparently anomalous conditions go hand in hand. Turning to the Scriptures we read therein that subsequent to the Christian being justified by faith, having peace with God and rejoicing in hope or prospect of the Glory of God, that the Apostle continues, "and not only so . . ." Both anomalous conditions are well set forth in that passage in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

The Christian pathway is not an easy going progress. It is beset with obstacles, which defy human ingenuity to overcome or circumvent. The trials are abundant and all the time we are here we are continually being presented with problems which appear to be insoluble. There can be no cessation from spiritual exercise, so that we may be overcomers.

It should be observed that the Apostle associates his readers with him in the process. "We glory in tribulations, etc.," that is the normal portion of the Christian to glory or boast in what the world seeks to avoid. The Latin word "tribula" meaning a harrow is the source of our English word "tribulation," and the Greek word so translated is derived from the idea of being "thrashed with a flail." People may seek to evade the contingency by classifying the expression as being merely a figure of speech, yet true observation will amply afford evidence that the expression is aptly descriptive of Christian experience under the administration of the Lord. He does not make any mistakes in His administration or discipline.

There is great gain if we answer to the advice of the Apostle Peter when he said :—"Wherein we greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations (or trials); that the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that perishes though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter, 1, 6-7). The trial or tribulation is only for a

season and only comes to us if need be. But the necessity of the trial is not in our assessment, but in the Lord's judgement. He sees the need, and subjects us to the process if necessary, and He knows best.

On one occasion a preacher put the phases of discipline very succinctly with mnemonic help as:—(1) *punitive*; we may have incurred the discipline through our conduct: (2) *preventative*; if it had not been for the discipline we might have been following a self willed course to our lasting loss : (3) *promotive*; all discipline is with the object in view that we should be making progress in grace and being of greater service to the interests of the Lord.

Much discipline comes to us privately so that we may not require to be under discipline by our Christian associates in the external sphere. Now it is good that we should be in harmony with the Lord's mind as to the bearing of discipline in the external sphere.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (or tried).” (Gal. 6, 1). If it were not for the abundant mercy of God we should be all overtaken in faults and thus we are not to adopt any superior attitude to the person under external discipline. Moreover, we are to realise that the Lord intends that restoration should be the result of discipline and we are not to raise insuperable barriers to the consummation of that end. Again observe that the one who essays to assist in the restoration is to be spiritual. That is not necessarily the one best versed in scriptural quotation or with the longest experience. Then the word “restore” is elsewhere used relative to the desirable end of the Corinthian Christians being “perfectly joined together” in the same mind. (1 Cor. 1, 10). In the prophetic scriptures “a body hast thou prepared Me.” (Heb. 10, 5). Again “the worlds were framed” by the Word of God. (Heb. 11, 7). These examples are indicative in an emphatic way of the

perfection in articulation of a joint without rheumatic affection, so that the restoration to fellowship of a Christian ought to be as complete as the welcome given by the Lord.

In Romans 5, the writer says, that we glory or boast in tribulation as the fundamental basis of spiritual advancement. What the world assesses as a discount the Christian is entitled to reckon as a premium. The logical sequel to "tribulation" is "patience," *i.e.*, the essential quality in the apprehension of the administration, because His rule is in connection with the scriptural term "the kingdom," which is associated with His patience. (Rev. 1, 9). The pilgrims path is no "sprint" race but a "marathon" or long distance race. It is as a rule of considerable duration and calls for patience which is developed by trial or discipline. Patience leads to "experience" which is literally the proof of the experience, because experience itself is all along the way, but the proof of the Lord's gracious and merciful dealings with us ultimately emerge and the result is "hope" or prospect. In human affairs hope is associated with uncertainty because necessarily there is nothing in the future here which is certain, as we have no control over our circumstances or our tenancy. So we rightly say, "if the Lord will," as to the future!

There is a development in the idea conveyed by the second mention of the term hope which makes us not ashamed, *i.e.*, not easily upset by untoward conditions. At first we were rejoicing in prospect of the Glory of God, *i.e.*, the objective presentation of the goal; but the second mention of the term conveys a subjective bearing. The process through which we have passed will confirm the settled conviction in our souls of the certainty of our goal or destiny.

We are not then merely repeating an answer to a catechism. But we are established in the sense of the perfection of the Lord's administration.

But running parallel with all the trials is the administration of the love of God which is shed abroad (literally,

“poured in a deluge”) into our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. When we try to empty water out of a bottle with a narrow neck there is some difficulty because only when a bubble of air goes up the neck can an equal volume of water come down, but when we tilt up water in a tumbler with a wide mouth the whole contents of the vessel are precipitated downwards in an instant. The former process is descriptive of the working of human love. There is a good deal of condition implied and hindrance introduced to its outflow; but the latter process conveys the idea of the love of God in its unconditional outflow.

The pouring out of the love of God into our hearts is the fortification of which the name “Bezer” speaks; so the problem of the apparent conjunction of anomalous conditions is solved. Parallel with the distress of secular circumstances from which the Christian is not immune, he has the fortification of the love of God which lifts him above the trials of “the way” and occupies him with a prospect “bright unfailing.”

No. 5—HEBRON.

The name “Hebron” is invariably taken as conveying the idea of association or fellowship. This is illustrated beautifully in the service of the Tabernacle, so minutely described in the book of Leviticus. The priests had at all times access to the Holy Place, wherein they accomplished the service of God. They had happy association or fellowship in that service. Moreover, the furniture of the Holy Place comprised a table, on which were placed the loaves of shewbread. On these the eye of God rested with supreme satisfaction, whilst his priests were nourished by feeding on the bread. Once a week the bread was changed by the priests, who ate what was removed. The bread could not be taken outside the Tabernacle, the priests had to eat it in the Holy Place.

Again, in Leviticus iii., in describing the peace offering there is no thought of making peace with God. It conveys

the idea of a fellowship offering, marked by thanksgiving and praise. Hence it introduces the thought of spiritual prosperity. Indeed, J. N. D's. French translation renders the peace offering as the "sacrifice of prosperity !"

In the Old Testament there is evidence to show that the altar of wood and the table of the Lord were identical (vide Mal. 1, 7 and Ezek. 41, 22). "Behold Israel after the flesh! Are not they who eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?" (1 Cor. 10, 18). This could quite well have been rendered "partakers of the table !"

The twelve loaves of shewbread were figurative of the twelve tribes of Israel maintained before God by Christ in resurrection and in all the unleavened perfection of Himself. The absence of leaven showed that He was absolutely apart from sin and evil. The New Testament analogy of this is seen in one loaf in this dispensation which represents all the people of God on earth at one time. They, too, are maintained before God in all the unleavened perfection of Christ and in the unity of the mystic body, just as the grains of wheat are held together in the loaf.

The Greek word (*koinonia*) and its cognate words occur 39 times in the New Testament and are translated variously as fellowship, communion, distribution, partner, partaker, companion. All the ideas conveyed in these English words are embodied in the original word. The main thought is "sharing in common," *i.e.*, partnership.

In this connection we may refer to the scriptural precision in distinguishing between two phases of partnership. In Luke, Chapter 5, verse 7, a different word is translated "partners" which describes merely sharing the privilege of fishing in the lake, since the fishers were in different ships. But in verse 10 of the same chapter our word is used to describe partners in a more intimate relationship, as being associated in the ownership of one ship and its nets and hence they shared the fish actually caught. The word of

verse 7 is used in Hebrews 6, 4 and is translated "partakers of the Holy Ghost" as describing people who shared in the external privileges of Christianity and yet were not in the intimate circle described as "in Christ."

In European countries favoured at one time or other by the widespread proclamation of the Gospel, all are described in a general sense as Christian. Yet many so described have not acquired a living interest in Christ as a personal Saviour. However, it is not generally recognised that these countries owe a great debt to the Gospel. The grace of domestic life, the friendly relations between people and the measure of good government extant have not evolved from Pagan origin. They have arisen from the influence of the object lesson presented by the Christians in holding forth the Word of Life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

In the great epistles of local responsibility (*viz.*, the Corinthian) there are three occurrences of our word in three different connections.

(1) God is faithful, Who has called us to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Cor. 1, 9). All Christians are called to that fellowship. We are partners sharing in common with all Christians, the blessings of being associated in a living way with the Son of God in resurrection.

(2) "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ. The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ." (1 Cor. 10, 16). We bless (or literally) speak well of the cup of which God has spoken well. We are partners sharing in common with all Christians, the blessings flowing from the death of Christ.

(3) "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." (2 Cor. 13-14). In the ritual of Christendom this has come to be recognised as the orthodox formula or benediction to wind up an oral service. It has a much

deeper meaning than that! We are partners sharing in common with all Christians the results of the Holy Ghost dwelling here and of his power to make good the truth of God in our souls.

Perhaps there are few other subjects which have provoked so much controversy as that of fellowship. These phases of the matter are foreign to what we are considering. Fellowship is essentially enjoyed in the spiritual sphere (typified in the Old Testament as "in the land"), the region of all Christian blessings. The objectionable phases to which we have alluded relate to contact with wilderness conditions.

At the end of the nineteenth century a wellknown teacher caused much stir by saying that there would not be any fellowship in heaven. He said that the word implied a special bond in a scene of contrariety and there will be no need for such a bond in heaven, because the opposing elements will be absent. Such a startling statement is true if we restrict the idea of fellowship to the above definition. Our English word "fellowship" has come to us through the Anglo-Saxon channel of language and puts emphasis on the fact of being drawn together. Our cognate word "communion" has come to us through the Latin channel of language and puts emphasis on the purpose of being drawn together. We submit that the foregoing definition only sets forth the first idea. We prefer to adopt the language and idea of the hymn writer.

Close to thy trusted side,
In fellowship divine;
No cloud, no distance, ere shall hide
Glories that then shall shine.

Although it is quite true that we shall not require any bond of fellowship in that blissful scene, it is certain that the burnings of heart stirred up within us as He has talked to us by the way will go on through eternity while we shall hear His voice without interruption.

Christian fellowship is essentially the fellowship of the

death of Christ. That distinguishes it from all material considerations. The one who participates therein recognises that he can have no peace or soul prosperity apart from the death of Christ as a basis. That fellowship is not defiled by the idolatrous associations of the world. That fellowship is also invested with the character of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apprehension of the excellencies of Christ on the part of one becomes the property of all. Hence prosperity of soul is shared by all in the fellowship. The fellowship of the Church of God is worldwide. It comprises all Christians. There are people who restrict the thought of fellowship to a local company of Christians. There are undoubtedly phases of the matter which relate to local responsibility. But the essential aspect is relative to the whole church of God.

If a business partnership is formed, the members are bound by the Articles of Partnership. It is realised that what one member does will compromise every other member in the partnership. As time has gone on men have had less confidence in their own judgement and in the acts of others. So legislation has been introduced to limit the liabilities of partners and unlimited liability partnerships have become less numerous in human affairs. But Christianity knows nothing of such arrangements. Christianity is an unlimited liability partnership, and hence the action of the individual tends to compromise the whole fellowship.

If a Christian partook of food in a temple of idolatry he necessarily compromised those with whom he was associated. Those who partook of the sacrifices were in communion with the altar. If we are in the fellowship of Christ's death we must be separate from idolatry. His death, the basis of fellowship, marked by what we enjoy together in separation from a world marked by idolatry. If a Christian is occupied with the enjoyment of the world and its frivolities he relinquishes the normal happiness which is his as a partner in the Christian fellowship. It is impossible to enjoy both

properly. Then we are contributors to the joy of others who are associated with us in the fellowship. We are always throughout the week partners in the fellowship.

The Lord's Supper on the first day of the week is the external expression of fellowship. In its celebration we are identified before God in all the value of the death of Christ. The fellowship is essentially spiritual. But its expression in the breaking of bread is in the responsible sphere. We break bread in the Lord's absence. It is a physical impossibility for all Christians in every part of the world to come together to break bread. So the breaking of bread or celebration of the Lord's Supper is a local matter. But we shall not partake of the loaf correctly, if our minds are occupied with a local congregation. We shall only celebrate the Lord's death rightly as we take account of all Christians. The statement, "We are all partakers," means that all Christians are entitled to partake. This is not a question of doctrine or duty, but it requires love to be in exercise. The longer time we have the privilege of participating in the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup the more these acts become invested with the characters of reality and beauty to our souls. Then the privilege has a limit. It is "till He come!"

No. 6. SHECHEM.

All linguistic authorities seem to agree in attaching to the name "Shechem" the meaning of shoulder or strength. All through Scripture the idea is very intimately connected with the thought of fellowship, presented in Hebron. In the history of Abraham we see that he pitched his tent in Hebron subsequent to his being at Shechem. Both names also obtain significant mention in the history of his descendants.

But the most prominent typical allusion to the ideas is conveyed in the Law of the Peace Offering in Leviticus, Chapter 7, 30-33. "The offerer's own hands shall bring

the offerings of the Lord made by fire; the fat with the breast . . . for a wave offering before the Lord." This passage speaks typically of the presentation of the excellencies of Christ to God the Father. That is a process which cannot be done in a second-hand way. It calls for personal exercise of heart, typified by the stress laid on the offerer's own hands.

The breast speaks of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge or comprehension. Yet the trend of the Apostle's second prayer for the Ephesians was that they might know that love, *i.e.*, in the way of quality what cannot be comprehended in the way of quantity.

Christ was daily ever the delight of the heart of God (Prov. 8). The contemplation of His qualities always occupied the eye of God. We, too, become absorbed in this as we enter into the love of Christ. Thus we are stimulated in our exercises as to what contribution we are making to give joy to God and to increase the sense of fellowship.

First, the breast was waved before God and then the priests ate thereof, so that the people of God assimilate the love of Christ, in relation to the joy that God has found therein. The breast was the common portion of Aaron and his sons. When eaten it formed the one who ate. So to-day the love of Christ is the common portion of all the saints in conjunction with Christ. When assimilated the individual is formed or nourished on the love of Christ spiritually. We shall love in the way that Christ loved. His commandment is that we love one another as He has loved us (John 15, 12).

But the right shoulder became the portion of the priest that offered the blood of the peace offering (Lev. 7, 33). So that the offerer was reinforced in his strength for walk by eating. There is thus a singular reflex action between our assimilation of Christ and our strength for right conduct in the responsible sphere of our lives.

Since the shoulder is connected with the leg therefore the walk is affected. John the Baptist looking upon Jesus as he walked exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God," and his two disciples hearing him speak followed Jesus. One would infer from the incident that John's contemplation of the Lord's walk called forth the expression as a reflex action. At once John's disciples left their Master and followed a new Master, seeking to walk even as He walked (1 John, 2, 6). We can only walk as Christ walked by being fed on what is set forth in the shoulder of the peace offering.

So as we survey the pathway of the Lord as clearly depicted in the Gospels, in measure we are helped to do things as He did them, loving as He loved, and in general, conducting ourselves as those who had been with Him. The process will cause us to be very sympathetic (not harsh) with the erring and the wayward. All the reinforcement of soul is with the object in view that fellowship may be rightly maintained.

There is a further thought in being strengthened than that we may be able to overcome our natural sluggishness, which prevents us from appropriating what is ours in Christ. There is a real enemy in opposition, seeking to neutralise in our own souls the effect of the revelation of God. So there is a war with the Devil, the enemy of our souls. Many excellent people of God seem to think that the war with the enemy is external. Thus they expend much time, effort and material substance in seeking to find a remedy for the unequal prevalent social conditions.

Men say if the slums could be eradicated then the devil would be defeated and people would turn to God. To look around the suburbs of our great cities is sufficient to afford evidence to explode that theory. The vast housing estates and the slum clearance settlements do not exhibit much evidence of desire for God. Gross secularism is usually dominant. People use the Lord's Day as convenient for gardening, playing games, and doing all sorts of trivial things.

However, the real war with the enemy is in the Christians' own heart. Therefore the Apostle Paul in concluding the Ephesian Epistle (Eph. 6, 10-18), exhorted them to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and to put on the whole armour of God that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The subtlety of the enemy is such that we need the whole armour of God, nothing less will do. We wrestle not against flesh and blood (the struggle is not a test of muscle and physical strength) but against principalities and authorities (angelic agents in the spiritual realm analogous to the real agents in the spiritistic seance) against the rulers of this world's darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (This should really read "heavenlies" because high places would tempt us to think that the Apostle was inveighing against the bad conduct of officials in high political administration.

There is nothing of that order implied. The statement refers intrinsically to something far more subtle than evil doers in the visible sphere.

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth" (*i.e.*, the Truth, we need to be established in that with which all Scripture resounds, *viz.*, the revelation of God in Christ).

"Having the breast-plate of righteousness" (we require to have our hearts protected by and established in the righteousness of God) and our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. The only peace for this harried world is not coming through the operation of the League of Nations, but through One of whom the Gospels speak. There is no peace for mankind except that which is the fruit of accepting the Gospel. The Christian's walk should be a fitting preparation for the Gospel.

"Above all taking the shield of faith with which we shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one." If the devil does not succeed in seducing from the path of

loyalty to the Lord by subtle means we can be certain that he will try direct attack and we shall need the ample protection which faith only will give.

“And take the helmet of salvation.” People look on salvation too much in the aspect of the deliverance which is to come to us at the end, but salvation in Scripture more often refers to the present phase, *viz.*, preservation. That is well described as a helmet or protection for the head. As we go on in the Christian pathway being overcomers through the rich mercy and goodness of God, we are apt to get inflated notions about ourselves and thus to be rendered useless for God’s service. Hence we need protection for the head.

“And the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication (the more intense aspect of prayer) in the Spirit and watching with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” We shall need to be vigilant. It is not a business demanding the regulation eight hours a day attention, but one which will absorb our whole interest.

No. 7. KEDESH.

We have already seen that the name “Kedesh” bears the interpretation “Sanctuary.” That sets forth the climax of all progress in the history of the soul, *viz.*, reaching where God is adored. From the outset God has worked with the end in view that he might have a people at home in His presence, and thus constituted worshippers.

In the history of God’s chosen people in the Old Testament the thought of the sanctuary did not appear until after redemption was typically completed. (Exod. 14). In the song of victory immediately following, Moses and the children of Israel, delivered from Egypt, spoke of preparing a habitation for God, and later in the fifteenth chapter they spoke of the place the Lord had made to dwell in, *viz.*, the sanctuary.

In Ex. 25, 8, the further thought is conveyed in the words :—"let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." Then a minute description is given of the golden vessels to be placed therein. The constitution of the tabernacle is described in Exodus 26, 1-6, as being formed of a curtain of various significant colours. There are various other curtains and structures, but these are all subsidiary to the first mentioned curtain. The Tabernacle contained the Sanctuary, thus the former term was more comprehensive than the latter which was descriptive of the inmost shrine, where God's presence and majesty were displayed. That distinction was confirmed in the New Testament in Hebrews 9, 2-3. Obviously the sanctuary was where God could derive pleasure from having His people dwelling with Himself, consistent with the display of His own attributes. He could not satisfy the desire apart from being consistent with His eternal characters of righteousness and holiness.

There are two great lines of manifestation, *viz.* :—(1) God reveals Himself in coming out to man. (2) Man has the privilege of going in to meet God. Of course that is a direct consequence of God's revelation of Himself. So throughout the Mosaic books the expression, "tabernacle of the congregation" (lit. "the tent of meeting") is ever recurrent.

Then in the vessels of the Holy Place, God in Christ is revealed in the Ark and the Mercy Seat, which although together they form one piece of furniture are distinct as to allusion and significance. Then Man in Christ is set forth in the Table and in the Candlestick.

These pairs of articles of furniture were separated by the Veil in the Tabernacle. The second pair were placed in the "Holy Place," while the first pair were in the "Holiest of all." The two compartments were together described as "the Holy Places." (Heb. 9). In Exodus 25 there was no Veil mentioned in the description. Apparently God's

original thought was that Man in Moses at least should have unrestricted access to the inmost shrine of God's presence. "There will I meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-Seat." (Ex. 25, 22).

The restriction arose through the presumption of Nadab and Abihu (sons of Aaron) offering strange fire before the Lord, contrary to His express command and summary judgment fell upon them. (Lev. 10, 1-2). Afterwards access to the Holiest was limited to the annual entrance of the High Priest who sprinkled blood on the Mercy-Seat as indicative of the perfect work of Christ, who would make propitiation for the sinner, *i.e.*, the man who failed in responsibility to God. (Lev. 16, 1-2). When the greatest man could not survive essaying to enter the presence of God, then it was positive proof that man after the flesh could not approach God. The Tabernacle and its arrangements testified to God's desire to dwell in the midst of a people on the ground of redemption. But at the same time they indicated very definitely that God could only be approached with due reverence to His character of holiness. The process was repeated year by year. But the repetition showed unmistakably that the question was only provisionally settled. In bringing the matter annually to remembrance, there was also the indication that the problem would be settled perfectly in God's own time and way.

From the beginning of Hebrews 9 we see that each of the two compartments of the Tabernacle was typical of a different order of worship. The first or outer was typical of the worship appropriate to Israel according to the Old Covenant. While the second or inner part was peculiar to the Christian order of worship, according to the New Covenant. The former was marked by distance. The priests could not go further than the outer part of the sanctuary. (Heb. 9, 9). The service was a ritual wherein neither the meaning of the place nor of the articles of furniture was understood by those performing the service.

They never knew God. The way into the Holy Places was not then made manifest.

The meaning of the second compartment and its contents are realised in faith on the ground of the New Covenant. The new things are marked by life and nearness to God, not by mere formality. The Christian has the blessed privilege of understanding the meaning of everything in the place where God displays Himself in accordance with His glory and majesty.

Christ is the minister of the sanctuary. (Heb. 8, 2). The term "minister" in this connection signifies "public administrator," who has a double ministry, *i.e.*, (1) He ministers to the Christians what God has revealed Himself in. (2) He takes up the worship of his people and presents it to God, who lives in an atmosphere of everlasting praise and joy.

Even as the veil is not mentioned in Exodus 25, so in Hebrews there is no statement of the veil being rent. Indeed the veil is only twice mentioned in that Epistle, *viz.* (1) relative to those who fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope which entered within the veil. (Heb. 6, 18-19). (2) "Having therefore, Brethren, boldness (liberty or confidence) to enter into the Holiest (Lit. the Holy Places), by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way . . . through the veil, that is, His flesh." (Heb. 10, 19-20).

As previously stated, at first Moses had access into the presence of God without a veil. Even after the veil was erected it would appear that Moses still had access within the veil. (Numbers 7, 89). Moreover, until the sin and death of Aaron's sons the priests could go within the veil without restriction. But afterwards the High Priest alone was allowed to enter once a year but not apart from the blood.

Now the blood of Jesus forms the New and living way through the veil into the Holiest. The blood is the means by which we shall be in the Holiest for ever. By faith we

avail ourselves of the privilege now. Thus the privileges of Christian worship are permanent and superior to those of the Jewish system. The blood of Christ has brought us back to the original idea revealed in Exodus 25. God's presence fills the Holy Places and man is there without a veil in the sanctuary.

We are not yet in Heaven. But as to our connection with God the veil has been rent from the top to the bottom * and we have liberty to enter into the Holy Places by the blood of Jesus. Our veil or body is not rent, and that prevents our seeing with our eyes the revelation of God in heaven. But the body of Christ is rent and that constitutes our title to go in. Yet we need faith to enter. (Heb. 10, 22).

In the Holiest, the articles connected with the display of God in Christ, were :—(1) the Ark setting forth the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which life and incorruptibility were brought to light. The acacia wood of which it was made was completely covered with gold indicating the righteousness of God. The golden crown above the Ark spoke of Glory. Christ glorified God in every word and action. The first Covenant which man neither knew nor kept was put in the Ark typifying that Christ alone fulfilled the covenant of man with God.

(2) The Mercy-Seat forming the lid of the Ark was of pure gold. It is typical of Christ in resurrection. Where there is a demonstration of the righteousness of God in His forbearance in remitting the sins of the past dispensation and moreover demonstrating the consistency of God in justifying the believer in Jesus. (Rom. 3, 25-26). Every attribute of God is in perfect accord with mercy. Thus His throne can openly declare the character of a Mercy-Seat and God is glorified in doing so. The panorama spread

* The types in Hebrews are relative to the Tabernacle, the veil of which was not rent. It was the veil of the Temple which was rent. In which the whole Jewish system was superseded.

out before the eye of faith claims the adoration of every heart with that endowment. Thus the cherubim did not look outward to contemplate man's ruined condition, but their whole attention was concentrated downward on the pure gold plate bearing the blood sprinkled there.

In the outer compartment of the Tabernacle, the Table with the shewbread thereon displayed in type the twelve tribes of Israel maintained before God by Christ in resurrection in all His unalloyed perfection. The food and delight which God derived from them became figuratively the food of the priests. In the New Testament time, the one loaf represents all God's people on earth maintained before Him in a similar way. The other article of display in the outer chamber was the Candlestick which represented the ascended Christ as the object and supporter of all ministry in the sanctuary. The oil represented the Holy Ghost, who bears testimony to the glory of Christ. The candle shed its light on the beauty of the candlestick and illuminated the table as well. So that there is a complete display of the glories and beauties of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Those who receive the testimony are brought into conformity to His image and fruit-bearing for God.

Man's failure will never render invalid the testimony of the Holy Spirit. He will raise up others to take the place of those who have failed. We see from Scripture that there is a direct testimony of the Holy Ghost and also an indirect testimony through men acting in the power of the Holy Ghost. "When the spirit of truth is come. He shall bear witness concerning Me and ye also shall bear witness." (John 15, 26-27).

As minister of the sanctuary, He presents gifts to God. "For every High Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices. Wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." (Heb. 8, 4). From hearts filled with the preciousness of Christ, He takes the elements which are the fruit of His own ministry and presents as

gifts to God. We receive the credit of these gifts to which is added the fragrance of His precious name. The reflex action on us is that we are led into more intensive worship.

The ministry of Christ as the Ark of the Covenant brings every heart into the presence of God. At the same time the process sets us free from all considerations of arrogance and ecclesiastical superiority over others, who may not have been favoured with such clear oral ministry of the things concerning Himself. We worship where all other Christians worship, *viz.*, in the church of all saints, *i.e.*, the Holiest. God is a Spirit and they who essay to worship Him can only do so in spirit and in accordance with the truth, *i.e.*, the light of Holy Scripture. Every other process, no matter how pretentious and apparently well founded, is futile. The Holiest where God is worshipped is now a spiritual sphere!

“LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.”

That injunction is the preface to the marvellous series of communications from the Lord to His disciples in the 14th chapter of John's Gospel. In the three preceding chapters, reference is made to His being troubled:—

(1) In sympathy with the sisters at the grave of Lazarus' "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." (John 11, 33).

(2) Consequent on the Greeks desiring to see Him and in view of His death, which was the necessary condition for the fulfilment of their desire, He said, "Now is My soul troubled." (John 12, 27).

(3) Contingent on the thought that one of that little company of His choice associates should betray Him, it is recorded that "He was troubled in spirit." (John 13, 21).

With all these thoughts pressing on Him and in spite of the evidences of lack of sympathy, faithlessness and treachery, He drew His own more closely to Himself and assured them in these words: "Let not your heart be troubled." From the preceding chapter, the prediction of Peter's denial followed on the indication of Judas as the traitor, and upon the announcement of the Lord's departure. These thoughts were well calculated to produce troubled hearts. The dark shadow of the cross had cast a gloom on Himself. But He calmed the anxious thought that He read in the disciples' hearts.

Up to that moment they had never had occasion to trouble about the future, because their Master had been at hand, and He had been their unfailing resource at every juncture. He was going where they could not follow. They were to be left alone and consequently they were filled with gloomy forebodings. It was that sense of desolation which the Lord sought to dispel. That was to be effected by the realization that thenceforward He was to be an object for faith, even as God was. Every true Israelite believed in God. That belief lay at the very foundation of their theocracy. But like all axioms in creeds, it was accepted as a matter of course, and often had little or no real power in the lives of those who professed such belief.

"In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14, 2). The Jews were accustomed to the idea that heaven was the dwelling-place of God, and the disciples had been taught to pray thither. In modern English, the word "mansions" implies the qualities of size and ornate display. But in the English of 1611 A.D., the word meant no more than the meaning that the original language would convey, *viz.*, "resting-places," "abodes" or "dwellings." The only other usage of the word in the New Testament occurs in the 23rd verse of the same chapter and is there

translated "abode." "Many" should not be understood as indicating diversity of condition, but rather abundance of accommodation. There would be room not only for the Lord, but room for all them also. There would be no risk of that house being overcrowded as the inn at Bethlehem had been at His first advent.

The Lord was not going away merely to escape from trouble, as they might quite reasonably have concluded. He appealed to His record of perfect candour in previous dealings with them. If matters had not been right, He would not have concealed the facts from them, they would know well! If there had been any limitations, He would have certainly indicated such. Their place was with Him. But it was necessary that He should prepare that place for them.

"And 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). "If" does not imply uncertainty, but condition of argument. It expresses the fact although in the future; it is perfectly clear and certain to Him. His setting out had a definite object, and they could depend that He would not leave it incompleted. Where He was going, they could not follow because the path lay through death. They had not the power then to pass through death. But the preparation of the place was a necessary antecedent to His coming again for the precious purpose of receiving them unto Himself. He would not accomplish the purpose by sending an angel, but He would come personally for them. Heaven, not earth, was to be the goal. The future of His own is to be where He is, *i.e.*, a portion totally eclipsing any position they could possibly have had due to His remaining on earth. Even His establishment as Messiah with all the concomitant glory on earth could not have placed them in such favour.

On this subject there has been much written which has tended to weaken the force of the straightforward meaning

of the words. Some have sought to impress that the reception was at the death of the individual disciples. That impression needs little more than its statement to carry its own refutation. Others have inculcated the idea that the passage refers to the spiritual presence of the Lord amongst His own and that the Father's house has a present significance in Christian experience. It is unfortunate that expositors who often in the main line are well-instructed should indulge in such far-fetched argument. That the verb is in the continuous present tense (*erchomai*) literally, "I am coming" and not "I will come" in verse 3 as in verse 18 is no warrant for doing despite to the obvious meaning of the passage. Attention should be paid to the context of the expression in question.

By the statements in the preceding paragraph, it is not intended to weaken the present bearing of the Lord's future coming. The Lord's object is to take us out of the world in a moment at the earliest juncture. With such an issue to our calling on high of God in Christ Jesus, there should be a very definite answer in our spiritual outlook and practical conduct. The result will be our gradual withdrawal from the world in soul experience. The power that will raise or change and snatch up the people of God in the moment of complete triumph at the rapture, is the same power that is operating now to effect a spiritual severance from the world. That spiritual process will have a consequent effect in our daily lives. We shall be obviously in the enjoyment of the hope of our calling. In spite of all the turmoil without as often within the Christian company, as well as connected with the individual Christian's heart, the same words, "Let not your heart be troubled" come from the same source in their unparalleled sweetness and assurance. Let us seek to have the experience of their value in an ever-increasing way!

THE LORD IS THERE.

The prophet Ezekiel concludes his prophecy with the words: "The name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there (Jehovah-Shammah)." That striking statement refers to the focus of interest in the millennium. One might have been tempted to think that the characteristic mentioned should have been the transcendent glory which will make everything in the millennial state effulgent with the praise of the Lord. But not so, it is the Lord's presence which will be the most prominent feature of that day of bliss to come.

What will be known in a national (yea, in a universal) way in that day to come, is known in a specialised way in this era, which is the Spirit's day. The Lord's people have now the special privilege of anticipating the universal condition obtaining in the "world to come." "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18, 20).

The disciples to whom the Lord addressed these words formed a select group who enjoyed the Lord's presence in their midst and who were attracted to Himself. But the statement is prophetic, as indicating that His bodily presence would not be continuing with them. In His absence, the authority residing in Himself would attach to His name. Moreover, consequent upon His departure from them and His exaltation to God's right hand, the Holy Spirit has come to give power to His name and to gather people together to that common focus or centre. So that the assemblage is relieved of the imputation of being whimsical, *i.e.*, according to changeable individual opinion, or of being fortuitous, *i.e.*, according to accident.

Obviously, the Lord's presence must now be a spiritual presence, but yet not less real than that physical presence which inspired His disciples with joy, and which will yet fill the whole earth so that the significance will be impressed on the name of its metropolis.

The Lord is the point of attraction. He said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." (John 12, 32). Christ is known in the glory of His person and His work as Lord. He is not manifesting Himself in the world to claim His rights, but He is drawing people to Himself on the ground of redemption. Then those so drawn find that they have endowments, qualities and interests in common. So that fellowship or communion is expressed in connection with the name of the Lord. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4, 5).

The name of the Lord cannot be linked up with the world. The Lordship of Christ appertains in an observation way to the "world to come." The apprehension of Christ as Lord leads us at once into the light of another sphere or day. The apostle said to the Ephesian Christians, "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light." (Eph. 5, 8). Spiritual darkness has settled down on the world. Even as light and darkness are wholly inconsistent entities, so the Christian and the world are radically different in constitution, interests and destiny.

The name of the Lord then has a wonderful selective effect. Coming under the Lordship of Christ draws us to a centre where His presence is known, but in the process we are dissociated from the world, *i.e.*, the spirit or course of the age. We are no longer dominated by the ideas which control the worldling. We are relieved from even the legitimate ambitions which influence him. The Christian's interests find their focus at the right hand of God. Therefore the apostle exhorted the Colossians to seek those things, because Christ sits there!

Then the highest point to which natural ambition would tend to take him fails to satisfy the Christian for at least two reasons: (1) that the position would not be high enough (2) that it would not be permanent enough. It is useless striving to reach a mountain peak that will be blown down in a moment! Previous to the eruption that overwhelmed Herculaneum and Pompeii in 79 A.D., Vesuvius had never been known to manifest volcanic action. Doubtless the dwellers on its slopes scoffed at the possibility of such an occurrence, yet that did not relieve them from the effects of the mountain top being suddenly blown off! So the world tendencies will come to a similar climax as described in the prophetic Word of God.

However, the power of separation from the world does not depend on any qualification possessed by the individual Christian, but on an external attraction. This is exquisitely expressed in the lines of a wellknown hymn-writer:—

'Tis the treasure I've found in His love
That has made me a pilgrim below.

That was the expression of an individual experience. Similarly what gives character to a meeting of Christians is the presence of the Lord. The antecedent is that the Spirit's constraining power draws His redeemed people together in the sense of the Lord's name, and the inevitable consequence is that the Lord honours that gathering together with His presence. Now it is well to recognise the precision of Scriptural expression. He does not grant His presence necessarily to every claimant company.

Scripture shows that there will be those in the day of manifestation who will claim: "Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name . . . and in Thy name done many wonderful works." (Matt. 7, 22). Yet the claim will be absolutely and irrevocably repudiated by the Lord. So no mere claim of orthodoxy will avail. Nor will clear enuncia-

tion of the truth afford a prescriptive right. There are lop-sided Christians who are arrogant enough to lay claim to an absolute monopoly of the Lord's presence in the connection to which this subject refers. But the claim only requires to be stated, for its absurdity to become self-evident.

The responsibility attaching to such a condition would be overwhelming. Moreover, by the fruits of the claimants shall the value of their contention be tested. In that coming millennial day, when the Lord's presence will be known in its ocean fulness, there will not be a wish expressed in dissonance with the Lord's will. There will be perfect unanimity amongst the components of society because of the Lord's will being owned. Although the conditions then and now are vastly different in a quantitative way, they are identical qualitatively. It is impossible to conceive of different results where the Lord's will is owned, and that is contingent on being in the sphere of the Lord's presence. That the claimants of such prescriptive monopoly are palpably found wanting in maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the co-bond of peace is so evident that their claim falls to the ground.

From the foregoing, it will be readily conceded that nothing else in our meetings is to be compared with the Lord's presence. Thus it is of prime importance that we apprehend that He is there. The realization of that condition will deliver us from every sentiment of human religion. All the trappings, with which man's tradition and superstition have trammelled Christian assemblages, will fall off as the gravecloths fell off Lazarus at the Lord's command! If on the one hand we are freed from ritualistic tendencies we shall be prevented in the same way on the other hand from drifting into rationalistic tendencies. It is easy to weave a web of metaphysics from our own reason which will enmesh us as effectually as ritual ever did.

The Apostle, in summing up the ministry of the New Covenant, wrote: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." That is neither the "cringing servility" of ritual nor the "arrogant license" of reason, but freedom to be occupied with the Lord, so that with all the privilege of unveiled face we may behold the glory of the Lord. Then we become the subject of a wonderful series of transformation into His image from glory cause to glory effect as by the Spirit of the Lord. In such a sequence of operations we shall be reduced in our own estimation sufficiently to preserve us from all presumption. The criticism of every meeting then will be in the individual analysis: "Did I realize that the Lord was there?" Otherwise all other conditions and personal presence were valueless!

THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.

John's gospel does not give the incident of the institution of the Lord's Supper, but the Lord's words recorded in John, chapters 13 and 14, were undoubtedly spoken at that time. That the Lord is absent is implied in the celebration of the supper. We should not require it if He were present. He was forty days on earth in resurrection, but the disciples did not break bread during that period.

But during His physical absence, we have His spiritual presence. There is not only the promise of His physical return for His own in the third verse of chapter 14, but the promise of His spiritual coming to them in the eighteenth verse, "I will not leave you orphans, I will be coming to you." During His resurrection period on earth He did not remain with His disciples continuously, but He visited them occasionally.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," are words of the greatest moment as setting forth one of the fundamental truths of

Christianity. But if this is merely accepted as a dogmatic statement, it will not take us far. Apart from the soul's apprehension of the Lord's presence His supper will be a formal matter.

The realisation of His presence is strictly conditional. In the 20th chapter of John, He came into the midst of His disciples, when the doors were shut. Doubtless that has a literal meaning, but now it has an equally applicable symbolical meaning. What hinders our enjoyment of the Lord's presence is failure to close the doors of our minds, after we have closed the door of the meeting-room.

Closed the door we leave behind us
Toil and conflict, self and strife,
And, within, Thy love doth bind us
In one fellowship of life.

“Cause every man to go out from me” (Gen. 45, 1), were Joseph's words. No Egyptian could be present while he made himself known to his brethren. So in symbol the “Egyptians” prevent our realisation of the Lord's presence, and the Egyptian who is most difficult to evict dwells within ourselves. In I. Kings, chapter 8, we read, “When the priests were come out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the House of the Lord.” So long as the priests remained to share the place with Him, the Shekinah glory cloud would never have been revealed. They must go out disowning all lordship or title to the place.

THE LORD IN THE MIDST.

Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. (John 20, 20). Not infrequently we have applications from Christians wishing to associate themselves with us, because they are seeking amongst us for the solution of ills which have afflicted them in some centre of formal religion. We may be sure that they will be grievously disappointed, if that idea is dominant in their minds.

The disciples were glad only as they saw the Lord in the midst. What has caused much of the unhappiness and disappointment has arisen through failing to see the Lord in the midst of His own. Then we are apt to limit our affections and interest to the merely social circle. Often that is as an inner ring within an outer ring of those with whom we formally associate in Christian observances. Moreover we need to see that in a much wider sense there are countless thousands who are as dear as we are to the heart of the Lord, with whom we do not associate, and that in answering to the Lord's request in partaking of His supper we should have these in view. We do not seek merely to express the fellowship of all the Christians in our locality. But we embrace in our thoughts the whole assembly of God in a world wide sense, and that as two or three gathered together in the authority of His name we seek to express that truth.

It was a common expression at one time that certain Christians had been gathered to the Lord's name for 40 years or more and so on. Such is apt to be a misleading statement. The gathering to His name is not a perpetual gathering although it has a lasting significance. But it is only realised when we come together. If this fact is appreciated, we shall not be found claiming the monopoly of the Lord's presence, and so denying the same to any other Christian company if those who constitute such are truly gathered in the authority of His name.

At the same time our being gathered together should leave a tangible mark upon us during the week of which the assembling forms a sort of vanguard. Even as it could be said of the disciples in the early part of the Acts that people took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. So it is nowadays, the apprehension of the Lord's presence must necessarily have a similar result. The people around will recognise that although in the world we are not of it.

Meeting with the Lord on the first of the week will entail sustaining a new character, *viz.*, the bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that His life also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4, 10).

Self and selfishness are the greatest hindrances to enjoyment of the truth of Matt. 18, 20. But on the other hand love leads to self-sacrifice and is the chief condition essential in the apprehension of His presence. "If anyone love Me, he will keep My words." (John 14, 23). "Fulfil ye my joy . . . having the same love," etc. (Phil. 2, 1-4). Love cannot be satisfied with anything short of His company. He was frequently at Bethany because a company was there that delighted in having Him with them, and so it is to-day. Being like-minded in Christ Jesus, causes us in lowliness of mind to esteem each other better than self and gives the proper atmosphere to the local company to experience the reality of the consolation in Christ and fellowship of the spirit. But the realisation of His presence is not unfruitful. There are precious fruits of the richest flavour. The first is peace! His first words in John 20 were "Peace unto you." Every disturbing element is hushed under His Lordship and we are free to think of Him. But joy always follows peace. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." (John 20, 20). They doubtless remembered His words, "I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you."

Then we have enlightenment as to the great sphere of blessing into which the heavenly company is introduced. "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." These two possessive pronouns "Thy" and "My" are full of significance. What divine enlightenment is contained in that revelation "Thy Name." "My brethren" speaks of the blessedness of association with Him, whose spiritual presence we have come to prize.

BETHANY.

Bethany means the "House of Palms," hence is indicative of a place of rest, *e.g.*, an oasis in the desert. There is scriptural evidence that the Lord was wont to resort to Bethany when he was in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It would not be difficult to arrive at the correct conclusion as to the reason of His doing so. There were loyal hearts there who appreciated his company and prized his love, in contrast to the treachery of Judas, the hatred of the Pharisees, the cruelty of the soldiery and the cold hard fickleness of the people.

It was at Bethany that these loyal friends made the Lord a supper. At which the three essential features of the Christian life in the individual were portrayed in the business of the three members of the family named in the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel.

1. Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead had the privilege of sitting at the table with the Lord, indicating fellowship.

2. Martha served, hence she exhibited the feature of service.

3. Mary, in anointing the feet of her Lord with the treasured ointment, indicated worship.

These features, fellowship, worship and service are indissolubly associated. No one can rightly effect one of these, who ignores or is remiss in the observation of the others.

When all the disciples were looking forward with eagerness to the immediate display of the coming kingdom. Mary, alone, was in the Lord's mind as to the future. Her faith had apprehended the end of His pathway was necessarily that He should die, and, therefore, she grasped the

opportunity. The other women essayed to perform that service, after His death and burial, but were too late. He had risen! (Mary was not at the sepulchre). She had bestowed on Him in His life-time the choicest treasured possession which she had. There was nothing too good to give to her Lord!

Since the Lord has gone on High, the significance of Bethany has continued. In the midst of the world that hated and crucified Him He finds positive delight in the response of His own to His love. There are hearts loyal to their absent Lord. They are found maintaining occupancy till He come!

The Lord went up from Bethany. He led the disciples out as far as to Bethany and having lifted up His hands He blessed them, as the true antitype of the priest in Old Testament times, with His hands filled with the favour of God, He bestows it in an unstinted manner.

It came to pass while He blessed them (or while He was blessing them), He was parted from them and was carried up into heaven. The real sense of the expression is that His blessing was an unfinished act! Although His position is changed since He has gone on High, He is still in the process of blessing His people.

The sequel was that they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the Temple praising and ascribing blessing to God. (Luke 24, 50-53). So the Gospel which begins with great joy has a similar termination! That feature is characteristic of the whole era for the Christian. So that the Apostle Paul terminating his earthly pathway in a Roman prison could quite rightly exhort his Philippian readers to rejoice in the Lord!

The Lord went up from Bethany and it is to Bethany He will return. Bethany is still formed of loyal and expectant hearts, who join in cheerful resonance to the in-

visitation of the Spirit and the Bride saying, "Come" to an absent Lord and Bridegroom. Meanwhile, we have the peerless privilege of occupying in His interests in the brief interval "till He come." The outburst from these hearts must necessarily be:—

"Even, so come Lord Jesus!"

His answer is:—"Yes! I come quickly!"

ANTECEDENTS TO ASSEMBLING TOGETHER.

(Heb. 10, 12-25).

From the above scriptures we see that there are obviously antecedents which are essential to our coming together in assembly on a real basis.

(1) The forgiveness of sins is the indispensable initial requirement. In the 8th Chapter of Hebrews where the terms of the New Covenant are specified, this matter is stated last. But so far as the individual is concerned it must be entered first. No one is entitled to be reckoned a Christian in the real sense of the word who has not his or her sins forgiven. Their sins and iniquities will be remembered no more. Only God could do that. No lesser person could blot out the memory of sins.

Christ offered one sacrifice for sins and sat down forever, even as by that one offering, He has perfected the sanctified forever, (or in perpetuity, *i.e.*, without break or cessation for a moment). All this is in contrast to the previous dispensation of law wherein the priests daily offered the same sacrifices which were unavailing in the removal of sins. Their practice only brought up the insolubility of the problem before men, but at the same time indicating with unerring precision that in God's good time He would Himself provide a solution.

(2) The witness of the Spirit (in verse 15) presupposes the Spirit having been given to the believer. The Spirit

gives testimony to the efficacy and the peerless value of the work of Christ. The prophetic passages in the Old Testament were ever recurrent as to His coming and His work. The Spirit's witness in the heart of the believer is consonant with the witness of the Scriptures. There are well-meaning Christians (who ought to know much better) who aver that the Scriptures are not important as they merely confirm what has been already established in their hearts by the Spirit. However plausible that may seem to be it conceals a subtle error. The statement arises from defective teaching, because it is exactly the opposite way round. The Spirit confirms in our hearts what is set forth in the Scriptures; not the erroneous contention that the Scriptures confirm what is witnessed in our hearts.

There are two great spiritual agencies at work, *viz.*, the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error. The Apostle John in his Epistle shows that there are two infallible discriminating tests to which every spirit may be subjected. The spirits which are in accord with the Spirit of Truth (*a*) confess Jesus Christ come in flesh, *i.e.*, the true import of His incarnation: (*b*) they hear the Apostles, *i.e.*, they listen to the messages conveyed in the Epistles as real messages from God through the Apostles.

It is fashionable in religious circles nowadays to speak in a disparaging way about Paul's opinion or John's opinion, etc., as if either were living to-day, he would have expressed himself otherwise than he did in the first century. If the Scriptures are valued as the living Word it is impossible to entertain the thought that the passage of time will alter the statement of the One who knows no variableness nor shadow of turning. If we do not pay attention to the Scriptures then our minds become the playground of evil spirits, which will speedily lead us to adopt the ideas of the spirit of error. With such considerations in view we may well exclaim :

O! To grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be.

But the Spirit's witness is a real entity. He constantly bears testimony to the unchanging efficacy of the work of Christ. Thus the consciousness of forgiveness of sins is established in the believer's heart. We have the Spirit who knows every element of the value of Christ's work. Our having the Spirit introduces the thought that we are the subjects of the Spirit's teaching.

(3) We are apt to be occupied solely with oral teaching. Again referring to the eighth chapter of Hebrews, we see that the second feature of the New Covenant to be established with the House of Israel in the day to come is that it will be unnecessary for anyone to teach his neighbour, *i.e.*, orally. For all will know the Lord from the least (*i.e.*, the little one) to the greatest (*i.e.*, the grown up person). But the blessings of the New Covenant are now known by the Christian through the Spirit's residence in him.

God has given us His Spirit that we may be conscious that His love has removed in the death of His Son everything that was between Himself and us. To know God there must be no distance between. In the far country whatever the prodigal might have heard of his father's love he could never have been deeply conscious of it there. To know God by being near Him is very different from believing a report about Him. The result is that we not only believe the report but we love the One of whom the report speaks. The Lord Jesus has been given as the Covenant that God's disposition towards men might be known. (Isa. 49, 8). Then the love of God being poured forth into our hearts leads us to love one another. "Ye are taught of God to love one another." (1 Thess. 4, 9). No orthodox formality and ecclesiastical rectitude can ever make up for the lack of love. No matter what argument may be advanced to substantiate the claim of being well taught can be of value if love to the saints is not being manifested.

(4) "We have boldness (*i.e.*, liberty or confidence) to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus. The new and

living way which which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is His flesh. (v. 19, 20). God has opened the way to us unreservedly that we may enter where He is adored and where we can survey without a veil the glory and majesty of His ways in Christ. In the past dispensation only the High Priest could enter there, once a year, not on account of his own merit, but only in a representative way, carrying the blood to sprinkle on the mercy-seat, typifying the perfect offering of Christ.

Everything in the Holiest is in accord with the Love of God. Christ is the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy-Seat. Every thought of God for the blessing of man is secured in Christ as the Ark of the Covenant as He is also the propitiation or Mercy-Seat where God can meet man in all the need of the latter. What streams of praise would mark our gathering together if we apprehended the privilege of approach in order to view Christ in the Holiest!

God's coming out in the revelation of Himself through the death of the Lord Jesus becomes our way of going in. As a new way it is a spiritual process which supersedes all the process of man on probation and shows his total rejection by God. The way is ever fresh and living because God is revealed in Love. All that is a forerunner of our being versed in the Lord's mind. In the Holiest we apprehend what His mind is as to every subtle distinction in the spiritual sphere.

In the day of glory to come, Israel under the New Covenant will have the forgiveness of sins, the Spirit poured out on them like a deluge and they will be taught of God, but they will never enter the Holiest, nor have intelligence of God's ways nor apprehend His Glory as the saints of this dispensation have the privilege to do. In the process we have wonderful support because we have the great priest over the House of God. He is the same unchangeable person whose eye never slumbers nor do His hands hang down for a moment of time. He is the great antitype of the articles of furniture in the inmost chamber of the Tabernacle.

The thrice repeated expression, "Let us," shows that the practical bearing of this process implies conditions or responsibility. A "true heart" means that the heart responds to the love of God. "The full assurance of faith" implies that the privilege is not thought to be beyond our apprehension. "Our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" indicates that the offering of Christ is known in such a way that our hearts do not condemn us. "Our bodies washed with pure water" would require that our conduct and associations are consistent with the fact that Christ received from the world only a cross and a grave!

We shall then be holding fast the confession of our hope without wavering. We shall continue steadfastly maintaining a resolute front to the enemy as the Christians did at first. Because God is not slack concerning His promise. He is faithful. Whatever He has said He will perform in His own good time.

In the long run (because the Christian's pathway is not a short race as a rule), we shall be very considerate for each other; stimulating love and good works, being examples to the flock of God. Parallel with this we shall be found assembling ourselves together and encouraging each other thereby, and in an increasing way as we see the Day of Glory approaching. We must be confirmed in the sense of the imminence of that event, without making any claim to having particular insight to the future. However, everything points to the conclusion of man's day of glory as coming to a sudden end. Man's ingenuity and success in the triumph of mind over matter is getting to such a pitch that he cannot brook denial in his search after the essential nature of things.

Then man seems bent in the use of his great powers in the compassing of the death of his fellows. God must speedily intervene to end the chaos and the welter of blood in human affairs, in order that He whose right it is to reign shall reign to the Glory of God and the everlasting benefit of a redeemed creation.

THE LORD'S DAY.

“ I became in the Spirit on the Lord's Day,” is a very striking statement of the Apostle John in the first chapter of the Revelation. It is a characteristic expression of Christianity, applying particularly to the first day of the week, the Resurrection Day, which introduces the sphere of walking in newness of life. There is but one day in the New Testament specially mentioned. The Old Testament was full of days, months and years, but in Christianity there is only one day of significance. We celebrate the Lord's Supper with the distinct limit in view “ till He come.” Collectively we live one week at a time; the Lord may come during the week into which we have entered. But if he does not come we start over again with a new week, and the Christian who is alive to that truth has in mind that the Lord's coming is imminent.

John was an Apostle but he does not introduce himself as such, but says, “ I am your brother and fellow partaker in tribulation.” There must be individual exercise preceding the collective exercise if our coming together is to have value. In spirit we ought to be in harmony with the significance of the breaking of bread. We should be in such spiritual condition that collectively we may be in the appreciation of the fellowship of the Lord's death.

Then there arises the matter of self judgment. A man's deeds may be such that even he cannot justify them. How often we seek to justify ourselves even when our deeds are judged! But we must judge ourselves. Whenever trouble arises it is because we are not in the enjoyment of the Christian fellowship.

In the 20th Chapter of John's Gospel we get a picture of the collective value of the individual experience of John in the Isle of Patmos. The disciples were glad when they saw

the Lord. It is only as we see the Lord in the midst that our hearts are full of gladness, and we can truly express the wish of the hymn writer that "our glad hearts responsive unto Thine, may wake with all the power of love divine."

The Lord was forty days upon earth in resurrection but the disciples did not break bread, because it would have had no meaning. The Lord's supper could only apply in His absence. We come together in the region of responsibility with the object in view of answering to the Lord's last request, but there is a marvellous conjunction in the experience of the Lord's spiritual presence in the midst of His own, which transports us into the region of the Spirit. The realisation of the Lord's presence is often frustrated by the intrusion of secular cares. It is an easy matter closing the door of the meeting room, but much more difficult to close the door of our hearts. When that is secured we experience the sense in our souls of the present love of the Lord binding us together in an indissoluble living fellowship. The experience of joy which normally goes along with the celebration of the Lord's supper in suitable spirit is the same now as that experienced by the disciples because both are in the sense of resurrection.

NEW WITH YOU.

"I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come." (Luke 22, 18).

"I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God." (Mark 14, 25).

"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." (Matthew 26, 29).

These variations in the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels have more than literary interest. Luke, who alone distinguishes between the cup customarily associated with the Passover and the cup of the New Covenant, simply states the fact without qualification. But Mark adds the attribute that in the coming Kingdom the fruit of the vine partaken will have a "new" character. While Matthew adds the further characteristic that the drinking will be "with you."

The little company in that upper room on the night of the Lord's betrayal had a dual or two-fold aspect. (1). They were representative of the remnant of Israel, who had carried on through the 400 silent years which connected the Old Testament and New Testament. For $3\frac{1}{2}$ years they had been the companions of Christ. After the Church has been caught up to be with the Lord forever, there will emerge a remnant of Israel from the Great Tribulation, bearing the same characteristics. With whom their blessed Lord on His triumphant return to claim the earth for Himself will drink the fruit of the vine. The act will have the peculiar significance of being new with them. They will be the lineal descendants of the company in the upper room, viewed with relation to earth.

(2). But these disciples were also the nucleus of the new company to be formed by the coming of the Holy Ghost, consequent upon the Lord's death, resurrection and ascension to heaven. In the Lord's absence that company had the peerless privilege of anticipating the aforementioned celebration by a redeemed creation.

On the first of the week the disciples came together to break bread and drink wine, thus manifesting the significance of the Lord's death, in the interval "till He come." But in doing so that act was relieved of formality and monotony. Because in spite of His physical absence He has granted His spiritual presence. So that in very truth they had the rich experience of partaking of the cup new with

Him. It is the cup of the New Covenant ratified in His blood. The cup is the expression of the heart of God. His disposition towards His own is love in a very special way. Again we are the lineal descendants of the company in the upper room, but viewed with relation to heaven. We are linked with heaven and so have a heavenly calling.

MY NAME.

“And hast not denied My Name.” (Rev. 3, 8).

“Name” is a word with perhaps more variation of meaning than any other. A dictionary will show that it commonly signifies the means of identification but it may also mean title, renown, character, reputation, authority, honour or dignity.

Many years ago having the experience of attending the logic class in a Northern University, the following proposition was encountered amongst others, “Are proper names connotative?” *i.e.*, descriptive of the attributes of the person to whom they are applied. That a negative answer should be given was well illustrated by the example of the class Professor himself, since he had changed his name in order to inherit an estate in the country.

Names in the affairs of men are largely accidental. But in their inception, names were much more descriptive of the person or the thing than is the case nowadays. Names in ancient languages were to some extent descriptive of the person. Even in our own language such a name as “Taylor” would arise from the person being engaged in one of the oldest of trades. But nowadays, “Goodman” is not necessarily any better than “Badman,” nor “Stout” bulkier than “Thin.”

In the New Testament, the Greek word (*onoma*) translated practically always "name" was undoubtedly connected with the root "*gno*" meaning knowledge or knowing and consequently the means of knowing. Therefore *onoma* signifies that by which a person or thing was known. We have the characteristics, the qualities, the acts and the consequences, hence the name is not merely the label of external identification, but implies the description or knowledge of the attributes and the spirit of the person.

The Lord's name signifies his authority during His absence and is more than a mere formal acknowledgment, but conveys the idea that consequent on knowing the Lord, His name exercises control over us, hence we gladly acquiesce in His domination. The result would be that we shall appreciate the transcendent thought set forth in Rev. 3. of being a pillar in the temple of God bearing the Lord's personal inscription of His new name thereon.

The Lord Himself, while here, attached great importance to the matter. Speaking to the Pharisees He said how could they speak good things being evil. Out of the good treasure of the heart a good man brings forth good things. Goodness of heart promotes doing good deeds and speaking good words. The internal rectitude of heart and external rectitude of act meet in rectitude of thought. Therefore the translation of *onoma* implies description of characteristics and spirit as well as a mark for external identification.

It would be futile to do a cruel, unfair or foolish act in the Lord's name. If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is not of Him. (Rom. 8, 9). The historical Jesuits may have borne His Name but they were apt not to manifest the Spirit of Christ. The qualities of that Name are only to be appreciated apart from the sectarianism of Christendom which shows the abundant fruit of the seed sown in Corinth.

Yet we must not conclude that our being formally apart from the ecclesiastical systems confers upon us the pre-

rogative to manifest hard-heartedness in our alleged faithfulness to the Lord. In so doing we shall be guilty of giving a false impression as to the Spirit of Christ. Faithfulness to the Lord's Name will cause us to be very considerate of others who may differ from us on many points of doctrine and practice, and yet be just as well pleasing to the Lord as we shall ever likely be.

How often after major ruptures in our ecclesiastical relationships we do not only abstain from weekly conference with our erstwhile associates about the only real matters to be considered in this life, but we refrain from visiting them in their homes:—all pastoral care for them vanishes. We may even become so estranged as to “cut” them when we meet on the street. Should it not be a salutary question for everyone who professes to bear the greatest of all names, as to how such a state of affairs can be considered congruent with the meaning of that name?

How good then it is to be found answering to the description of the Philadelphian believer in not denying the Lord's Name. How often those who profess His name are found in word and deed falsifying His character and thus earning the description of denying His Name!

THE RIGHT GROUND OF GATHERING.

For where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them. (Matt. 18, 20).

No matter how few in number or poor in intellect and spiritual gift may be the constitution of a local Christian company, if the conditions ensuring the Lord's presence are in evidence that company does not merely exhibit local responsibility, but is representative of the Church all over the world. There the Lord is paramount. The Holy Spirit in the midst excludes what is of the order of the flesh,

man's arrogant mind and all that has come under the judgment of God. At the same time the Holy Spirit introduces Christ and His glory, taking of the things concerning Himself, and making them living for the apprehension of the company. If one member suffer then all suffer, but on the other hand if one member gets a spiritual uplift all the others are uplifted too.

Much ministry, oral and written, has been occupied with the subject of the right ground of gathering. It has been often asserted that we gather on the ground of the one body. Such a statement is apt to be very misleading, although it is intended to relieve us from the imputation of sectarianism. "The one body" is an abstract term which includes all the redeemed on earth and thus denotes what is outside responsibility. But our gathering together is in the realm of responsibility, so that the expression is apt to have little meaning under existing conditions.

The real important statement is that we gather to or in the authority of the Lord's name. That name has great significance! There are also great privileges as well as responsibilities attaching thereto. The fact of our gathering to His Name is tantamount to the statement that He is rejected here as He is accepted there, *i.e.*, in heaven. The martyr Stephen in the climax of his trial bore witness to the rejected man being in full acceptance in heaven associated with the glory of God.

It should be observed that the verse quoted is in the second part of the gospel of Matthew. In the first part, Christ is presented to his people as their being yet under probation. But from chapter 16 onwards the fact of His rejection on earth is established, and the subject matter proceeds on the basis of his acceptance and exaltation in heaven. Hence the kingdom or the rule of God is described as the kingdom of heaven, finding its centre in a man at the right hand of God. Hence His name does service for His

personal presence in His absence, so far as responsibility is concerned. But the verse shows the marvellous association of His spiritual presence being granted to those so gathered.

But simple as the statement may be we are not to presume on that quality. Many who claim to be so gathered may be only deluding themselves because their practice is vitiating the sense of the Lord's Name!

Did not He in His own matchless ministry give unmistakable evidence of the truth of that contention? "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord! Lord! have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have we not cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? Then will I profess to them, I never knew you." (Matt. 7, 22-23). It is not sufficient to claim His name and its consequences, we must justify the claim by fulfilment of the responsibilities relative thereto in the Spirit of Christ.

There are not only responsibilities but priceless privileges connected with gathering in the name of the Lord. From the Corinthian epistle we see that they were saints by calling and thus formed the temple of God and as such they had the mind of God, and the presence of the Holy Spirit excludes the mind of man. In the dedication of the temple by Solomon the priests could not enter the house of the Lord because it was filled with the glory of the Lord. (2 Chron. 7, 2).

The next important matter is that the "salvation bringing grace of God" has appeared in Christ. He came primarily to present God to man. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Cor. 5, 19). The continuation of that ministry and power is now manifest in the church of God. All God's goodness to man is displayed there. That is matchless grace! In spite of the rejection of Christ by the world, the church and the Spirit of God are here. Spiritual gift manifests not only the glory of Christ but His wonderful grace. Indeed spiritual gift is grace.

Unless what purports to be gift is associated with manifest grace it belies its profession. Gift is not displayed externally as at first. We have not the apostles nor the gift of tongues, but otherwise all that was vital in the first century is vital to-day. We have the record of the Apostles' ministry in the Epistles, and the Holy Spirit makes that living and operative. There is abundance of resource, discernment and scriptural exposition evincing present grace for every need. We are apt to put great stress upon our endowment in the way of oral gift. That undoubtedly has a great and honoured place, but the necessary prelude to the exercise of gift in 1 Cor. ch. 14, is found in the display of love one to another in 1 Cor. ch. 13. Otherwise oral gift would be analogous to the sound of a tinkling cymbal. The proportion of real gift finds its measure in the extent of love manifested. As we apprehend the love of Christ, we love His own, because all are equally dear to Him. We are of His own whom He loved and for whom He gave Himself. There is often grave discrepancy between the oral endowment and the "hidden man of the heart," which is manifested in a meek and quiet spirit, esteemed in the sight of God as of great value. (1 Pet. 3, 4). That does not cause one iota of what is real to be null and void and the knowledge of that is a very great comfort!

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE BREAD AND THE CUP.

The bread and the cup form the elements of the Lord's Supper, but they are not synonymous nor is the cup merely confirmatory of the bread because there is no redundancy or vain repetition in scripture, *i.e.*, the Holy Spirit does not use different expressions in scripture to mean the same.

In the Old Testament arrangement the bread was composed of twelve loaves (the shewbread) which were set

before the Lord continually. They represented the twelve tribes of Israel, maintained before God in type by Christ in resurrection, in all His unleavened perfection. The word implied presentation (literally, the bread of face). No matter how they failed in responsibility they were still the people of God, so that even a greedy prophet like Balaam in spite of himself had to bless them in transcendent terms.

But when we come to the New Testament era there is only one loaf composing the "bread." It has an unique place, it symbolically represents all the people of God on earth at the present time. They are maintained under the eye of God in the unleavened perfection of Christ and in the unity of one body, just as the homogeneous grains of wheat are held together in the loaf. The one loaf is the special perquisite of the assembly which Christ loved and for which He gave Himself. Neither Israel nor the world to come will partake of the one loaf. It appertains to the Lord's people in the day of His rejection.

The loaf is followed by the cup which is not limited in application to this dispensation. The cup is the cup of the New Covenant ratified in the blood of Christ. As such it is the testimony of God's attitude to all men. The cup of the New Covenant is primarily for the benefit of Israel in the glorious day to come. But in the present era the church of the First-born has the privilege of anticipating that day of display in the enjoyment of the blessings of the New Covenant, vouchsafed to her members in the Lordship of Christ. Later it will be the portion of Israel and in the Millenium the whole redeemed creation will rejoice in the benefits of the New Covenant and the cup which is its symbol. The testimony of the cup evinces the love of God to all men, while the testimony of the one loaf is particularly to the love of Christ who loved the church and gave Himself for her. Both are in beautiful consonance with each other. The universal bearing of the cup will be evinced in the world

to come. Then will be the full issue of the expression, "in the midst of the great congregation will I praise thee." (Ps. 22, 22). But meanwhile He leads the praises in the midst of His assembly, to the Father. (Heb. 2, 12).

These elements of the Lord's Supper can only be enjoyed properly in separation from the confusion of sectarianism which has sprung up from seeds sown in Corinth. Sectarianism reduces the celebration of the accomplishment of the righteousness of God and the victory of Christ to a mere sentimental Sacrament. The institution of the Lord's Supper on the night of His betrayal indicated the closing down in death of everything of man's pretentious sentiment under the eye of God.

The breaking of bread introduces us to a new association with the risen Christ who died but is now alive for evermore. In obedience to the Lord's last loving request we partake of the loaf and the cup in remembrance of Himself. In separation from the confusion of Christendom we realise the force of the simple statement of Scripture and thus we reject the teaching of human tradition and superstition which would seek to inculcate the idea that the act infuses some virtue into the partaker.

BLOOD AND WATER.

"One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side and forthwith came there out blood and water." (John 19, 34).

"This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ." (1 John, 5, 6).

Blood and water are frequently mentioned in the typology of the books of Moses, because these were essential in the cleansing of those who essayed to draw near to God.

In Exodus, judgment and blessing are evinced in both ideas. In the Passover (Ex. 12) the blood of the lamb, the test of the judgment which fell on the Egyptians proved the protection for the Israelites. In the Red Sea (Ex. 14) the water which destroyed the Egyptian host was the means of salvation to Israel. In Leviticus, the idea of atonement was connected with the blood and cleansing with water. Thus in this connection there were two prominent vessels in the Tabernacle made of brass, *viz.* (1) the Brazen Altar for the burnt offering, (2) the Brazen laver placed between the Altar of Burnt Offering and the door of entrance to the sanctuary proper. Both pieces of furniture were in the court of the tabernacle.

At the altar was the only place in the camp of Israel appointed for the shedding of blood. There the guilt of the offerer was transferred typically to the sacrifice, whilst the virtue of the sacrifice was reckoned to the offerer.

In the New Testament, the cross of Christ corresponds to that altar. However, Christ is the sacrifice, the altar and the priest combined in one. He is the propitiation or atonement for our sins. But it is interesting to observe that the Brazen Altar had a curved horn on each of its four corners indicating the four points, North, South, East and West, and thus the comprehensive character of the efficacy of the blood offered upon the altar. The types of the confession of identification of the offerer with the victim through the laying of his hands thereon, the killing of the animal, the fire burning its parts, were absolutely fulfilled in the great Substitution at Calvary.

The Brazen Laver was for Aaron and his sons washing their hands and feet with water. (Ex. 30, 18, 19). Otherwise they were not fit to perform their priestly functions in the tabernacle. At their consecration the priests were cleansed by bathing in water. That operation was never

repeated, and corresponds to the New Testament thought of the washing of regeneration!

They were also sanctified by the blood of the Lamb of consecration, but subsequently they had to observe the washing of hands and feet with meticulous care.

The fulfilment of the type of the Laver is in the application of the Word of God to the heart by faith. The precious blood of Christ was shed once for all. Its efficacy for ever remains. (Heb. 10, 10.: 1 John, 1, 7). The righteous and holy claims of God have been completely satisfied so that God is now revealed as One who justifies the ungodly. (Rom. 4, 5). The blood has made peace with God. (Rom. 5, 1), and believers are now reconciled. (Col. 1, 21). The blood has made propitiation and sin is put away from under the eye of God.

The water corresponds to the cleansing power of the Death of Christ applied to the one who gets the good of the salvation effected by the sacrifice. It is applied in power to the believer at conversion by the Holy Spirit using the Word of God to bring him in accordance with the shed blood. In effect the Word of God removes sin from the believer's sight by causing him to see what the blood has done in God's view. The blood has made propitiation and the water gives the believer to know that truth!

The Blood is mentioned first in the order of the sentence in the Gospel, because there the prime interest is from God's side, therefore the blood must come first. While in the Epistle the matter is viewed more from our side and our appropriation of the truth, therefore the water comes first. The Word of God cleanses our hearts from the hatred which is natural to man in his attitude towards God.

The antecedent of the passage to that which we have quoted from the Gospel states that the Jews wished to hasten death by breaking the legs of the crucified, so that

the bodies might not be hanging on the Passover day. The soldiers broke the legs of the malefactors, but when they came to Jesus they found He was already dead. A soldier expressing the brutality of the human heart drove his spear into the side of the dead Saviour, and forthwith came out God's answer to man's wantonness, in the blood and water indicating the love of God. So that there was blessing even for the cruel soldier if he cared to avail himself of the provision. The blood would set him free from his sins in the sight of God and the water would cleanse him internally from the hatred which led him to perpetrate the cruel deed.

In Scripture, washing is always with water. The idea of washing in blood springs from analogy with Pagan practice. In Rev. 1, 5, the word translated "washing" really means "to be set free from" or "loosed from." Elsewhere the idea so conveyed is due to misconstruction of the sentences. Perhaps such theology has been moulded by Cowper's misconception of a "fountain filled with blood," founded on Zechariah 13, 1, which obviously refers to a fountain of water! "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," does not suggest renewal of application, but permanence of its efficacy.

THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE.

The Apostle had to address a Christian company at Corinth saying, "You are yet carnal" or fleshly. At first, doubtless when Paul was with them they could not be said to be such, but the test came after they were left to themselves. One may be greatly impressed on walking in the woods to see that when trees are cut down so as to lay a plantation open to the blast of wind, many more are blown down in consequence. How like that circumstance is to the experience of a Christian company. Christians cannot

stand alone, and it is the constant effort of the enemy to divide them. Paul could stand alone, but he did not mean us to attempt to do so. Even as the trees standing together helped to keep the wind out, so Christians standing in unity help to repel the blast of the enemy.

The devil is very wily. He divides the people of God into sects or parties. He will try and bring in coldness and jealousy especially with reference to Scriptural teaching. Paul, Apollos and Peter are made the names as excuses for division, and even the Corinthians sought to make a sect of special averred ecclesiastical standing in Christ. The devil always contrives to spoil the testimony and efface the image or moral likeness of Christ in those who bear His name. Dear old Rowland Hill once wrote,

“ Let names and sects and parties fall
And Jesus Christ be all in all.”

Christ is in all the Christians, although misconduct may arise by allowing the flesh to dominate us. In Christ there is only an unleavened lump. The leaven may be working, but not in Christ. In Him there are but the features of one new man. We may allow ourselves to come under the influence of the flesh, as it is still an active part of us. There is a very good story told to illustrate these opposing principles. A raven and a dove were put in one cage. On feeding them with bread, the dove was fed and the raven starved, and vice versa when flesh was the food put in. It is at once seen that their needs will never harmonise. One of them must die. So it is with the Christian. What feeds the new creation starves the flesh, and what feeds the flesh starves the new man. The Apostle said, “ Do not let sin reign in your mortal body.” That, of course, supposes that sin dwells in our bodies. The Spirit of God says, “ The tendency of the flesh is to assert itself against the Spirit, therefore, do not let it reign.”

Then there is so much outside which appeals to us and pierces into our hearts. The eye and the ear are avenues to the heart. There is the lust of the eye, and the lust of the flesh. If they are allowed to work for a time, we are carnal for that period. Christians, when in that state, have not been keeping company with the Lord. When we forget to be alone with God, we are bound to suffer. It is a great thing to get a little time alone and confess our own weakness. Confession leads us to be well kept. The Apostle could pray that his readers might be preserved soul and body blameless by God's Holy Spirit. We are blest when in the place of dependence, and sanctified wholly from the power of the flesh. God will keep us in a state of humility and preserve us from fleshliness.

It is well to remember that we may become sectarian even in our own minds without outward manifestations, *e.g.*, there are different lines of teaching. One teacher is able to open up the Word to us, another to give the application, while the third is burning with love for souls. And we may make parties by shewing our preference to one or other of these. We need all these varied gifts. Gifts are the proof of the continuance of the love of Christ. The work of many honoured servants of the Lord is spoiled through lack of wisdom. Doubtless the faults arise unwittingly on both sides, yet the Apostle condemned the Corinthians for it.

If the Lord helps us through anyone's ministry let us be thankful for it. But do not let us put the one who ministers acceptably on any special pinnacle. Let us not pin our faith to him. Gifts adorn the Assembly. Instead of edifying, gift often evokes people's jealousy, *e.g.*, it is not uncommon if a man gives a word of ministry in any place where he is unknown, it is frequently more valued than it would have been at home. This should not be the case. We should thank the Lord for the word, no matter through whom may be the channel of communication. A very

important passage of scripture in this connection is, "Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings." (1 Thess. 5, 19-20). The utterance of five words may convey just what we need, and if there were more waiting on the Lord this would be more in evidence.

A PHASE OF LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY.

There is a great tendency to shift responsibility on to those endowed with natural capacity for giving audible expression to the thoughts impressed on the hearts of the Christian company by the Spirit of God. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." But such procedure is not the Spirit's leading. The Spirit's business is not to please ears, but to open hearts. Hence the wakening of gladness in the heart under the power of God may call forth an audible response which may not be pleasing to cultured ears, but may gladden the heart of the Lord. He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. Thus if we realize our local responsibility better we should be found more frequently breathing out the wish expressed in the following lines:—

"That our glad hearts, responsive unto Thine,
May wake with all the power of Love Divine."

COMING TO MOUNT ZION AND ITS SEQUEL.

“ For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, *i.e.*, tangible (*viz.*, Sinai) but ye are come unto (a) Mount Zion, (b) the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, (c) to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly, (d) and the church of the Firstborn which are written in heaven, (e) to God, the Judge of all, (f) to the spirits of Just Men made perfect, (g) and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant and to the blood of sprinkling.” (Heb. 12, 18-24).

MOUNT ZION (a).

The contrast between Sinai and Zion has an important place in Scriptural exposition, *e.g.*, the allegory of the Two Covenants (1) Mount Sinai which genders bondage answers to Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children, (2) But Jerusalem which is above, is free, our mother, (Gal. 4, 24-26). So the passage from Hebrews would emphasise the double anti-thesis between the dispensations, signalling the first as in the realm of sense, concerned with natural phenomena, a dispensation of fear, while the second is of heavenly order thus outside the realm of sense, and introduces the dispensation of grace. Sinai was typical of the first Covenant connected with material things (tangible) of terrible nature inspiring apprehension, relative to broken responsibility. On the other hand, Mount Zion is typical of what is consequent on the death and resurrection of Christ.

In Scripture a mountain was symbolical of what could be depended upon. Mount Sinai revealed the character and

consistency of God. He demanded consistency on the part of the people relative thereto. Their inconsistency was demonstrated very shortly afterwards. But Mount Zion demonstrates God as a giving God, no longer manifested on the line of demand. Man's period of probation was ended in the cross of Christ. God is faithful, *i.e.*, absolutely reliable or consistent. Hence we are delivered from the necessity and bondage of preserving a reputation for consistency because we are linked up with One who has never varied.

Zion has a great place in the Old Testament, *e.g.*, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion the city of the great King." (Ps. 48, 2). "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined." (Ps. 50, 2). Mount Zion was really nothing as a geographical feature. Naturally it was merely a flat topped mountain rock with precipices on one side, easily defended in those days of feeble engines of attack. It would not have been sought as a place for comfortable living. But it took its real significance from the Ark having been brought there by King David after its absence of nearly a century, amongst the Philistines and then subsequently in various resting places. What made Mount Zion was not its physical beauty, but that it was invested with the Glory of God, because God was pleased to dwell there. So in the epistle of Peter the mount of Transfiguration is referred to as the "Holy Mount," because the Lord's glory and presence was manifested there; so we have come to the real Mount Zion which is a spiritual conception in contrast to the provisional Zion which was material.

The real Zion is seen in Christ risen from the dead and seated at the right hand of God as the centre of attraction for the people of God. He is the perfection of beauty from which the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God shines forth, and thus is the joy of the whole earth of redeemed souls. The realm of responsibility before God was

finished in the death of Christ, so that man doing his best to merit the approbation of God is now 1900 years too late to have a reasonable pretext for the achievement of his purpose!

The secular powers of His day crucified the Lord of Glory, so the world has come under condemnation. But the One who passed through "death's dark raging flood" has emerged on the other side a complete victor. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. (Rom. 6, 4). That is a remarkable statement! The Apostle adduces the irrefutable argument that the necessary consequence is that we should walk in the newness of life. The experimental effect is that we are delivered from the necessity of having recourse to the world to supply our needs, whether material or spiritual. We are now of God's universe, the illumination and centre of which are found in the Man at the right hand of God. Therefore the Apostle insisted that the Colossian Christians were to set their mind on things above. Why? Because that is where Christ sits. All our real interests are there!

Every hope connected with the world as a permanent entity was lost in the death of Christ. So that a new sphere is introduced in the resurrection of Christ. Mankind was under death and the curse of the broken law, but the redemption which is in Christ Jesus has met all that man was, and a way of escape has thus been made on an irrefragable foundation.

Our bond with Christ is established in the Spirit. Every bond on earth, no matter how precious, will be snapped by death, but we are bound up in a new entity from which no agency, physical or spiritual, can extract us or separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8, 39). God is faithful who has called us unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Cor. 1, 9). He is to us the real Mount Zion, on whom we can rely implicitly!

THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD (b).

The general trend of civilisation is to draw people together so that social services may be facilitated, hence the growth of cities is one of the most remarkable features of modern social tendencies. But the principle was in evidence very early in the history of the human race and seems to have been associated with the desire of man in self-will to be free from the presence and interference of God. The way of Cain was manifested in his going out from the presence of the Lord and dwelling in the land of Nod. Subsequently he built a city and called it after the name of his first-born son. (Gen. 4). That tendency finally produced such a state of corruption and rebellion that God had to blot it out under a flood of judgment.

One would have thought that the descendants of those preserved by God in the Ark from the general judgment would have derived profit from the object lesson of the Flood! Yet ere long their descendants in self-will and desire to escape from the consequences sought to establish once more a city with a tower which would reach to heaven, so that a flood would not reach them; perhaps also with the idea of tapping the resources of heaven, independently of God. The evolution of these tendencies has gradually proceeded according to the compound interest law. So in the twentieth century the countries are being depleted to an alarming extent in order that mankind may enjoy the comforts and conveniences of the cities. Alongside of this there are seen the wretchedness, helplessness, and depravity of man in their worst aspects. Millions are crushed together, dirty, hungry, unclothed and unemployed, while vast areas of the earth are untenanted. Human ingenuity is completely at a loss to find a solution to the problem. But the loyal descendant in the faith of Abraham is not satisfied with the consummate product of man's effort, but looks for a city with foundations, whose architect and

constructor is God. (Heb. 11, 10). Here such have no continuing city, but seek one to come. (Heb. 13, 14).

Nimrod, a mighty hunter, was the first empire builder, founding a city which developed into Babylon. So great cities of similar character persisted for many centuries in the plains of Shinar, as centres of successive empires, which had their day and disappeared under the sands of the wind-swept plains and the alluvial deposits of the great rivers. But Jerusalem became the centre of the empire of God's interests in the days of David and Solomon, reaching to the banks of the great river in the north and to the borders of Egypt in the south. The opulence of Jerusalem and the majesty of its King were subjects of conversation all over the world, so that the Queen of Sheba was attracted from the utmost bounds of civilisation then extant to get first hand knowledge. She was greatly impressed. But what really captured her heart completely was the ascent by which the great king went up to the House of God. So that it was the presence of God which was the distinctive feature about that city. It would have continued to be the centre of attraction for the whole earth if God's people had continued loyal to Him.

Although its kings and people sadly traduced the name of their God, their identity and that of their city were not lost, so the greatest enigma of history has arisen. The Jews are the only Semitic people who have held together. All other nations vanished into the complex of humanity, when their gods were smashed and temples destroyed; their cities became the abodes of jackals. Even infidel historians have attributed the solution to the Jewish possession of a book with stimulating confirming ideas about an invisible God, the Lord of Righteousness, high above kingship and priesthood, who would in the future restore a glorious kingdom to His people. But these writers fail to see that the book is living because it is the word of the living God who is behind everything, moulding all human affairs to His will. So that

it is no mere stimulating theory which makes the Jew the inexplicable enigma of history. That mystery is on the verge of solution by the instantaneous coming of Christ to snatch up His own people from the tomb and the earth to be with Him for evermore!

Meanwhile the cities of this world occupy the attention of many more people than the city of the living God, the centre on earth of God's thoughts. The city is found in what was formed by the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. It is constituted by charter or covenant. Jerusalem was governed and marked by the first Covenant. The heavenly city on earth is constituted and marked by the New Covenant, ratified in the blood of Christ. In the city of the living God, He is known, *i.e.*, the essential feature of eternal life. Moreover, He is known in a very different character than the people of old knew Him. He is no longer dwelling at a distance in thick impenetrable darkness with relation to His people, He is known as the God of Love and that love is reciprocated. "We love Him, because He first loved us." The result is that there is liberty of approach. "Christ has set us free in freedom," *i.e.*, a free state or city. (But the main thought in the city of the living God is the display of His character to the universe).

Six hundred years ago there were important cities in Germany like Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck which formed a league of free cities enjoying liberty and many privileges in common. In course of time these were lost. But the heavenly Jerusalem is marked by liberty which cannot be forfeited. There was not any freedom in the Jerusalem of old under the First Covenant because God was not known. Liberty is a necessary consequence of God being known. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (1 Cor. 3, 17).

The City of the Living God was founded in the power of the Spirit and its resources and privileges are tested in the same power. We have reached it that we may be marked

by the features of the New Covenant and rejoice in the liberty peculiar to its apprehension. The knowledge of God leads to our drawing near to Him. Until Christ rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven the Holy Spirit was not here personally, hence our reception of all that is in the domain of the Spirit is consequent on Christ having been glorified at the right hand of God.

MYRIADS OF ANGELS (c).

From time to time there has been much discussion as to whether the term "general assembly" applies to the foregoing entity or to that which follows, *i.e.*, whether it refers to the Angels or to the Church of the First-born. However, the great volume of reliable exposition is agreed that it refers exclusively to the former. The innumerable company is literally "tens of thousands" or myriads, while the general assembly is analogous to the festal assembly at the Olympic games. The angels are here regarded as assembled in fulness of joy not as sent forth in service. So that the usage of the term with relation to an annual congress of an ecclesiastical organisation is not justifiable from scripture.

Throughout the Old Testament we have instances of angelic manifestation. A scene analogous to our text was set in the day when Elisha the prophet and his servant were in Dothan and the king of Syria sent a great host with horses and chariots and compassed the city. (2 Kings 6, 14). The servant was greatly perturbed. But his master prayed the Lord to give vision to the young man and he saw what had been apparent to the prophet all the time. The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about them! It might seem an exact replica of the host outside the city. But there was an important distinction. The chariots outside were combustible while the chariots surrounding them were of fire, in keeping with the character of God who had sent them. He is a consuming fire! The host

surrounding the prophet and his servant was undoubtedly angelic. They were there not for display of heaven's delight, but for service. While our scripture treats of angelic display consequent upon God's complete victory, when evil and its author have been crushed irrevocably. We have come in the Spirit to that moment.

Until Christ came there never had been anyone on whom myriads of angels could wait in raptures of delight. At His birth the multitude of the heavenly host sang and praised God. They were manifest to a few shepherds, men of little account in the affairs of the world. They sang "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men (*i.e.*, God's good pleasure in a man.*)" For the first time in history the good pleasure of God had been brought to a focus. It was concentrated on a babe in a manger in Bethlehem. Is there any wonder that there should have been such a festal display of innumerable angels? Judged by human reason it looked very unlikely that deliverance from bondage should be located in a stable. Probably the people thought only of deliverance from the thralldom of Rome, but a much more intense bondage than that was in view. In the temptation which preceded the institution of His public ministry angels attended Him and so throughout his life angels were continually in waiting. The angels waited for the Man, the Saviour, Christ the Lord. His life was antecedent to His death. The victory achieved for God in the death of Christ involves a celebration in the coming day of Glory! An important feature of which is set forth in myriads of angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, heaven being opened. (John 1, 51). This is consequent upon all being put under His feet. (Psalm 8). That terse description is a summary of the greater things than those which had entered into the conception of Nathaniel, in relation to the man of Psalm 2, *viz.*, Israel's coming king.

Angels now take charge of the city of the living God. They are ministers or servants with a specific commission to take care of the people of God who are the heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1, 14). That fact is dimly seen and often referred to in a sentimental way by people in general, so much so that in times of great trial, people are convinced that they witness vast forces of angels acting on their behalf. *E.g.*, at the battle of Mons in 1914 there were many credible witnesses of the presence of angels. We have no intention of discussing that matter, because from the premises of human reason the vision could quite well be attributed to hallucination of men's minds under strain; but we have scriptural testimony that angels are constant attendants on those who belong to Christ as aforesaid. So that their presence is not confined to times of tremendous trial. But in every moment of life's journey we are assured of their presence. However, it is perceived by spiritual means. We need not be looking for angels in white by natural perception. Probably we have very little realisation how much we are guarded by the angels!

THE CHURCH OF THE FIRST BORN (d).

The term "first-born" bears the idea of pre-eminence rather than precedence in birth. This is borne out by Old Testament usage, *e.g.*, Solomon was addressed as first born although he was amongst the younger sons of his family. It is probably suggested by the important place of the first-born in Israel. God claimed the first-born, hence the Church of the first-born is for God. But that could not be established until Christ came. He is undoubtedly the real first-born for God. He is the beginning of the creation of God. In all things He must have the pre-eminence. (Col. 1, 18). But in Colossians Ch. 1, He is spoken of as "the first-born from the dead." As such He has precedence as well as pre-eminence.

The Church of the First-born is perfectly congruent with Christ. They share in His dignity and their names are written in heaven. (Luke 10, 20). Although that is undoubtedly the significance of the passage in Hebrews 12, the particular construction of the sentence is not unimportant. There is additional stability given to the position that not only are the names written in heaven but those who answer to the names are themselves written there. They are inscribed on a roll beyond the reach of the eroding influences of time and indeed outside the realm of responsibility altogether. They were not natives of heaven as the angels are, yet in infinite grace they have come to be associated with the First-born as the heirs of the glory according to eternal counsel. Hence all their real interests are in heaven, thus it is fitting that their burgess roll should be there too.

They are the same people that the scripture has brought before us as the heavenly city, but viewed in a different aspect. The heavenly city is coming out from God as the medium of administration of rule and the dissemination of light to the earth and where liberty is enjoyed, *i.e.*, representing God manward. But as the church of the first-born they represent man Godward as a worshipping company. Before the eye of God we are risen together with Christ, the First-born. So the Apostle Paul pressed on the Colossian christians the importance of setting their minds on things above.

As we are constituted in harmony with heaven, we are dissociated from the course of this world. When Christ was here He was occupied with His Father's business, which had relation to heaven. Everything on earth was subsidiary and transitory. So since we have a heavenly calling and as co-sharers of his inheritance and joy we partake of the same character. We wait the moment when we shall receive the call from heaven to go there in body where our spiritual interests have been for a long while.

All christians look forward to going to heaven not because of their merit nor even on account of their faith but because the love of God will delight to have them there. When we apprehend that, we have liberty to draw near to God now. It was God's pleasure to have Israel in the land. He would not allow them to continue either in Egypt or in the wilderness, so it is God's good pleasure to have us dwelling with Him. As rich in mercy, on account of the great love which He loved us, even when we were dead in sins He quickened us together with Christ and raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2, 4-6). So our spiritual position beyond the realm of time and sense is altogether due to the love of God and the grace flowing therefrom.

GOD, THE JUDGE OF ALL (e).

The introduction of these solemn words in the midst of a superlative description of Christian privilege and blessing seems strange. Up to this point thought had been concentrated on heaven, its angelic inhabitants and various phases of the blessings of the heirs of salvation. The words of the passage we are considering would imply that although previously contact with God could only be made indirectly that now there was no intermediate relationship. Hitherto Israel had relations with God through various media, *e.g.*, angels, priests and prophets. But now the Hebrews could approach without fear even if He were manifested in the character of being judge of all.

God could not take up that relationship apart from the coming of Christ. He could not be in direct communication with man and the creation that man had grossly distorted until Christ became man. No man had seen God at any time. Indeed no one could see Him! So that all depended on the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. In consequence God could be known as the judge

of all. He takes that place with relation to creation. In fact that is the place that God assumes relative to the world to come. Primarily the passage does not refer to God as judge seated on the throne of executive justice, but more in relation to its administration.

It will be a great day for the world when judgment will return to the earth in righteousness. At present the world is not governed through righteousness but through expediency, so compromise is an important feature in the awards of so-called justice. "Splitting the difference" is always an easy course of settling disputes in the first instance, although that procedure may lead to very serious difficulty in the long run. At present the aggressive individual or nation secures the major awards and the meek are pushed to the wall. Yet the day is coming when "the meek shall inherit the earth and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Ps. 37, 11).

For the most part judgment has been dissociated from righteousness and might has been esteemed as right. But there will be a return to the principle of righteousness not through the efforts of the League of Nations and other well-meant devices of man, but through God's intervention in the Man of His counsels, the Lord of Glory, who is the rightful King. When His sway is owned, everything will be under His control. Meekness will come in for its legitimate reward and forwardness will be put in its proper place. Now in spiritual apprehension the Hebrew Christians had arrived at that moment and they are representative of the saints of the whole dispensation.

THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT (f).

This passage has reference to the Old Testament saints whose spirits are now in heaven, made perfect through the offering of Christ. "For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified." (Heb. 10, 14). Yet a

little later on the writer could say "that they without us should not be made perfect." (Heb. 11, 40). The apparent contradiction between the passages simply arises through the use of the term "perfect" in different connections. The great cloud of witnesses of the first verse of Chapter 12 refers to the Old Testament worthies cited in chapter 11, *viz.*, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc., who were reckoned just men not on account of their merit but through faith. With true prophetic vision they foresaw the coming of Christ as the complete solution of all the ills of humanity and as the propitiation, *i.e.*, that God might be just in justifying the believer either antecedent to His coming or subsequent thereto. Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto Him for righteousness by God, (Rom. 4, 3), so with all the others they were justified on the same principle and thus in God's reckoning they were just men.

By faith these "just men" ran their course and after they had patiently endured they obtained the promise. (Heb. 6, 15). Yet later we read "these all died in faith not having received the promise." (Heb. 11, 13). Yet again there is no contradiction. The sixth chapter refers to the fact that the perfect discipline of God resulted in their obtaining the spiritual good of the promise in their souls. Albeit they did not actually get the substance which could only be brought about by the coming of Christ. Similarly the ultimate destiny of their souls was perfectly secured in Christ and their spiritual enjoyment of the things of God was perfect because of their faith in God's solution. But Scripture forbids the thought that their state was the complete consummation of God's thought or promise. Indeed the full bearing of the passage would necessarily involve the condition that not only those spirits of the old dispensation, but the spirits of the departed saints of this era, and we who are yet in the body await the resurrection day when at the word of the Lord we shall rise triumphantly together to meet Him in the air.

We cannot say what was the precise enlightenment of those just men when they foresaw the day of Christ, but they were undoubtedly fortified and rendered superior to the conditions in which they lived. Moreover the context would show that not the spirits but the just men were made perfect. They are made perfect on the basis of redemption. Those righteous men had been recognised by God before the Church period was initiated. They had finished their courses. They had been overcomers in the trying circumstances of life. They are in the presence of God awaiting the manifestation of Christ in the day of glorious display. They had been intimately associated with the ways of God on earth. They had proved loyal to God in a time of vastly less blessing than obtains in the christian era, yet God owned their faithfulness and they enjoy their rest in heaven. But our passage only speaks of their spirits because they will not be perfect or complete until they receive their bodies of glory. The Hebrew christians had arrived in spiritual apprehension to the moment when that will be true.

THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT (g).

Elsewhere the adjective “new” in connection with “covenant” is the translation of the word *kainos* implying newness of kind or quality, but here the usage is unique of another word *neos* which means newly made, *i.e.*, young or having all the freshness of youth in comparison with that which had long since become old.

God had ever in mind the purpose to bless the earth, but He could not do so according to man’s responsibility which had been conclusively demonstrated as an unreliable basis throughout 4,000 years of probation. Pursuant of this end, Moses became the mediator of the First Covenant which spoke of God’s claim over man and required a satisfactory response from him. But that was a complete failure on man’s side. Therefore the prophetic scriptures with ever

increasing emphasis brought to light that God would establish a New Covenant with Israel, no longer on the ground of man's responsibility but on the basis of His faithfulness. That would involve the law written in the hearts of the people and the forgiveness of sins.

No less person than Christ could effect God's purpose. He died for the sins of the people who were under the First Covenant. He met man's accumulated liability and became the mediator of the New Covenant by redemption. But the blessing is more comprehensive than meeting the needs of individual men and women. Its bearing has relation to man on the earth. Therefore the blessing is secured for the earth as to the whole creation which shared with man the consequence of his sin. So under the New Covenant all creation will share with man its benefits. "The earnest expectation of creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8, 19).

The New Covenant expresses God's disposition of love primarily towards Israel. But it has also relation to all men. What God will establish for Israel is also his purpose for mankind in a general way. God's disposition towards all men was manifested in the death of Christ. So in instituting the Supper on the night of His betrayal the Lord said to His own "this cup is the New Covenant in My blood." The New Covenant was ratified in His blood. He is the mediator or the One by means of which the Covenant was established.

Then the last clause of the text puts emphasis on the blood which was sprinkled by analogy with the procedure under the Old Covenant. The blood of sprinkling testifies to the righteousness and grace of God relative to the removal of sin. The blood of Christ was shed on earth just as that of Abel was, but the former spoke better things or acted more powerfully in bringing about incomparable better results than the latter did. Indeed the blood of Abel called for vengeance, but the blood of Christ speaks of righteousness

accomplished for God therein. So that the dread entail of human guilt is broken for the believer who comes into the benefit of remission of sins.

The blood of Abel testifies to the first flagrant act of man's self will in the world. The incident was the forerunner of a flood of violence which soon filled the earth and ultimately brought God's judgment in a flood of water to cleanse the earth. But subsequent to the flood, mankind soon took on the character of the antediluvians and that character of violence has been sustained ever since.

Man came under the sentence of death by his disobedient act in Eden. But he hastened the incidence of the event by hatred and violence. Abel was the only one of the worthies before the flood named in Scriptural record who was short-lived and without progeny. Sin was introduced against God in Eden and shortly after the expulsion therefrom sin was manifested by man against his most intimate neighbour!

The blood of Christ does not call for retribution against the Jew as that of Abel did against Cain whereby he could no longer continue near to God, but became a wanderer on the earth. The grace of God bringing salvation commenced operations at the blood-stained city of Jerusalem, just seven weeks after the arch deed of violence had been committed. The blood of Christ invoked forgiveness of sins and peace with God even for the brutal soldier who drove his spear into the side of Christ.

The blood of sprinkling is God's answer to the defilement wrought by man. It is the witness of the righteousness of God accomplished in the sacrifice of Christ. His blood is the means of purgation of sins. All the sin and defilement which has come in by man has been cleansed by the blood of Christ, so that God is now satisfied perfectly.

There is a practical bearing on the Christians so that they may be separate from the world and its glory. "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour." (Heb. 2, 9). The Christians now get the blessings of the New Covenant

in the sequel of the death of Christ. These are administered in His Lordship. In partaking of the Lord's Supper, He presents himself to the partakers as the mediator of the New Covenant.

But the benefits of the New Covenant are not exhausted in the Christian era. Indeed they are relative in a primary way to the world to come which will be founded on the same redemption. While the new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness dwells, repose on the same basis, *viz.*, the infinite glory which has accrued to God through the virtues of the blood of Christ.

THE VOICE OF GOD.

God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by (in) His Son. (Heb. i. 1, 2).

A well-known writer on christian themes once said that a silent heaven is the greatest mystery of our existence! That God is silent amidst all the high-handed oppression and cruel actions of men must always be an enigma to people who judge by what they see. Nevertheless that God has spoken is the greatest fact of history. The Old Testament is full of the revelation of God. That God spoke in Moses was evident, because anyone who refused him speaking on earth fell under the summary judgment of God. Hence emphasis is put on the importance of hearing the One who speaks from Heaven, as of vastly greater interest. (Heb. 12, 25).

All through the Old Testament, God spoke with ever increasing punctuation in the prophets. In the glorious days of Solomon, prophetic function was not so much in evidence, but as kingship and priesthood deteriorated the star of prophecy shone forth in the firmament with growing lustre. Then after 400 years God was manifested again but

in another character. "When the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive Sonship." (Gal. 4, 4-5). The advent of Christ introduced everything for God. Before His time all was provisional. But His coming established a permanent basis on which God could work. All the sacrifices under the law could not effect anything of absolute significance. They were simply relative to an event to come, and that event was the death of Christ. By His own blood He obtained eternal redemption and became the Mediator of the New Covenant. (Heb. 10, 12, 15).

So there has been a complete revelation of God in the New Covenant established in the blood of Christ, so that His love can flow forth without hindrance. Whosoever will may take of the water of life freely. God wishes to be known as the God of love. He gave His Son that man might not suffer the consequences of his rebellion, but have eternal life, *i.e.*, the enjoyment of God's presence for evermore. When God spoke on earth in Moses He was occupied with affairs in the realm of responsibility, but when He speaks in this era from heaven in His Son He is occupied with the unfolding of blessing in the realm of His purpose, which was in His mind before the world was founded, *i.e.*, before responsibility existed. These blessings are of spiritual order and are found in the heavenlies in Christ. These communications are made by the Spirit consequent upon Christ going to the right hand of God after accomplishing all to the glory of God. He has sent His Spirit here to be His mouthpiece.

So that God is not silent nor has He so much work on hand that He cannot attend to details, as a great classical writer once averred. He sees everything so that an apparent trifle like a cup of cold water offered to His own in His name does not escape His notice. But He is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish. The burden of

prophecy affirms that God will intervene suddenly in the affairs of men and when He does so, no one will be able to gainsay His title for a moment. Of old, His voice shook the earth, but when He speaks again after man has filled his cup of sin and rebellion, God's wrath will be manifested against ungodliness. His voice will shake not only the earth, but heaven also. Only things which cannot be shaken will remain, these appertain to the realm of grace and are being received now in the process of our service of God acceptably with reverence. (Heb. 12, 28).

TWO BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION PRINCIPLES.

In the old dispensation, God stated the terms on which He could be with Israel and on which they could be His people. These terms were embodied in the Law or the First Covenant. In that, the opportunity was given to man to prove what he could do with God's help. The Covenant resulted in man proving unfaithful at the very first test. It depended on man's obedience which was the condition of blessing.

"If ye will obey my voice and keep my covenant." (Ex. 19, 5).

"If ye hearken to these judgments and keep and do them the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant." (Deut. 7, 12).

"He declared unto you his Covenant which he commanded you to perform." (Deut. 4, 13).

"Obey my voice and I will be your God." (Jer. 7, 23).

The first Covenant was given to convince man of his powerlessness to meet God's requirements and of his sin. The Covenant promised life but could not give it. Since disobedience forfeited the privileges of the covenant, the obviating of that contingency must be the main provision of a new covenant. Obedience must be secured and in the

New Covenant that provision has been made in a way transcending all human device. God Himself undertakes to secure man's side as well as his own.

“God is faithful.” “He will not suffer His faithfulness to fail.” “With Him there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.” Scripture abounds with such references.

The central thought of the New Covenant is that man's heart is put right. So that in the world to come Israel will be unchangeably faithful too! God will put His fear or reverence in their hearts, so that they will not depart from Him. This is the exceeding glory of the New Covenant.

These differences are well illustrated by two different principles of bridge construction.

1. A bridge is constructed across a ravine supported by a pier at each side. That the bridge may be good and useful depends not only upon the bridge being good but that both the piers may be equally good also. This arrangement is like that of the First Covenant, in which there was nothing wrong with the Covenant or bridge on God's side, but man's side or pier was hopelessly bad and the Covenant or bridge between God and man failed to achieve its purpose.

2. The second principle of bridge construction is that of the Cantilever, in which a bridge is thrown across a chasm and supported entirely from one side. It entails a far stronger structure of support. That is exactly the principle of the New Covenant. In the First Covenant, God was revealed on the principle of “demand.” In the New Covenant, He is revealed on the principle of “giving.” In the First Covenant there were two parties, God and man. In the New Covenant God has taken all responsibility. “God is one.” (Gal. 3, 20).

The New Covenant was primarily made with the House of Israel. As Gentiles we have no part therein. Then it may be asked as to what is the application to us. Why did the Lord speak of the New Covenant when revealing the truth to the Apostle Paul?

We read " God who has also made us able (or sufficient) ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit (2 Cor. 3, 6), *i.e.*, not exactly of the doctrine of the New Covenant, but of its experimental application to the soul. The letter is what is set forth in the Old Testament, notably in Jer. 31, 31-34. The spirit of what was in God's mind and the principles on which He will deal with Israel when they will be restored under the New Covenant He applies to the Christians now.

All the blessings that Israel will have in the future are to be known now by Christians in a spiritual way. Hence we get all the blessings of the New Covenant in the Spirit, although not in the letter. The Lord is the Spirit of the New Covenant. He is the One who died and rose again and now fills the highest place in Glory, administering the blessings of the New Covenant. The Spirit of the New Covenant is well summarised in one word, " Love." The New Covenant is quite unlike the first Covenant which has been rendered " Old " by the introduction of the former. The Old Covenant was well described in the phrase " Thou shalt." The New Covenant is described in the phrase " I will." Everything is secured from God's side.

The Old Covenant resulted in days of failure in responsibility, in murmurings, in rejection of the prophets and finally in the murder of the Holy and Just One. That summary retribution should have fallen on the murderers would be a logical conclusion. But the wonder of it all is that God revealed Himself according to the riches of His grace and glory.

The terms of the New Covenant are stated in three parts, *viz.*: (1) I will put My law in their inward parts and write it on their hearts (that implies " new birth "). (2) They shall no more teach every man his neighbour but they shall all know Me. (3) I will forgive their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more. Therefore the Law written in the heart, the knowledge of God (who is Love)

and forgiveness of sins are the blessings of the New Covenant.

The first term will be literally fulfilled in Israel in "the crowning day of Glory." We see from II. Cor. 3 that a higher blessing is true of the Christian now. Christ (not the Law) is being written in the heart with an eternal pen in an indelible fluid (the Spirit of the Living God). So that the principle of the New Covenant applies.

The second term, the knowledge of God, is realised through love. Since love is the way to know God. "Everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." (1 John 4, 7). "God is Love." Love is His nature. He is revealed in the Son, who came to earth to make Him known. Every thought of God in the mind of the natural man is wrong. Darkness and ignorance of this all-essential matter reign supreme. Then there is the blinding of men's minds by the God of this world lest the light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ should shine into them. But God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and this treasure is in earthen (or frail, friable) vessels. That the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us (2 Cor. 4).

The third term, forgiveness of sins, is the initial blessing of the Christian. The question of the sins of the believer has been settled once for all at the cross and God will never raise the question of our sins again. This is in distinct contrast to the Day of Atonement, when God raised the question of sins every year (Lev. 16, 34).

The Lord, the Spirit of the New Covenant, is the perfect expression of the love of God, which was perfectly set forth in His death. Hence we see the value He must have attached to it in speaking of it in connection with the cup in instituting the Lord's Supper. In that, He gave His own the cup of the New Covenant ratified in "His blood."

Thus we are continually reminded of the love of God and the reflex action to this is that we pour out our praise and worship to Him, who has so delighted to bless us.

PERFECTION.

The expression “to make perfect” (*telioo*) occurs very frequently in the New Testament, but more so in the Epistle to the Hebrews than in any other book of the Bible. “To make perfect” in its scriptural meaning has not the modern meaning of endowing with all excellent qualities, but simply to bring to the end, *i.e.*, the appropriate, or appointed end corresponding to the idea. In any case, what this end is will be suggested by the context as to what is made perfect. In John’s Gospel the verb is translated “finish” and the corresponding noun occurs at the beginning of 12th Hebrews, “Jesus, the author and finisher of faith.”

“For it became Him for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (Heb. 2, 10). The previous verse speaks of Him being crowned with glory and honour. Hence the perfection describes the Son’s supreme place in the economy of salvation.

“To perfect” then is a relative term and may be used in the sense of bringing to completion in a variety of connections. There is no variation in the mere meaning of the word, the variety of meaning arises from the fact that it will vary according to the relation in which it is used. The expression is used relative both to the Son and to men. In regard to the Son it is said in the above passage that, “It was fitting to make perfect or to instal the Captain of salvation through sufferings.” He was not initiated or installed in them. Again in the fifth chapter the Son

learned obedience by the things which he suffered and when He was made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation, He went through sufferings to effect the purpose of God.

Then in the seventh chapter the law appointed high priests, having infirmity, but the word of the oath which was after the law appointeth the Son who is "consecrated" or "made perfect" for ever more. The contrast is between a Son completed and the human high priest who had shortcomings or infirmity. The Son being made perfect excluded the idea of infirmity and the necessity of offering for himself, but the words do not suggest any contrast between the Son's completed or perfect state and His condition previous to the Cross.

Perfection is the end of a process "He was crowned with glory because of suffering death." The various steps, however, reflected themselves in a process in Himself. He was made perfect through suffering. He became a merciful High Priest. He learned obedience. The point, therefore, is not that this perfecting process went on in the Son as if it were an advance in virtue or even a confirmation of sinlessness. It was a process that went on in Him in relation to those whom He was saving. It is erroneous to bring the process of making perfect into relation to his sufferings viewed as temptations, and overcoming them, and in His exaltation to a condition of confirmed blessedness. His life under sufferings was not a personal probation, His sufferings were those incident to His authorship of salvation and as He met them in the preparation for it, they were the means of giving Him that experience of human conditions which furnished Him to engage in the work of becoming an author of salvation on the cross.

His learning obedience does not mean that He advanced in disposition, but that He entered more fully into the experience of that obedience, till it was crowned in the suffering of death.

In the beginning of the twelfth chapter, the expression "finisher" or perfecter of faith does not imply that He advanced in strength of faith, but simply that he completed a path of faith. It had in Him its completed work.

When the word is used relative to men, it is said that perfection was not by the Levitical priesthood (Heb. 7, 11); that the law made nothing perfect. (Heb. 7, 18); that the Old Testament offerings were unable to "make perfect" the servants as to the conscience (Heb. 9, 9); that the Old Testament sacrifices offered year by year could not make the worshippers perfect (Heb. 10, 2); and that the Son, by His One offering had forever perfected the sanctified (Heb. 10, 14).

From these passages the perfecting of men would seem to bear the meaning of bringing them into true covenant relationship with God. This condition was not realised in the life of the Old Testament saints. They could not be made perfect or complete apart from us. (Heb. 11, 40). Reference is made to the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12, 23), yet their perfection is not the completed salvation which they will receive when the Lord comes again.

The corresponding adjective is translated "of full age" (Heb. 5, 14) simply, meaning "maturity" in contrast to the state under the Jewish system which was occupied with "the first principles" or "rudiments" of the "oracles of God" or of the "doctrine of Christ." The Hebrews were encouraged to go on unto perfection, *i.e.*, to the apprehension of Christ in glory. Judaism, *i.e.*, ritualism, never could effect that end. They had not even got the question of righteousness settled in their souls and were necessarily inexperienced in the word of righteousness. The further method of discernment was quite beyond them. The Holy Spirit's presence consequent on Christ's exaltation and glory is the factor which sharpens our senses or spiritual faculties to discriminate between subtle distinctions of good and evil. This is much more comprehensive than what man describes as morality or conduct.

There is another word, "*katartizo*," which is sometimes translated "makes perfect" or "perfection." In other places it does service in expressing the thoughts of "mending" nets (Matt. 4, 21); the Christians were to be "perfectly joined together" (I. Cor. 1, 10); one overtaken in fault was to be "restored" in spirit of meekness (Gal. 6, 1); a body was "prepared" for the Son (Heb. 10, 5); the worlds were "framed" by the word of God. (Heb. 11, 3).

Hence the second word introduces another idea, that of fitting into a position probably best illustrated by the articulation of a joint in the human body. When by accident or disease a joint gets stiff the limb fails to obey the will and so when anything occurs which renders a joint inoperative in a spiritual sense, it fails to supply the nourishment which Christ our Head in heaven alone can communicate. Hence spiritual growth is hindered and all are losers through the inarticulation of one joint.

FOUR PEAKS OF THE MOUNTAIN RANGE OF TRUTH.

Read John 17, verses 4, 5, 22-24. I Tim. 3, 16.

In the middle of last century there was much uncertainty as to which of four peaks in the Himalayan mountain range was the highest and consequently the highest mountain in the world. Surveying apparatus and procedure were not sufficiently precise to answer the question. The four great peaks in the mountain range of the truth of God which must necessarily relate to Christ are (1) His Life, (2) His Death, (3) His Resurrection, (4) His Exaltation.

With the best of intentions some theologians have sought to compare the altitude of these peaks, but we have no means of measurement of these transcendent entities and even if we had we have no zero plane from which to measure the relative attributes of the Glory of Christ.

The passage in John 17, 5, speaks of "the glory which the Son had with the Father before the world was." That is beyond the range of our survey, that precipitous descent from infinity is beyond our knowledge, nor shall we ever know. "But then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13, 12), is a scriptural dictum. But one must apply Scripture with reference to its context. In that case it is relative to love the way of surpassing excellence. We shall yet know vastly better than we do know now but we shall still be finite. God cannot make us infinite, and only the infinite can comprehend deity.

Although we have no means of relative estimation of the aforementioned peaks, they are presented in Scripture for our contemplation. The apostle's desire in Ephesians 3 was that we may know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge or quantitative estimation. The telescope through which we view the mountain range presented in Scripture is the Holy Spirit. He will (a) guide us into all truth, (b) show us things to come, (c) glorify Christ by taking of His things and showing them unto us. (John 16).

The main features of these peaks which emerge from our survey are:—(1) Manhood was enhanced when Christ was here on earth because He was the second man, the Lord from Heaven. In essential characteristics he was another kind of man than the man of friable or chalky consistency whose origin was the earth. (1. Cor. 15, 47). In the prophetic Scriptures we read that the national perception was expressed in the words "There was no beauty that we should desire Him." (Isaiah 53, 2). Nevertheless there were those who had the immense privilege of being the companions of Christ in His lowly pathway and they could say "We beheld His Glory, the glory as of the only Begotten with the Father full of Grace and Truth." (John 1, 14). The four gospels present in an unmistakable fashion that God was fully glorified in man while Christ was here. "I have glorified Thee on the earth." (John 17, 4).

(2) In the Death of Christ God was glorified in Man in the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. In the very essence of things in the Levitical economy the victim was distinct from the offerer but in the fulfilment of the type is was essential they should be combined in one person, since obviously no other sacrifice but Christ would suffice to meet the holy eye of God. Similarly He could not be offered by anyone but Himself. In no other person could the love of God be declared. On the great day of atonement the high priest entered into the holiest with the blood of others every year. He had to present the blood of a bullock for himself and his house and also the blood of a goat was sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat on behalf of the people. But the necessary accompaniment of his entrance was that he should be covered in the presence of the Glory of God by a cloud of sweet incense beaten small which had been put on the fire before the Lord. Typically the offerer was concealed in the fragrant preciousness of Christ to God. To have sought approach to God otherwise would have meant instant death. The high priest represented his own house and Israel but both as being under death.

(3) In the Resurrection of Christ we see man's acceptance by God. There could not be a greater contrast between the Levitical type and the entering in of Christ. "I have finished the work that Thou hast given me to do." (John 17, 4). Consequent on the perfect accomplishment of the work he entered in once to the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption. In the resurrection of Christ there is testimony to the accomplishment of righteousness. There was no need as in Aaron's case that he should be covered with incense nor for the sprinkling of blood, for He carried in His own Person the testimony of the perfection of His offering. So long as blood had to be carried in the way into the holiest could not be made manifest for no resurrection from the dead had occurred. "But by Christ came the

Resurrection from the dead" so the peak of the truth is not the apprehension of a literal blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, but of Christ risen and entered in when all the work of offering was done, sin put away and the judgment of God, under which man lay, removed.

(4) Consequent upon not only the satisfaction of the righteous requirements of God, but the complete vindication of every divine attribute, Christ is not only raised from the dead, but is exalted to the right hand of God, and there we see by faith what Stephen saw—the Glorified Man in the Glory of God. He is there not as the culminating fact of a brilliant theory, but is the object of our faith to be the glory or boast and joy of the Christian's heart. In Him we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. (Eph. 1, 3). Moreover, we are made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2, 6). Only one man had the privilege to enter heaven and to come back again. In 2 Cor. 12, the apostle speaks of a man in Christ—whether in or out of the body is irrelevant, because the body is connected with responsibility and a man in Christ is beyond that sphere. Such a man was caught up to heaven and on his returning he had no medium of communicating his experience. The "unspeakable" words were not "illegal" but untransmissible in human language. Scientists tell us that the human ear can appreciate 11 octaves of sound pitch and that there are vibrations of shorter wave length than the grasshopper's click which the ear cannot detect. But even these inaudible minute tremors in the air would not be a suitable medium of communication, but although the Apostle could not communicate his experience, he could safely make his boast of a "man in Christ." As to himself in the sphere of responsibility he could not boast save in his infirmities which found their climax in a "thorn in the flesh," as an intelligible counter balance to the abundance of the revelation.

Therefore, " the glorified man in the Glory of God " is a living bright reality to the soul of the Christian. As a consequence of such apprehension he is strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, and in some little measure he is able to hold fast the truth which God commits to his care. No mere natural bull-dog pertinacity will enable him to maintain the truth. The only possible way is by his own soul being in the blessed realization of it. The essence of the truth is that Christ at the right hand of God is the boast and delight of the Christian, and the results will be that the characteristics of the heavenly Man who is heavenly in origin and constitution will be reproduced in measure through the Christian, because Christ is presented as the absorbing object of the Christian's heart.

Parallel with this display of character as royal priests, there will be no less exercise of the functions of the holy priesthood in the offering up of spiritual sacrifices. The Holiest is where God alone is adored and we have perfect liberty of access to the spiritual fulfilment of the type which admitted of only the access of the high priest in a representative capacity once a year. But the practical appreciation of this privilege is dependent on attachment to the person of Christ.

Aaron's sons had a very perfunctory attachment to Aaron, and hence harmony could not be continuously maintained. But " the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17, 22). That glory is consummated in the Holy Spirit's taking up residence in us and with us. The tendency of His operation is that absolute unity may be manifested, which will convince the world of the reality of Christianity. Like the Apostle we shall be driven irresistibly to the conclusion that not one of the disintegrating agencies in the physical and in the psychical spheres can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE TRUTH.

Truth pervades the Father's sphere, hence the whole range of the counsels of God the Father comes to us as Truth, which is the revelation of Himself. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, is here to guide us into all truth, and that is revealed to us on the principle of faith.

At His arraignment before Pilate, the Lord said He came into the world that He should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears His voice. Pilate's ejaculation, "What is truth?" is indicative of a realm outside the Spirit's sphere in which darkness and ignorance of God is all-pervading. In spite of the world's boasted illumination by philosophy, it is absolutely in the dark as to the light of the knowledge of God and His glory.

The principle of the world is not truth, its god and prince is a usurper. The Christian passes through the world, carried by the Spirit of God, kept by mercy, deluged by grace abundant which directs attention to where his real interests are in a living Person at the right hand of God.

The character of the world is false, comprising three elements, the desire of the eyes, the desire of the flesh and the pride of life. These are found in multitudinous combinations and in different proportions, but when the matters are analysed properly the elements appear. The Spirit of Truth would seek to dissociate Christ's own from that sphere by occupation with the sphere in which faith lives. That vast universe of bliss finds its centre of attraction in Christ who is also the Sun for its illumination. All the counsels of God are fulfilled in His Son on the ground of redemption. He is the Lamb of God, the Taker-away of the sin of the world, who has established a new universe for God which He fills with blessing.

Before going on high He said to His disciples, "Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no longer, but ye see Me; because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14, 19).

He was going to the Father, His place was there, and this entailed their going also. He might have gone alone, but He went back in value of redemption, so making way for us. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We rejoice because He is gone to the Father. Hence the Holy Ghost carries us through our responsible lives maintaining us in liberty with the Father in the name of the Son, thus relieving us from the world's care. The disciples had known the Lord here, they had valued His company; His name was to represent Himself in His absence. It is a great thing to live in the light of that wonderful revelation !

FREE IN FREEDOM.

The Apostle exhorted the Galatians to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, or, more literally, "Christ has set us free in freedom. Stand fast therefore." We are not only set free, but set free in a free sphere, *i.e.*, "in Christ Jesus." Before the American War of Emancipation it was open for anyone to buy a slave and then set him free, but he was set at liberty in a sphere of slavery, and if by any mischance the erstwhile slave lost his emancipation papers he was liable to be seized by unprincipled men and impressed again in a state of slavery. In 1865 on the conclusion of the Civil War, slavery was abolished, and all the slaves were set free in a free state, and it was no longer possible for any of them to be brought again under the same yoke. The Christian is free from the law through the cross of Christ. "For I through the law am dead to the law that I may live unto God. I am crucified with Christ." (Gal. 2: 19, 20). The law, appealing to the responsibility of the man who has been set aside by God, changes what is living and spiritual into dead ritual. In Christ Jesus the law is no longer a guiding rule of life, but faith which worketh by love, and the Christian is thus free to serve in the Spirit.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THREE PHASES. I.

The Kingdom is God's intervention in the affairs of men, displaying His character and establishing His rule. As to time there are three distinct phases.

(1) While the Lord was on earth, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. All the glory of God was brought to a focus in a man, so that at Bethlehem the heavenly host could declare God's good pleasure in the child in the manger. Subsequently, in His public ministry those who in grace came to be associated with Him were in relation to the Kingdom. Behold the Kingdom of God is within you or in the midst of you. (Luke 17, 21).

(2) Consequent upon the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ to God's right hand, another phase of the Kingdom was introduced by the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom does not come by observation. (Luke 17, 20), *i.e.*, it does not appear to the eye, but it makes progress in the hearts of men and women. Since the King has gone on high it is the Kingdom of heaven (the heavens rule), *i.e.*, the centre of authority, but there is also power manifested (that of the Holy Spirit) so that the authority on high may not be flouted. Because every kingdom of consequence has power to enforce the will of the central authority to the utmost bounds of the kingdom. Thus the Kingdom is not meat and drink (symbolical of essential material existence), but righteousness, peace and joy established in souls by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. 14). We enter the Kingdom by faith then we confess Jesus as Lord. (Rom. 10). We bow the knee to the rule of God, thus the present phase of the Kingdom is in mystery or hidden. The "Kingdom

of God " is the term which includes every aspect under which the kingdom idea is described.

(3) But the Kingdom is not always going to be of hidden character. Ere long the king whose right it is to reign will come to take charge of the earth to administer the principles of God, *viz.*, righteousness, peace and joy to the erstwhile unrighteous, warring and sad world. Before doing so He will snatch up His people of era No. 2, to be forever with Him, to be associated in His rule in era No. 3, and in the subsequent eternal state, where righteousness is not merely dominant, but the essential element of its constitution, so that unrighteousness is inconceivable. The Kingdom will then come by observation! Every eye will see the King coming in His glory. But before instituting the era of the universe of bliss, He will purge the earth of every vestige of man's waywardness. Evil men and their works will be brought under inexorable judgment. There will be a period of a thousand years of perfect administration, popularly alluded to as the millennium, when the attributes of God will be fully demonstrated. Where man has made ruin of God's fair creation for six thousand years in sin and rebellion, there will be a perfect exposition of God's character for one thousand years, proving that God has not been without a remedy for the ills of mankind. All the resources of God are concentrated in Christ in Whom all fulness is pleased to dwell. Everything will be subservient to His will.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE GOSPELS. II.

Although in the Old Testament there were many indications of God's rule, when the fulness of times came and God sent forth His Son, a new condition was introduced. After the enemy's initial triumph in Eden God announced to the serpent that the woman's seed would bruise his head and in the process he would bruise the heel of the former. The enemy was not to be left in permanent control of man

and the earth. Prophetic communications with that import were made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, but the culminating point was reached in the time of David and Solomon, when a beautiful type of the coming Kingdom was exhibited. Prophets took up the line. Daniel fixed the time of the coming of the King. Nebuchadnezzar was warned of His crushing power and the institution of a permanent Kingdom and also that the heavens rule.

Hence when John the Baptist preached the imminence of the Kingdom of Heaven it was not a new story to the instructed Israelite. Immediately after that the Lord took up His public ministry and put emphasis upon the same theme. In both ministries there was a clarion call to repentance. In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord sets forth the characteristics of those who enter the Kingdom. On Nicodemus He pressed the necessity of the new birth apart from which no one could see the Kingdom. To His disciples He revealed that the simplicity of a child was the condition of entrance. To John it was future, but the Lord could speak of it in the present tense. He was exercising the power of the Kingdom over Satan and his subjects. He gave commissions to "the twelve" and to "the seventy" to preach the Kingdom. However blind people might be the demons were quick to perceive the revolution which had occurred consequent upon His presence on earth. They felt His power as under His authority. The Lord had come to undo the works of the devil and to preach to the people the good news of the kingdom. The power was already in evidence which would set man free from the age-long servitude to Satan. He did good and healed all oppressed of the devil. The people marvelled, but the rulers fumed and blasphemed His name.

When the Lord was on earth the Kingdom of God was here but it could not be called "the kingdom of heaven" until He ascended, because the King was on earth. Hence that aspect which formed an important part of His ministry

had relation to the future. The Jew thought that his genealogy secured him a place in the Kingdom but that was erroneous. A radical change was necessary. Blood, the will of the flesh and the will of man were completely disestablished. There is meticulous care in the choice of the language of Scripture. There is no confusion of terms. All through the Old Testament, the men of God looked for the Kingdom. Although there was faith and also the hidden control of God, since righteousness was not accomplished, God could not come out in grace which is the rule or character of the Kingdom. The kingdom involves the responsibility consequent on grace. If one is not influenced by grace in relation to others (*i.e.*, hard hearted), then discipline will ensue.

The usage of the term "Kingdom of Heaven" is confined to Matthew's gospel, indeed the term "Kingdom of God" is only used in four passages in that Gospel and in each case stress is put on the moral or internal aspect, *viz.* (1) "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." (Matt. 6, 33). The law was the measure of man's righteousness with relation to God and his neighbour. Man was to put himself in line with the righteousness of God, making the matter his prime object of life. (2) "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God then the Kingdom of God is come unto (or in the midst of) you." (Matt. 12, 28), *i.e.*, the power of God was manifested in and through Christ and affected those with whom He came in contact. (3) "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of an needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Matt. 19, 23). That statement speaks of the intimate way in which the power of God works. The Jews had been taught to believe that riches were a mark of the favour of God. That idea had to be disestablished from men's minds because it was on the eve of going out of date. (4) "The publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you." . . . "the Kingdom of God shall be taken

from you.” (Matt. 21, 31, 43). At first these statements would seem to be at variance with the principles already set forth. Yet the strange preference and association are completely explained when we consider the history of the people of privilege in the Old Testament and the way they treated the Son of God when He came in grace. The righteousness of God is in Himself displayed and in His own consistency and was revealed to man perfectly in Christ. Man’s true righteousness should have been manifest in recognising the claim due to God. Man in his best estate failed to be consistent with the will of God. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. Man rejected Him in the person of Christ. Because of man’s disobedience and thus the introduction of sin into the fair creation God expelled man from His presence. When God in goodness and mercy came in the person of Christ man expelled Him from his rightful place in the world which had been created for His good pleasure.

The expression “the Kingdom of their Father” in Matthew 13, verse 43, and “my Father’s Kingdom in Matthew 26, verse 29, would indicate the heavenly side of the coming kingdom. Their righteousness will shine forth and in that kingdom the Lord shall drink the new wine of joy with His disciples, while Christ and His own will reign over the kingdom under heaven.

“The kingdom of the Son of Man” refers to the earthly side of the same kingdom. Dominion will be exercised over all the nations under heaven. Everything is to be put under Christ, the Son of man, to whom all judgment is also committed. In Matthew 17 on the Mount of Transfiguration, the heavenly saints were represented by Moses and Elias in glory with the Lord, and the earthly saints were represented by the three disciples in their normal condition on the earth, overshadowed by a bright cloud which was the Shekinah glory of the presence of God.

The Kingdom of God is the authority and power of God

exerted for the preservation of its subjects from the evil by which they are afflicted, and for subduing everything under His sway of blessing. It was exhibited in the Lord's works while He was here.

The Kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of His Father David refer to the earthly side of the kingdom. The former is wider than the latter, which never extended very far beyond the confines of Israel, as known in later days. But the former shall include every part of the earth. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. His name shall be excellent in all the earth and shall continue as long as the sun, men shall be blessed in Him and nations shall call Him blessed." (Ps. 72, 8, 17). That was the phase which filled the minds of God's earthly people with joyful expectancy.

The testimony to his Messiahship was superabundant. John the Baptist was to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. From Malachi 4 we glean that Elias was to be the herald of the Sun of Righteousness but John disclaimed all connection with Elias, and in answering the Pharisees he adopted Isaiah 40, verse 3 as his commission and not Malachi 4, 5. But the Lord in answering the disciples left no dubiety in the minds of the hearers as to the identity of John with Elias. John came in the spirit and power of Elias and if the people had received him no other would have been needed. So that to the nation he was not Elias, but to his disciples he was conclusively so.

The wise men of the East enquired for the One born King of the Jews. They were enlightened and guided by God. But the orthodox people of God instead of being overjoyed were apprehensive of evil due to the report. Well might Herod and all Jerusalem be troubled by the rumour, since they had usurped place and functions without title thereto. There were obscure people like Simeon and Anna and their associates in harmony with the mind of Heaven. Again at the outset of His public ministry, Nathaniel hailed Him as

the King of Israel and at the close of that peerless ministry, He rode into Jerusalem on an ass's colt in accordance with prophetic statement, amid the loud hosannas of the people who for the moment at least were in harmony with Heaven.

There are two great main roads running through Scripture, *viz.*, the purpose of God and the responsibility of man. The latter is connected with the ways of God on earth, while His purpose connects with heaven. In Eden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the test of man's responsibility and so long as he continued in obedience he could partake of the tree of life, but when he disobeyed he had no longer access to that tree and ultimately God had to bring in another man who would prove to be the complete solution of the problem of bringing the two roads together.

In Matthew ch. 13, the Lord describes Himself as a Sower of seed in the field of the world. The good ground receives the good seed of the Word and brings forth fruit. There are tares from the seed sown by the devil. There are men formed by the evil doctrines of the devil. The fruits of these seeds cannot possibly be transposed although they are intermingled with no hope of separation at present. But at the harvest the power of God will effect a complete separation. In the parable of the net cast into the sea a similar lesson is impressed. In the introduction of the leaven to the meal, the permeation of profession and in the grain of mustard seed sowed in the field the widespread development of evil are clearly shown. But in the parables of the treasure hid in the field and of the pearl of great price we see the pure results of God's operation uninfluenced by all the works of the devil.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE ACTS—III.

The exposition of the Acts is apt to degenerate into an essay on geography, but the sense that the book presents samples of the power of the Kingdom will counteract the tendency. In the first chapter we have a summary of the

conclusion of each Gospel in (1) the Resurrection and (2) the Ascension of Christ, (3) the promise of the Holy Spirit and (4) the promise of the Lord's coming again.

The book covers the second generation of the Christian era approximately of the same duration as that of the Lord's life on earth (the Gospel era), and therefore forms a sort of bridge between the gospels and the epistles. The epistles were written for the most part at the end of the second generation of the era. In the Acts, evidence is afforded of the carrying out of the commission of the Lord to preach everywhere. Practical examples are given of the doctrines which are subsequently developed in the epistles by Paul, Peter, John, etc.

The early Christians were marked by nearness to the Lord, (in the world but not of it!). They were full of the Holy Ghost. Hence there were wonderful works of healing and saving power. There were great Gospel triumphs over tremendous obstacles. They were not like the spies of old who reported about giants and high walled cities. The obstacles were but food for faith! Nothing stood before them in their triumphal march. The purpose of the book of the Acts is to show that the things the Lord Jesus began to do and teach as related in the Gospels were continued after His Ascension through His servants.

The Apostles were instruments in His hand. The Holy Spirit was the dynamic power. Although heaven had become His seat the Lord was no less active than He had been on earth and in a larger sphere of operation. In the Gospels He fed the bodies of thousands. In the Acts He saved souls by the thousands. Obviously the Lord was leading His servants and guiding them how to proceed all through the era of grace. To Him His servants pray. (Acts 1, 24). To them He sends the Holy Spirit. He heals the lame. (3, 16). While Stephen saw Him standing (7, 55). To Saul He proclaims His identity, "I am Jesus." (10, 13) and so on.

In view of such statements the problem demands solution as to how far conditions now differ from those obtaining then. The answer is not difficult to give. Too often Christians have hindered the tide of blessing owing to worldly aims and associations which have reduced the mass of profession to an empty sham of Laodicean character. We are apt to criticise others, but in this connection we do well to examine ourselves in the light of scriptural injunction.

The ascended Lord empowered His ambassadors, added daily to the Church and extended the boundaries of testimony. The Apostle Peter proclaimed Him both Lord and Christ. In Samaria, Philip preached Christ, His person and work, (the cross, His resurrection and ascension). Hence great joy was manifested. The Kingdom was established in souls, then the powers of the Kingdom were demonstrated. His resurrection baffled the rationalistic Sadducee. His ascension disturbed the complacency of the ritualistic Pharisee. Every chapter is radiant with the power of the Kingdom. The sceptre of grace had been extended and forgiveness was proclaimed to the rebels. The great lines of development were indicated geographically from Jerusalem to Samaria, Antioch, Ephesus, Colosse, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Rome, etc., and to the uttermost bounds of the habitable earth. These were citadels of the enemy, stormed and captured by the good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul's commission was to open eyes, turn from darkness to light and the power of Satan unto God in order to receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among the sanctified by faith in Christ. (Acts 26, 18).

The Holy Spirit abode in them, was in them, and worked through them. In these conditions we have the essence of their tranquillity of mind, their power and their successful service and witness. But evidences were soon afforded that the Kingdom suffered or permitted violence to be done to

its ambassadors. Stephen was stoned, James was slain by the sword, Peter was imprisoned, Paul was stoned, scourged and imprisoned, yet undaunted courage marked them. Moreover their souls were filled with gladness, they could sing songs of praise in the prison in midnight darkness, because they had incomparable light in their souls. Yet here and there we find the active intervention of God on their behalf. Angels loosed chains, prison doors were opened and the ambassadors went free. But again in a Philippian dungeon the chains were loosed and the doors opened, yet no one went free. But the miracle resulted in the jailer himself being set free from a vastly greater thralldom than that of Rome.

The book closes in Rome with its chief figure receiving all that came to him while he preached the Kingdom of God and taught those things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him. It is a rather unsatisfactory ending as stories go. Curiosity would want to know what ultimately happened to the hero. But Scripture does not satisfy curiosity. Indeed it does not stimulate interest in the ambassadors but in the King. The all-absorbing theme was that the precious things of heaven which find their centre in the Lord Jesus Christ were taught.

Many christians fail to apprehend the difference between the ways and the purpose of God. In His ways, God deals with man conditionally, but the purpose of God involves the unconditional rule of the heaven and the earth by Christ, the man of His counsels. In the former line God offered restoration to the Jews by Christ personally. As king He was ready to effect all the promises of God if they had received Him. Their refusal filled up the measure of man's sin and broken responsibility. On the line of purpose He used the failure in order to introduce the heavenly department of the Kingdom, without which there could not

be any Millennial kingdom. In the line of purpose He came to earth to die and to lay the foundation of future blessing on the unbreakable basis of redemption. Ever and anon throughout the Old Testament there are examples of the foregoing distinctions. There were unconditional promises in Genesis, Ch. 12, renewed in Ch. 22 of the same book, connected with purpose. Subsequently there was a chain of conditional promises in the Law connected with the ways of God.

Underneath God's dealings in His ways with the first man during His period of probation until the coming of Christ, was the purpose of God in the second man, the Lord from heaven. The failure of the former only cleared the way for the latter to make all good for God.

That there is a great transition in the teaching of the Book of Acts is evident to every careful student of Scripture. In the early chapters the Apostle Peter charged the people with culpable homicide, as a deed done in ignorance. He put emphasis on the resurrection and the promise of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand in the 7th Chapter of the Acts, Stephen accuses the leaders of the people with wilful murder and the rejection of the Holy Ghost!

The rejection of Christ in the person of Stephen severs the Christian from connection with Jerusalem, the centre and perfection of beauty as to the earth, but links him up with Heaven, where a new centre has been established in the Glory of God with the Lord Jesus as the new object for occupation of the soul. The death of Stephen marks the close of the transitional period. Then on the line of responsibility, the centre of gravity of Christianity shifted from Jerusalem as the work of God spread to Samaria, Damascus, Joppa, Caesarea, Antioch. In the last mentioned the first Gentile church was planted without the help of apostolic ministry and from that centre the evangelization of the heathen began.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE EPISTLES—IV.

At the end of Romans, Ch. 4, we find the bases of redemption in the death and resurrection of Christ. The sequel appears immediately in the opening of the fifth chapter where the blessings of the Kingdom are vouchsafed in the Lordship of Christ. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5, 1-2). As soon as we come under His Lordship we come under the reign of grace through righteousness, that is the place of security from evil. The Lord is set over all things which are not yet put under His feet. He is now hid from mortal eye, nevertheless His Lordship will yet be manifested, and meanwhile it is true to faith.

In the death of Christ righteousness was accomplished. In His resurrection there was complete testimony that righteousness had been accomplished and that every attribute of God's character had been vindicated. In His ascension and subsequent glory there was the celebration of the victory of righteousness over all the powers of evil. All heaven was resplendent with His reception on high. He is crowned with glory and honour but earth's acclaim in accord with heaven is deferred except in hearts touched by grace where there is now harmony with heaven. In the sense of God's victory the christian is empowered to overcome evil with good. The present value of the Kingdom is what is apprehended first by a soul. "He has delivered us from the authority of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." (Col. 1, 13). The realm of darkness is the domain of Satan from which we are delivered and put under the sway of God's love vested in His Son.

"The kingdom of the Son of His love" is a present phase of the kingdom. His being seated at the right hand of God

is testimony to the good pleasure of God in Him. When the world rejected Him, denying His right to the throne which was His by incontrovertible title, God called Him to occupy His throne where He shall sit until the fulness of times shall come when He shall sit on His own throne, every enemy having been crushed under His feet. Meanwhile we are brought under His sway which is that of the love of God. For such a blissful condition, totally at variance with the existing state of affairs in the realm of time we are found emulating the spirit of the Apostle's prayer by giving thanks unto the Father. (Col. 1, 12).

It may be well to put emphasis on the fact that the different terms used in Scripture do not refer to different kingdoms but only to different aspects of the same kingdom. At the beginning of creation, the sun was set to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night during the absence of the sun. So that from the outset God sought by the physical creation to impress on the mind of man that whatever might be the provisional authority permitted to continue on earth, over all there was the continuous rule of the heavens in the last issue.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. That passage in 1 Corinthians 15, refers to the heavenly side of the Kingdom.

In Thessalonians the apostle introduces the christians as suffering for the Kingdom. There would be a righteous answer in the administration of God. They would be reckoned worthy thereof when the Lord will come in display, when He will be glorified in His saints and admired in that day in all those who believe. Meanwhile the display is moral and not physical. In the Kingdom we find salvation or preservation from the powers of evil. In the crowning day of glory we shall have part not in the earthly but in the heavenly kingdom. "For having suffered with Him we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2, 12). Similarly the first epistle of Peter deals with the Kingdom

mainly relative to the righteous government of God in favour of the christians. The second epistle carries the subject on to the judgment of the wicked.

The kingdom is mediatorial in character, *i.e.*, occupying the ground until it has served its purpose. "He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be annulled (or put out of business) is death (6,000 years of dying will be undone in a moment), when everything has been subdued unto Him then shall the Son Himself be subject unto Him, who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15, 25-28). The mediatorial government of man will disappear and will be merged in the supremacy of God to which there will be no longer any opposition. The Kingdom will have completed its purpose at the end of the dispensations when it will be delivered to God. The display of glory in the Kingdom will not cease, it will be for ever radiating from Christ, the Head of the new creation, who at the same time is God—One with the Father. (That is indicated in the expression "My Father's Kingdom.")

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE REVELATION—V.

In chapter 1 are evinced the perfections of character in which Christ will govern the whole earth. (But for the time being, John who received the communication was in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, a companion in tribulation in Patmos isle for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.) Chapter 12 gives a brief summary of the events on earth in the time to come. The woman clothed with the sun and with a crown of twelve stars, is Israel in the purpose of God. She is vested with supreme authority for perfect administration. The enemy seeks to destroy her child who is caught up to God and His throne. While the woman symbolical of the earthly people is protected by providence upon the earth. War in

heaven results in the devil and his angels being cast out. The proclamation is made in heaven that the kingdom of God and the power of his Christ have come. The devil no longer able to oppress the saints of heavenly calling will persecute the Jewish remnant, who maintain the testimony and the word of God. Chapter 13 shows the consummation of man's kingdom in the power of Satan in opposition to God, that will have the outward appearance of Christ's kingdom demanding universal acknowledgment—a perfect dictatorial tyranny. The saints of that day will have no difficulty in recognising the nature of the spurious kingdom and its authorship. The subsequent chapters unfold the judgments of God.

In chapter 21, the heavenly city is shown with the prominent place in the administration. It will be the centre of God's rule, God will have honour on earth when all will be made subject to the Man of His counsels. There are distinctions between the heavenly city in the millennium and in the eternal state. There are two different descriptions given in the chapter. Where measurements are specified and the names of the twelve tribes in the gates and the city viewed from a high mountain these appertain to the city in the millennium. But when the city is considered with reference to the eternal state there is no relation to earth adduced. It is simply the Holy City coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Even the Lamb has passed from view).

In relation to the former the Psalmist could say "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." In spite of the raging torrent of evil God will accomplish His will, that is the first issue of the ways of God in the millennium or the world to come. He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron. (Ps. 2, Rev. 2, Rev. 19). In Rev. 2 the overcomer in Thyatira is credited with the authority symbolical of that which will be actually wielded by the King later. Jerusalem will then be the metropolis and the light of the

whole earth. The new Jerusalem will have the glory of God and light of a stone most precious (*i.e.*, an exquisite iridescence). It will be the expression of God in the view of the whole universe.

The city (even its streets) will be formed in the righteousness and holiness of God (*viz.*, gold transparent as glass), The nations will walk in the light thereof and to it the kings will bring their contributions of honour and glory. God and the Lamb will be the temple. The Lamb in the glory of God is the light of the city. The river of God and the tree of life with its fruit, continuously ripe, will heal the nations, and be a constant source of blessing for the earth. There shall be no more curse. The servants of God shall worship Him; they shall be associated in display not only during the thousand years of transcendent blessing, but for ever and ever.

Meanwhile we have a heavenly calling and are endowed with expectancy to wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the Great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Living in a godly way will entail persecution and suffering during the King's rejection, but our suffering time will give place to the Day of glory which incomparably surpasses the sufferings of the present time. So we gladly join in the refrain "Come, Lord Jesus!"

RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY.

The moral principles of the Kingdom of God are unchanging in every generation. To most people their definition in Romans 14, 17 is obscure. We have, first, the negative proposition that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. It is not material, nor does it appeal to the natural senses in any way.

On certain occasions men meet to exalt the memory of a great poet or other genius who has left "his footprints on the sands of time." But before the evening is gone they

are probably controverting the principles which that genius sought to inculcate in men's minds. Similarly, if Christians merely talk and sing of the coming of the Lord and other precious truths, and are not following after the things which make for peace, and which will edify one another (Rom. 14, 19), they are controverting the principles of the kingdom of God. In their case, the expressions of precious truths are but beautiful sentiments, in other words "meat and drink" to suit the mental tastes of mankind.

But the definition has a positive as well as a negative side. There are three great prominent principles which are characteristic of God's kingdom: (1) Righteousness, (2) Peace, (3) Joy, and these are all enshrined in the Holy Ghost. These principles remind us of the subject matter of the first four psalms. Ps. 1 sets forth the moral beauty of God's Man, and Ps. 2 shows His ideal in power or strength. There were two pillars in the temple—Jachin and Boaz—meaning beauty and strength (see 1 Kings 7). So there are two great essentials, or pillars, in righteousness according to God's rule, and these are beauty and strength. In human righteousness, strength is too often exaggerated out of proportion to beauty, and so, in the name of right, deeds of great harshness are perpetrated. But God's righteousness is always beautiful as well as strong. Thus if we act in accordance with the principles which govern the kingdom of God, we shall not allow our good to be evil spoken of, by insisting on the strength of our cause to the exclusion of what is beautiful and comely in God's sight. For it is only in that way we can serve Christ and be found well pleasing to God; otherwise for meat or self-gratification we are destroying, or rendering of no effect, the work of God.

Psalms 3 sets forth the second principle, *viz.*, peace. The peace of God which keeps sentinel over the heart is not peace of circumstances; when our property is safe, our business prosperous, our health good, and our relation-

ship with our associates happy, we are apt to think that we are enjoying the peace of God. But when we nestle down in the nest of circumstances it is necessary for our soul's prosperity that God should stir up the nest and dispel our fancied peace.

Psalm 4 speaks of the third principle, *viz.*, joy—*i.e.*, in metaphor, the music on the stringed instrument (*Neginoth*). In response to the cry, "Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us," the inmost being of the Psalmist was thrilled with the stable assurance that the Lord had put gladness in his heart in the days of adversity more than when his cup was overflowing with prosperity.

Similarly, Habakkuk begins his concluding prayer on *Shigionoth*—which is, literally, a selection of variable tunes on the wind instrument often entailing much effort with little music. How often our prayers are like that! But if they lead us to the result which he reached, our joy will indeed be full. No one could imagine less congenial conditions than those pictured by Habakkuk. Yet he would rejoice in the Lord, and as a result he was caused to walk on high places. His feet would scarcely touch the ground, so great would be his joy. That corresponds to music on the stringed instruments (Hab. 3, 19).

Paul and Silas were at Lydia's prayer meeting, but they did not touch the top note of praise until with feet in stocks and bleeding backs they sang praises to God in the darkness of the Philippian dungeon. They had graduated from *Shigionoth* to *Neginoth*, from performers on the wind instruments to be experts on the stringed instruments. Years later, the apostle, writing to believers in Philippi, could counsel them to rejoice in the Lord always.

May we know something more of the process which will lead us to be (metaphorically speaking) competent players on the stringed instruments, making melody in our hearts to the Lord.

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST.

(Read Hebrews 2, 7-17).

The supremacy of Christ in every connection over the men who were His forerunners is amply demonstrated in Scripture. In Himself, Christ presents all the great and glorious characteristics which were displayed in the typical men of the Old Testament. It was the will of God to make such men in olden times prominent in order to display the qualities of which Christ would ultimately secure complete fulfilment.

In the geographical atlases of seventy years ago Africa was simply an outline of the coast for the most part. But every physical feature known to-day existed then but could not be shown because unknown. Similarly, the excellent men of the previous era formed a sort of outline of the truth which was to be filled in detail later by the coming of the Son of God.

1. Adam was established head of creation, everything being put under him, but that feature was very imperfectly exemplified by him. The perfect fulfilment awaited the coming of Christ. He is the true head! Everything in creation is put under Him although that is not true to sight yet. In the meantime it is a subject for faith. We see Jesus who was made for a little time on a lower plane than the angels in order that He might suffer death. It is striking that the literal statement is "we know Jesus." We know Him intuitively, *i.e.*, by a new intuition which we did not derive from natural sources but on the principle of faith.

2. But we also see Him crowned with Glory and Honour, as the One greater than Solomon. No king had ever such undisputed sway and glory as Solomon had. So much so that he became the centre of attraction for the whole earth (*vide* the Queen of Sheba incident). But the record of the glory of Solomon is completely eclipsed, when the glory of God in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ appears.

3. Verse 11 of the chapter shows that the features manifested by Aaron as chief of the priestly family are literally fulfilled by Christ as the One who sanctifies. In verse 17, He is stated to be the merciful and faithful High Priest, making propitiation for the sins of the people, not in the figurative way that Aaron did.

4. In verse 12 the Lord declared the name of God to His brethren as Moses representatively made known that name to the children of Israel. (Exod. 6, 1-9), and in verse 15 he delivers His people from the thralldom on account of the fear of death in which they had been until He appeared. Moses was the deliverer from the Egyptian house of bondage with the object in view that the people might be properly connected with the Tabernacle, *i.e.*, the House of God.

5. In verse 10, He is the Captain or Leader of salvation. That corresponds to Joshua who led the people into the land. When in danger of being carried away with the sense of his own importance Joshua had a vision, outside Jericho, when he was introduced to the real Captain of the Lord's Host, in whose presence even the honoured Joshua had to put off his shoes as standing on Holy Ground.

Joshua did not originate the path. He was only entrusted with part-time conductorship. But Christ was the originator of the path of salvation along which He is conducting the many sons to Glory. That end being reached will put on the copestone of salvation, or its completion, *i.e.*, the sense of making "perfect."

6. In verse 12, we have a quotation from the 22nd Psalm "In the midst of the great congregation will I sing praise to Thee." David was the Psalmist, the sweet singer in Israel. But David, although a very wonderful man, was only giving provisional expression relative to the Leader of the song of praise in the midst of a redeemed creation. At the present time Christ anticipates that day of glory by leading the praise in the midst of His assembly.

7. In verse 13, Christ proclaims Himself as associated with the family of faith which God gives to Him. Abraham was the federal head of the family of faith with relation to the earthly calling, but Christ is the fulfilment of that description as perfectly manifesting the features of the heavenly calling.

DIVERSITY OF ADMINISTRATION.

(*Substance of address at Edinburgh, 2nd Oct., 1925*).

1 Cor. 10, 15; 12; 5, 28, 31; 14, 3 read.

Scripture never addresses men as "wise" in the sense of having philosophic minds. There are two words in the New Testament rendered "wise" but with essentially different meanings. The word *phronimoi* in 1 Cor. 10, 15 has the force of "sensible," "sane" or "possessing common sense" in contrast to "foolish" which the apostle used freely in the beginning of the epistle. I make no claim to speak as a prophet, but merely as a man of common-sense to people of common sense. If one reviews the history of the last half-century one is tempted to doubt the sanity, not to speak of the common sense, of the prime movers in many of the events. Recently one who had addicted himself to the ministry withdrew from certain Christians on the plea that he believed that the Lord was not with them, and that the Lord had withdrawn His administration from them, and as proof he averred that they had no ministry. Some of our brethren put a peculiar metaphysical construction on the Lord's presence. A former friend sought for the space of three hours to convince me that the Lord could not be with two companies of Christians in the same place. I said that if that were true then I was sorry for the other companies in the place where I resided, because I was not under any hallucination in having realised the Lord's presence, although I had become dissociated from the company which he recognised. It seems

late in the day that one should have to insist that the Lord's presence does not recognise geographical contour and Act of Parliament which define a place. We lose a great deal by evading the plain meaning of the words of Scripture; "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst."

With reference to the second indictment, many seem to labour under a false conception as to what constitutes the Lord's administration. There are undoubtedly negative and positive sides to it. The former deals with discipline. On the positive side there is the authority of the Lord's name. Then there is power commensurate with that authority. Authority in heaven and power on earth are indissoluble, because the Spirit of God is here. His power, the energy of grace, is exercised in subduing all things unto Himself. Gifts were given with that end in view. His administration covers much more than the provision of oral ministry. But in that department we should recognise that gift is not necessarily accompanied by eloquence, although the latter quality will not be absent. Indeed the Lord will take care that there will be a suitable vehicle for wheeling the truth up for our apprehension. But in the Corinthian epistle, gift has a very wide sphere of application. Gift is indeed the expression of Christ on earth. If those composing a local company are getting on well, with low thoughts of self and each deferring to the other, that is evidence of the presence of gift. During last century it was said of a brother who lived in Devonshire that for forty years for forty miles around there was no lasting trouble in any of the local companies. This was undoubtedly due to the exercise of prophetic and pastoral gift:—"prophetic" in bringing those who had differences into the presence of God, and "pastoral" in the exercise of the shepherd's care and love. In a contention, one asserted the axiom that both could not be right, overlooking the obvious fact that both could be wrong. In the inception of every difficulty there is usually right and wrong, but the one

who was right is liable to go far wrong through the consciousness of being right. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is the universal solvent that is able to dissolve every hard crystalline substance likely to afford cause for complaint between Christians.

In I Cor. 12, 28, two of the departments of gift are apt to be overlooked as insignificant, *viz.*, “ helps ” and “ governments,” yet they are very necessary to enable the Christians in any place to make progress or growth by the process of “ self-edification in love.” In the nature of things in the various little companies there cannot be much gift which appeals to the senses, but if that which is born of God gets free course it will make increase of itself in love. “ Helps ” may not rise higher as men say than cleaning the room where the Christians meet. For example, if a cobweb hang from lamp to lamp, it may serve to stimulate the study of the mathematical law of the catenary, even as Galileo was led to solve the pendulum “inverse square” problem by observing how the lamp supports of different lengths vibrated in church, but such phenomena are not conducive to happy fellowship. That cleanliness is next to godliness is a common idea, but “ cleanliness ” is godliness when associated with the Lord’s name. The term “ governments ” does not necessarily refer to anything in the nature of the Prime Minister’s duties, but simply taking an oversight over the small affairs as well as the large affairs in the Lord’s interests.

The apostle John realised the value of oral conference when he wrote, “ I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.” (II. John 12). This will entail increased size of hearts and growth in the gift of “ governments.” Isolation tends to breed distrust, which oral conference soon dispels. It should be remembered that there is no menial work in the House of God. When the principles of that House will be fully evident in “ the crowning day ” that is coming, the very pots in the Lord’s House will be like the bowls before the altar, they will be

marked with Holiness unto the Lord. But to-day the same is essentially true in a spiritual sense. Verse 31 of 1 Cor. 12 shews that gift is subject to desire. That our spiritual enablement may be different from what we thought best may be quite likely. But the Lord knows best how to promote the work of grace in our souls. Gift will be singularly inefficient unless its function is performed in the way of superlative excellence, *i.e.*, of love. We enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom, *viz.*, righteousness, peace and joy enshrined in the Holy Ghost, through the Lord's administration subduing everything to Himself. No one can enjoy these blessings apart from having a spirit subdued by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus we get the good of Kingdom blessings through walking in self-judgment.

“He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort.” (1 Cor. 14, 3). The popular idea of prophecy is that it deals entirely with prediction of future events, but this feature was secondary. The Old Testament prophets did speak of the future. But they sought to bring the light of “the world to come” (not the mere future of man's day) to bear on the consciences of those whom they addressed, so that they might bring them into the Lord's presence, and that their hearers might be in accord with His mind. With reference to the two last mentioned objects, scholars tell us that the word *parakleesin* translated “exhortation” had initially the meaning of “one being at our side strengthening us by his presence” while the word *paramuthian* translated “comfort” emphasises the fact that there is an additional support in hearing the spoken word. We have not a mute fellowship, we *are* provided with oral ministry, and the assertion that we have no ministry not only proclaims the ignorance of the asserter, but is an insult to the Lord, and a slight upon His administration which extends wherever His Spirit is. Every Christian carries in himself or herself the proof of the Lordship of Christ. He will never cease to comfort and chasten those He loves unto the end.

AUTHORITY AND CONFIDENCE.

There are two aspects of the truth which are realized in Christian experience and which are wholly inconsistent with historical records. The first aspect is the establishment of the authority of God in man's soul which is an essential feature of His kingdom. The other aspect is that He has gained the confidence of those over whom He has established His authority. The authority of God is represented by the Lordship of Christ. With the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. The word of faith involves confession of Jesus as Lord. (Rom. 10, 8-10). At the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess Jesus Christ as Lord to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2, 10-11). The Lord has established an unchallengeable claim and an absolute authority over every believer. The kingdom of God is an absolute monarchy!

If God has chosen to establish His rule over man no one can gainsay His right to do so, but the enigma remains that in doing so, He has promoted a corresponding confidence or assurance in the heart of man who has come under that rule. These two results have never been brought into harmony in human history. The more absolute the rule established, the greater has been the measure of discontent inspired thereby.

For example, Caius Julius Caesar, the greatest man of ancient secular history, in the course of a long series of brilliant military successes established an absolute autocracy over the known world. During the period, he showed the greatest administrative capacity of any ruler up to his time (and for that matter since). But his magnanimity and beneficent rule did not inspire confidence. On the contrary, conspiracies sprang up all around. The result was that Caesar died at the dagger points of his most intimate associates. As he sank under sixteen wounds, recognising amongst the assassins Brutus, the man above all others who

owed everything to Caesar, the latter exclaimed reproachfully, " And, thou too, Brutus! " Such was man in ancient times. Yet we have the principle well exemplified in comparatively recent history in the case of Russia, where an absolute monarchy was established for two centuries. Throughout that period, conspiracy was rampant and few of the Czars escaped violent deaths.

With such depressing examples of man's ingratitude on the pages of secular history, we turn with zest to the pages of Holy Writ to find a wonderful contrast. In the descriptions of the kingdom of God in display during the Millennium we see that the authority of God will be publicly demonstrated in the world, and there will be a guarantee to man of immunity from the power of the enemy. While, on the other hand, the New Covenant will result in the most unswerving conviction in the hearts of men as to the rectitude of God's government. At the outset, man departed from God, following the devious ways of his own self-will which carried with it pride and desire for display of the results of human achievement. In his evil course he has thus established himself as antagonistic to God. But the issue of God's ways must necessarily emerge in the subjection of every opposing force and the ultimate displacement of evil altogether.

These two aspects of truth are brought out very well in the examples of Moses and Aaron. The former was the mediator, representing the authority of God to the people, while the latter was the priest representing the people to God, enabling them to have confidence in God. On the entrance of Christ to Jerusalem, a week before His crucifixion, the people hailed Him in the language of prophecy. " Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." On that occasion the confidence established in the hearts of the people was of a transient nature. Because a week later the multitude cried, " Away with Him! " Such is the fickle estimate of

the mob! But the prophetic writings have a further interpretation. They relate also to the Lord's second coming, when He will be welcomed to Jerusalem in identical terms, but not on the basis of Israel's faithfulness. The welcome will depend on the certain ground of God's faithfulness and the continuing fruits of the death and resurrection of Christ. Then will spring up in the hearts of men a permanent confidence in the Lord.

But while the affairs of earth await solution, those who have the heavenly calling know Christ in both aspects as Lord and Priest at the right hand of God, giving us confidence in God. In the midst of trouble we are not afraid because we have His support. We are exhorted to come "boldly" (literally, with confidence) to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and grace for timely help. (Heb. 4, 16). We are conscious of the constitution and ability of our great High Priest. As Christians, we are imbued with the spirit of the New Covenant while in the place of testimony and responsibility. "Herein is love with us made perfect that we may have "boldness" (literally, confidence) in the day of judgment, because as He is so are we in this world." (1 John 4, 17). This refers to our responsibility as Christians. The judgment day will close for ever the history of responsibility. All that we do is in view of the judgment seat. When we shall receive the true appraisal of Christ. But it is of all importance that we should have confidence of heart in view of that day, because we are as Christ is. Love is thus completed with us so that we may be without fear or apprehension as to the future.

MAN.

The common word for "man" in the Old Testament is Adam (literally meaning "red earth"), emphasising his origin rather than his constitution. There is no thought in the word that man was destined to return to the earth or dust. The analogous term "Son of Man" shows that the One to whom the term is applied was a true man in descent

and inheritance. These names denote mankind in general as distinct from the "sons of Ish," (the men of high degree or princely position).

The grandson of Adam received the name Enosh which signifies frail, friable, failing man, who is subject to all the ills in soul and body and to death as an inevitable sequel. It is also highly significant that the immediate descendants of Adam realised in some measure the tremendous hiatus which had come in between their state and the state of innocence forfeited in Eden. In consequence they began to call on the name of the Lord. They felt that their resources were hopelessly inadequate, and that they were dependent on the mercy of God.

Ezekiel was addressed 93 times as "Son of Man." He lived in a day when affairs had become very broken down in Israel. Ezekiel was selected to be the judge of the condition of the people, as representative of God Himself. He testified to their stubborn apostasy from the Lord. After which the Glory of the Lord could not continue with them. Albeit that Glory departed with reluctance, but the prophetic vision did not close without offering evidence that the glory and blessing of the Lord would be restored to Jerusalem consequent upon the people being cleansed from their sins by divine power and grace.

Well might the Psalmist exclaim "What is man (Enosh) that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man (Adam) that thou visitest him." (Ps. 8, 4). The proposition seemed to be an insoluble riddle. But when we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the writer supplying that solution in Christ who came as a true man in descent and heritage of Adam, "made in all things like unto His brethren." (Heb. 2, 17). Yet he was apart from failing man (Enosh) and his deeds as from the sons of Ish who claimed the earth in princely right, *e.g.*, Caesar, Herod, Caiaphas and such like. However, those intimately associated with Him could say that they beheld His unique glory, full of grace and truth.

In the Gospels the Lord describes Himself 65 times as Son of Man, so putting emphasis on his derived humanity. He was no mere emanation of radio-activity from the God-head in human form. He was a real man, but apart from sin therefore not subject to death, yet capable of suffering death for the fulfilment of the Grace of God, and so to end the frail fallen Enosh condition of mankind in due course.

But the Lord's constant use of the term implies much more than the Old Testament meaning. He was Son of Man in a specific way which marked him off from every other man. He was the only one who was exempt from the consequences of Adam's disobedient act. Hence he was the only one who could fulfil the promise of man's first creation, and bring in a new promise to man of a new creation in Himself. For that reason this Son of Man must suffer death by being lifted up on the Cross, just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

But there is another relation in which the Lord adduces the name Son of Man, which connects itself with the only usage in the Book of Daniel. That is in the matter of all judgment being committed into the hand of the Son of Man. As the one who is fitted with perfect knowledge of mankind yet with absolute tenderness. He is representative of God, and he is entrusted with everything and every person to settle all in accordance with every attribute of the throne of God being vindicated.

In the New Testament even as the term the "Son of Man" certifies the continuity of humanity in Christ, so the "Second Man" (1 Cor. 15) indicates his unique character. We do well to seek to apprehend something of the stupendous accession to man which was gained in the person of the Man Christ Jesus. "The first man is of the earth (in origin) earthy or dusty, literally, chalky (in constitution)." (1 Cor. 15, 47). Chalk is notorious for its friability. Whereas greywacke can withstand the erosion of centuries, chalk breaks down into powder very quickly! How

fitting is such a description of man! It would be futile to found conclusions on the consistency of the best kind of man. Only God is faithful, with Whom there is neither variability nor retraction.

What a change is introduced in the second part of the verse "the Second Man is the Lord from Heaven." God's thought from the beginning is fulfilled in the second man who is in contrast not merely with the failing man of the order denoted by the name Enosh, but also with the first man Adam, before he failed at all.

In 1. Corinthians, 15, 45, we are introduced to a new relationship. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam is a life-giving spirit." The first Adam was the federal head of a race the members of which have borne his image and characteristics. His descendants have simply evinced a repetition of his features; so it is with the last Adam. He is the last, not the second, Adam for the simple reason that Scripture is emphatic in stating that there is no super race to come. In the last Adam we have reached finality. He is the federal head of a new race. The members of which in His life evince His features. Each member of the race has borne the image of the first Adam, but is now a partaker of the life of the last Adam who is from Heaven. They will bear the image of the heavenly in a future day which is not far distant. To be "in Christ" suffices to appertain to the New Creation and to be under the new Headship. The last Adam became such after His work of obedience unto death was accomplished, His resurrection and ascension. So the relation is based on redemption accomplished. He could not communicate "spirit" otherwise!

It may be worth while mentioning that whereas the Hebrew word for man "Adam" denotes earth, the Greek word in the New Testament (*anthropos*) is derived from three elementary words which combined denotes "the one who turns up the eye." That such should be the case is not an accident of man's mythology, it has been undoubtedly

God-guided. Whereas other animals concentrate their thoughts entirely on earthly things, man has the capacity to desire help from above. Whereas other animals have living souls connecting them entirely with their bodies; man has in addition a spirit which makes him capable of receiving light from God. He is created in the image of God with the specific object in view that he may glorify and enjoy God forever. This end can only be consummated in association with the Christ as the last Adam.

THINGS TO COME.

The plain teaching of the Bible on this subject is that at any moment the Lord Jesus may descend from heaven into the air with a shout, raise the dead and change the living who are His, and catch up all to be for ever with Him (1 Thess. 4, 14-17). Since this event will take place in "the twinkling of an eye," an "atom" of time (1 Cor. 15, 52), the world will go on as if nothing had happened.

The consummation of the mystery of iniquity, the elements of which are already working, is prevented by the presence of the Holy Ghost. He will be caught up with the Church, and thus the way will be opened for the revelation of Antichrist, the master-genius of the ages (2 Thess. 2, 7-12). "The Man of Sin" will be manifested with all lying wonders and miracles. God will give men up to strong delusion, and they who have rejected God's truth will believe the devil's lie without question.

After the catching up of the Church, God will resume His dealings with Israel, and a selected sealed company will be entrusted with "the gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 24, 14), to proclaim it to the millions who have not heard the gospel of the grace of God. Then will come the great tribulation (Matt. 24, 21), when the abomination of desolation will be set up in the holy place (Matt. 24, 15; Dan. 12, 11), when Antichrist will sit as God in the temple and will demand universal worship (2 Thess. 2, 4; Dan. 11, 30-39), the head of a world-wide religious-political-com-

mercial syndicate (Rev. 13, 18). The persecution to which the godly remnant of the Jews will be subjected will be so severe that God will intervene about seven years after the rapture of the Church (Dan. 9, 27), and will shorten the tribulation for the elect's sake. Then the Lord will come as a thief in the night with myriads of His saints to the Mount of Olives, and Antichrist will be destroyed with the brightness of His coming, and the Devil will be chained. Then the Lord will set up His kingdom in display on earth by a judgment of the living nations, when He will separate the sheep from the goats according to the way they will have treated His Jewish messengers (Matt. 25, 31-46). That judgment has no reference whatsoever to Christendom or the gospel of the present dispensation. After the earth has been purified the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings, and will establish His millennial kingdom, and will reign in equity for a thousand years.

At the end of the millennium, Satan will be loosed from prison and will go out once more to deceive the nations. Men will again unite and compass the camp of the saints, but they will be destroyed by celestial fire (Rev. 20, 8, 9). The devil will be cast into the lake of fire where the Beast (the political head) and Antichrist (the false prophet) will have been for a thousand years. Then will come the judgment of those who have died out of Christ. A Great White Throne will be set up. The earth and heaven will fly away from the face of the One who will sit thereon. Death and Hades will deliver up the dead, small and great, that they may be consigned to the lake of fire. Then will be ushered in the new heaven and new earth: the era of no night, no tears, no pain, no death, for the former things shall have passed away and all will be lighted up with the glory of God.

One of the primary functions of the Spirit of truth is to show us these "things to come." His operation will preserve the matter from becoming a mere intellectual exercise for the curious, and will keep us on the tip-toe of expectancy for our blessed Lord's return!

THE SUFFERINGS AND EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST.

THE THREEFOLD CHARACTER OF THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

Much disputation has occurred on this theme from time to time. We need to be preserved from allowing the spirit of controversy to dominate our minds. It is easy in the process of correct analysis to lose the sense of the preciousness of the subject. Every fresh distinction coming before our minds should tend to fresh exercise. With that admonition we are free to examine the subject matter.

Scripture would lead us to conclude that the sufferings of Christ were of threefold character, *viz.*:—(1) vicarious, (2) martyrial, (3) constitutional. In examining these categories in a little detail, the following thoughts amongst others pass before us.

(1) The vicarious or atoning sufferings of Christ were those which He suffered at the hand of God on account of sin, and these were exclusively confined to the brief period which the Lord repeatedly referred to as “His hour,” unique in the history of all the ages!

O solemn hour ! O hour alone !
In solitary might.

.
Centre of two eternities
Which gaze with rapt adoring eyes
Onward and back to Thee !

As soon as sin entered by the disobedient act of our first parents in Eden, God’s solution was predicted in His prophetic word to the serpent, relative to the woman’s Seed, “He shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise His

heel " (Gen. 3, 15). So throughout the Old Testament, there were abundant evidences of the coming of Christ to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Moreover, the sacrificial system made the elements of God's requirements clear. The lamb was to be without blemish, typifying that the victim must be sinless. Again a period of testing the virtue of the victim, was observed in keeping the lamb four days. So an adequate period of testimony was afforded in the case of Christ's public ministry of three and a half years, which fully showed His perfect conduct in every test. Then the thought of substitution comes in. Christ stood in the sinner's place, the Just for the unjust. The perfect One was made sin for us that we might become God's righteousness in Him. (2 Cor. 5, 21).

Propitiation is the aspect of atonement with relation to God. Every attribute of God was completely vindicated in the death of Christ. So that God's character of being just is shown to be quite consistent with His justification of the believer in Jesus. (Rom. 3, 26). Reconciliation is the aspect of atonement with relation to us and to creation. (Col. 1, 20-22).

Man's sin necessarily brought Him under the curse as inflicted by God in His inflexible righteousness and holiness. Thus the Sin-bearer on the cross was under the curse which entailed His being forsaken by God. He had been in the infinite favour of and communion with His God and Father up to that hour. The suffering was thus not only indescribable but inconceivable by the human mind and hence it is useless multiplying words on the subject.

A final quality not demonstrated by the Old Testament typology lay in the fact that the Sin-bearer must be able to exhaust the judgment of God on sin. All the antecedent sacrifices had remained in death. Thus only One who was infinite could satisfy God's righteous claims and besides glorify God as to every aspect of sin. He only could have exclaimed as He died on Calvary's tree, *Tetelestai*, lit.

“finished.” That was not merely relative to His life here, but that the work of redemption was absolutely completed.

(2) The martyr sufferings of Christ were those which He suffered at the hand of man on account of righteousness. He loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. (Psa. 45, 7). But sin is essentially lawlessness. (1 John 3, 4). Again He said, “I am come as a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness.” (John 12, 46). “Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light.” (John 3, 20). Darkness, evil and lawlessness are elements or qualities of the world. Thus the world knew Him not and did not receive Him. Indeed He was speedily rejected as the proofs of His origin and characteristics became evident to the religious leaders. So that the prophetic word, *enunciated over 700 years previous to the occurrence*, was literally fulfilled. “He was despised and rejected of men.” (Isa. 53, 3).

The Psalms were primarily the expressions of exercises through which their writers were passing at the time. Although most of them are so written as to express also the experience of the Israel of God as a remnant under governmental dealing on earth, there are expressions therein which could only be true of Christ. From these we learn that He was hated without a cause. Reproach had broken His heart. Man requited His love with hatred and so on. When we turn to the record of His pathway in the Gospels we see repeated evidences of the world’s hate and persecution. But until the incident of His betrayal, He was not subjected to any physical abuse because “His hour” was not yet come. Indeed, when at that juncture He proclaimed Himself “I am,” they went backward and fell to the ground. The hour was also that of man and the power of darkness. So strong bulls of Bashan beset Him round; the assembly of the wicked enclosed Him. (Psa. 22, 12, 16). They had repeatedly endeavoured to kill Him, but when every restraint was removed, the inveterate hatred of

man's heart was evinced in scourging and other indignities, when with wicked hands they crucified Him.

This aspect of the sufferings of Christ has nothing whatever to do with atonement. However, that statement cuts directly across much of the current theology which would seek to shake up the sufferings of Christ into an indistinguishable mass, so that justification may be found for the wholly unscriptural contention that man may have fellowship with Christ in the spirit of sacrifice, and so that he may contribute to his own salvation. The doctrine is not new theology, but was really initiated by Cain 6,000 years ago. The way of Cain is a broad road that ends in everlasting woe!

But notwithstanding the foregoing paragraph, there is a real fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. But it appertains entirely to His non-atonement sufferings. The Christian has the privilege of suffering for Christ and for the cause of righteousness, *i.e.*, for well-doing according to Scriptural definition. Those who will live godly or according to the will of God shall suffer persecution. (2 Tim. 3, 12). Therefore, there need be no wonder expressed if the Christian finds that he is hated of the world. (1 John 3, 13). That will be his portion according to his faithfulness in bearing testimony to the truth of God. But in doing so the Christian has rich compensation in the corresponding privilege of sharing in the personal peace and joy of Christ. (John 14, 27 and 15, 11). "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye." (1 Peter 3, 14).

(3) The constitutional sufferings of Christ were those He suffered because of what He was in a world which had no element in common with Him. The first and second characters of suffering were directly inflicted on Him by the hand of (a) God or (b) man. But the third character of suffering had no relation to either agency, but to the fact that His whole nature revolted at sin. He loved righteousness and hated or abhorred lawlessness or sin. He knew

no sin! Constituted as He was in a world constituted as it was and is, there could not be any other result than that He would suffer!

Throughout the Old Testament, there are abundant evidences of the deep sorrow that God felt as He contemplated the awful havoc that man had wrought in His fair creation. He was grieved at the heart as He saw man's great wickedness on the earth in the time of Noah. So much so that He repented that He had made man. (Gen. 6, 5, 6). The earth which had come from God's creatorial hand had been pronounced very good. In the interval of a few generations, it had become full of corruption and violence, while man's imagination or inmost thoughts were evil continuously. Only one bright spot in Noah was preserved for God.

Similar grief must have been God's portion when in much shorter space of time on the earth cleansed by "the flood," Noah's immediate descendants erected the Tower of Babel in defiance of the will of God. Later the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was very grievous to Him. The subsequent investigation test brought out its nature so markedly that His summary judgment could not be delayed. In the wilderness, God was continuously grieved by His people. (Ps. 78, 40). In the land, their idolatry and self-will brought them repeatedly to such a state, that His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel. (Judges 10, 16). The *Psalms* are expressive of similar thought. The prophets, too, afford evidence in support of the statement, *e.g.*, "In all their affliction He was afflicted." (Isa. 63, 9). Christ as God must necessarily have entered into all that these Scriptural references convey.

But we are not left to found conclusions on the statements of the Old Testament. When we turn to the record in the Gospels, we see the exquisite harmony of the feelings of Christ with those of God. In the synagogue, He was

grieved at the hardness of their hearts. He was displeased when the disciples rebuked those who brought the children for blessing. He sighed deeply in His spirit when the Pharisees sought a sign of heaven's approval of His work. He sighed in opening the ears and loosing the tongue of the afflicted man. (Mark 7, 34).

Christ was perfect in love and sympathy in the midst of the distress and need of man. As He saw the grief of Mary *and her friends, He groaned in spirit and was troubled.* On the way to the sepulchre Jesus wept. As He reached the grave, Jesus groaned in Himself. (John 11, 33-38). "He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." (Matt. 8, 17). He sorrowed to an inconceivable degree, even over those who rejected Him. He wept over Jerusalem. (Luke 19, 41-44). He was the Man of Sorrows indeed and acquainted with grief as no one else could be, owing to His constitution as the Light and darkness being the constitution of the world.

This third character of suffering like the second had nothing to do with atonement. God's grief at man's sin in the Old Testament did not provide a remedy for man's state. So the grief of His Sent One while on earth did not solve the sin problem. God's inexorable justice demanded the death of the victim.

In Gethsemane, the first and third characters of Christ's suffering would seem to make contact. The devil tried Him in the wilderness at the outset of His ministry. He had departed from Him for a season, but in the hour of the power of darkness Satan pressed "the power of death" on the heavy spirit of Christ. So that He had to say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." His agony was such that His sweat was as great drops of blood falling down to the ground. That suffering was antecedent to the cup of infinite sorrow which God was about to give Him to drink upon the cross.

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 8: 9). What grace and infinite wealth were His! He came down to the depths of poverty. The journey is sketched in chap. 2 of Philippians. He was worshipped and adored by the host of Heaven. He was a commander. Previously He had nothing to do with obedience. Let us think of what His poverty implied. The magnitude of the precipitous descent from the highest glory of Heaven to the tremendous depths of Calvary is impossible for the human mind to comprehend. As a preliminary contemplation we see that there was no room for Him in the inn. He was cradled in a manger. Great indeed would have been that humiliation for even a human potentate to be subjected to. Yet that was only the beginning of His pathway, and that path was all downward and found its culmination in the shameful death of the cross. He thought it no robbery to be equal with God. He took the course upon Himself. He was under obligation to no one. He was the Master (lit., "despot"), the Lord of the universe.

He had the glory of God in view in this; but also, "for your sakes," He became servant to God. He became, He was not made, that. He became obedient! He became a real man, and carried out man's obligations to the utmost all the way. He humbled Himself. Because of self-esteem some do not care what people think of them, but this was not so with Him. He was the first-born of all creation. That was a title of priority, or dignity. Yet He was more sensitive than any other! With such considerations, we do not want anyone else to be our Lord. He was reviled, and, finally, He was abandoned by God. He fathomed the bottomless abyss of woe and unutterable suffering. He sank in the deep water of death.

"He loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2: 20). Through His poverty we are rich. He stood in our room

and stead. His wealth has become our wealth. We have become joint-heirs with Him. He has enriched us with the fulness of the blessed God Himself. He glorified God on the earth, and finished the work He was given to do. Soon we shall be with Him, where He is, actually; now we are there representatively in Himself. Whatever He has, we have. "For your sakes He became poor." He put it all down to those very Corinthians who had not been commendable in many relations. This applies to us in every local company of Christians. Why does He do it? His grace is manifested to affect our lives. We are given light to walk and act in our relationships with one another, so that character is given to us all round. That is a very wonderful passage indeed. May its sense get hold of us! Mere hearing is not enough, although that is a necessary antecedent. Cattle grazing in the field are said to feed. But it would be more appropriate if we said that they were feeding when they were chewing the cud. It is unlikely that we shall get hold of the truth unless we meditate thereon.

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST.

Scripture Reference: John 12, 1-7.

At the supper at Bethany the different functions of the members of that devoted family aptly illustrate the several main privileges and functions of Christians. In sitting at the table with the Lord, Lazarus sets forth the privilege of fellowship even as Martha's privilege is typical of the servant, while Mary's action sets forth the return of the fruit of the heart in praise and worship.

The ointment was not merely of great value, literally "precious," but in Scripture this has always the meaning of "what is held in honour." What the world accounts as precious is merely what is an index of wealth, *e.g.*, the diamond has certain superlative physical properties. It is

the hardest of substances, and due to its having the highest index of refraction it is the most lustrous of all crystals, and combined with these outstanding qualities its scarcity has made it a costly stone. However, it has the same chemical composition as soot; its crystalline structure has been impressed by subjection to great heat and slow cooling under great pressure deep down in the earth. However, the conjunction of physical forces is conceivable whereby its lowly analogue could acquire such crystalline structure and the diamond would cease to be of abnormal value.

But Mary's ointment was not of that order at all. It was what she had treasured above everything else. There was nothing too good to bestow upon her blessed Lord, so she gladly anointed His feet and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. In its primary description, reference is undoubtedly made to the material house in which they were supping, but in its application to the Christian function, the fragrance of the ointment is only appreciated in the House of God, which is a spiritual entity composed of living stones, and thus the Apostle Peter goes on to say, "Unto you, therefore, who believe is the preciousness" (1 Peter 2, 5, 7). The appreciation of Christ is only amongst those who believe. The cultured philosopher may dilate to a great extent in marvellous language about the beautiful life of Christ and His moral influence and such like, but the fragrance of His name and the fragrance of the ointment from hearts in which God has wrought are known only by the believer. A grain of musk is said to be able to permeate every part of the air of a closed room for twenty years with its fragrance: the fragrance of Christ will fill every part of the House of God for all time, yea, for all eternity!

Jesus, Thou alone art worthy
Ceaseless praises to receive.

Judas Iscariot's assessment of the value of the ointment was probably a true account according to the statistician,

but was no criterion as to its value to the Lord. Judas's interest had an ulterior motive, as much of modern philanthropy has too. Judas was unfaithful, although externally he must have been able to make a fair show of honesty, else he would not have had the confidence of the other disciples to allow him to continue as their treasurer. Nevertheless he could not disguise the fact from the Spirit of God, who puts on record that he "bear" what was put in the bag, *i.e.*, he was a secret purloiner. The Apostle Paul indicates that servants should not purloin but show all good fidelity that they may adorn the doctrine of God in all things. (Tit, 2, 10).

Mary's apparent extravagance received the Lord's commendation in the words, "Let her alone; against the day of My burying hath she kept this." Mary's thoughts were necessarily in prospect of that event, but the Christian's thoughts are in retrospect of His death, and the world's statistical assessment of our action is as cold and severe nowadays. They say that we could certainly put the time to far greater purpose if we were occupied in helping the poor. But in obeying His request, "This do in remembrance of Me," we too will secure the Lord's approbation, the white stone of His approval. Anything else is not worth giving a thought.

CONTINUITY OF JOY.

"That they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves." (John 17, 13).

Relative to His pathway on earth, the Lord is usually referred to as "the Man of Sorrows." We do not usually think of Him as filled with joy. Yet if it had not been for the testimony of Old Testament prophetic Scriptures we would not have learned much about His sorrows, *e.g.*, "A Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53, 3); "See if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." (Lam. 1, 12), etc. In the four Gospels, it is remarkable

that there are only two direct references to the Lord's grief or sorrow in His own words, "Now is My soul troubled" (John 12, 2), and in Gethsemane, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matt. 26, 38; Mark 14, 32). I am not forgetting His sighs and tears.

In contrast to the paucity of reference to His sorrow, there is repeated reference to His joy. The nearer He came to the climax of His pathway at the Cross, the more He spoke of His joy. In His early ministry, joy is not such a prominent feature. But as the shadow of Calvary loomed ahead, just when the tide of sorrow judging from ordinary observation rose to its highest, His joy triumphed over the sorrow. The radiant prayer in John 17 was uttered at the close of His ministry just as the meeting with the betrayer became imminent. From whence came His joy? He rejoiced in the will of God. From the outset there was perfect acquiescence in the purpose of God. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!" (Heb. 10, 9). Every step in His pathway presented that quality in an unvarying way. Moreover, it was for the joy that was set before Him, that He endured the cross, despising the shame. (Heb. 12, 2). The joy of the future when He would see of the travail of His soul was the final consummation to His suffering. In Scripture, happiness is presented as a tranquil quality, based on the peace consequent on realizing the value of the Lordship of Christ, and that involves doing His will. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (John 13, 17). Suffering for righteousness, reproach for the name of Christ, etc., all bring happiness in their course. The Sermon on the Mount was a series of instruction in the development of real happiness.

Joy seems to present the further idea of the overflowing fountain of happiness. The Psalmist said, "My heart is bubbling up with good matter." (Ps. 45, 1, marginal reading). So the hearts of the people of God should resemble a geyser which under internal pressure shoots the

water high in the air. In the Yellowstone Park, Western U.S.A., the Old Faithful Geyser shoots up a 150 feet fountain of hot water for a short period every hour. Our outbursts of joy are more uncertain than that phenomenon. We can rely on the faithfulness of God. But we shall be greatly disappointed if we count on either our own faithfulness or that of anybody else.

In Thy grace Thou now hast called us,
Sharers of Thy joy to be,
And to know the blessed secret
Of His preciousness to Thee.

In being called to share divine joy, we are introduced into the home-circle of heaven and we come to know what transcends the fruits of philosophic enquiry. The sense of this in our souls preserves us from mere self-pleasing and lifts us into the higher plane of glad participation in the fellowship of His sufferings, which is the concomitant process to realizing His inexpressible joy. That realization will lead us to know that we are not the creatures of circumstances. The children of God are not whiffed about on the breeze of chance. Things do not happen to them accidentally. Everything is controlled in perfect administration.

THE WORD OF CHRIST.

Scripture References: Luke 10, 38-42; Colossians 3, 16.

The "one thing needful" is the knowledge of Christ, and hence the appreciation of Himself. One can only know Christ by hearing His word. His word is His revelation. The consequence of hearing His word is gradual self-effacement. John the Baptist realized this as he gave utterance to the expression, "He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3, 30). In consequence of the increased appreciation of Christ there must necessarily be self-displacement.

Mary made no attempt to justify her action under the accusation of her sister. She was content to leave the matter with her Master. There is no need to institute odious comparisons between Martha and Mary, as is the common practice with commentators. Martha's function was quite right in its proper setting. Service is necessary, but we cannot serve rightly apart from hearing His word. Ahimaaz wished to be of service in running with tidings to the king in the matter of the death of Absalom, and although more efficient physically than Cush, his running was profitless because he had no message from Joab. (2 Sam. 18, 14-32).

Martha's restlessness was out of place. Mary had spiritual sensibility. She could not have explained her action satisfactorily. Indeed, logically Martha's argument was unanswerable, as Mary seemed to be shirking work. But the Lord rebuked Martha, yet very tenderly, and at the same time He showed his appreciation of Mary's attitude. Sitting at the feet of Christ had the result of illuminating her soul. The bride in the Canticles gives expression to similar experience thus, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." (Song of Songs 2, 3).

The Lord speaks of Mary's portion as that good part which will not be taken from her. She was in the position of a disciple, and was therefore being instructed through hearing His word. It is our privilege to know Christ similarly. Our blessing depends upon our being led by the Holy Ghost into the knowledge of Christ. The Spirit as the "Spirit of Truth" has the special function of guiding us into all truth. He is the sole Agent in the opening up to us of the truth of God which is the revelation of God. Moreover, He shall glorify or magnify Christ, "for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." (John 16, 14).

What are these things that are specifically described as

“ Mine ”? All things that the Father hath are His, therefore the Spirit can say, “ He shall take of Mine, and shall show unto you.” Moreover, “ All things are delivered to Me of My Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.” (Luke 10, 22). We have an unction from the Holy One, and as a consequence know all things. But these things communicated and unfolded find their centre in Christ—they are things of His. It is inconceivable that such an unction would illuminate us with anything else than the knowledge of Christ, *i.e.*, the essence of eternal life.

Multitudinous books have been written on the principles of teaching in the various spheres of mental apprehension, but the Spirit's sphere, mode and principles of teaching defy all explanation. The mighty power of the Spirit brings the heart of the Christian under the influence of the love of God, and as we develop in His love, our spiritual apprehension is enlarged. We are found reaching forth unto those things which are before: things which relate to eternal life. Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father—it is the same power which is now dealing with us. The Son is the object of all the Father's thought, and He is the subject of all the Father's teaching and of the proclamation of the Gospel in the widest sense of the word—Christ is indeed the central subject of Scripture.

It is of prime importance to realize that God the Father has in view a cosmos of blessing which in its infinite variety of spiritual phenomena transcends all human expression or conception, whether considered in the microscopic or the megascopic aspect. That cosmos originated in the Father's purpose, and therein everything is as precisely adjusted as in the physical cosmos, and the medium through which the life peculiar to that sphere works is the love of God.

The apostle's prayer in the third chapter of Ephesians discloses the magnitude of the sphere of which Christ is the

centre and theme, and the burden of the prayer is that we may know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. Although this expression is paradoxical, it is simply explained when we come to see that there are two kinds of knowledge, radically different in nature and in mode of communication. But as the spiritual cosmos is opened up to our ravished gaze by the power of the Holy Spirit of God, we see how the love of God moulds everything to accomplish His will, and also to promote the good of His people. This vision eclipses the physicist's conception of a miniature solar system of electrons revolving round a centre of protons in the ultimate atom of nature.

The expression "the word of Christ" in the third chapter of Colossians is a unique usage in the apostolic writings, and it is fraught with meaning. The word of God is likened to milk in other Scriptures, and on this analogy the word of Christ may well be described as the cream on the top of the milk. The cream proclaims the richness and the quality of milk, so the word of Christ proclaims the richness and quality of the word in its personal application, and it is not to partake of a transient character, but to dwell in us richly in all wisdom. If we are to be efficient in the two-fold work of "teaching and admonishing one another," we must have wisdom which is the product of metaphorically sitting at the feet of Christ and hearing His word as Mary did, and there will be the concomitant "singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord." The word of Christ is the solution of all the questions which continually arise, with the tendency of wrecking Christian unity in the visible sphere.

THE PEACE OF CHRIST.

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."—John 14, 27.

Peace is a familiar term in Scripture, but its significance depends on the particular context or setting in which it is

found. In its connection with Christ, the initial idea is that He made peace by the blood of His cross. (Col. 1, 20). In the peace-offering of the third chapter of Leviticus, the elements of communion or fellowship are taught on the basis that peace is made in the death of Christ. The natural chaos which reigns in the human heart has been done away, and a new domain has been introduced in which everything is controlled after God's order.

The individual bowing the knee, believing in the heart unto righteousness, confessing Jesus as Lord, finds that the same basis on which he is justified provides him with the second of the kingdom blessings in its initial aspect of "peace with God." (Rom. 5, 1). But the blessing does not stop there, he finds that he is enclosed in a new envelope of peace into which the confusion dominating the world has no ingress.

Sin in the flesh has been condemned before God and put away by the death of Christ. (Rom. 8). Moreover, the whole order of man, whose sole aim was his own glory, has been removed through the same death; that is, for God and for faith. And while he still fills the world with the confusion of his own lawlessness, yet his trial is over and he only awaits the execution of God's just judgment.

In the Levitical type, we eat the peace-offering in the presence of God (which would naturally inspire fear), rejoicing that God has ended the confusion, and that there is a sphere into which we can withdraw from the world to feed on the offering of Christ. "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." (John 6, 56). Could there be any experience equal to that? What a transition from the husks which the world affords, to feed on the finest of the wheat! He who offered Himself by the Eternal Spirit without spot to God, is alive from amongst the dead, and He is our peace. (Eph. 2, 14). This is the first consequence of His having made peace.

He has broken down the middle wall of partition separat-

ing Jew and Gentile; but they are not merely fused into one entity retaining their natural characteristics, for He made in Himself of twain, one new man, so making peace, that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross. (Eph. 2: 15, 16). These two dissimilar elements are no longer marked by their original features once they are found in Himself, *i.e.*, in the one body. Moreover, the Scripture goes on to say that "through Him both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." He who rose from the dead has given His Spirit to all who believe God; so Jew and Gentile receiving the Spirit have the enmity emphasized by the Law of Commandments applicable to the flesh set aside. The intrusion of the flesh can only introduce distance between Christians.

Speaking metaphorically, if the six-inch brick wall separating Jew and Gentile was obliterated in the death of Christ, what about all the brown paper partitions which have been erected by over-zealous legalists, separating Christians from each other? It is certain that they will be reduced to pulp by the infiltration of the water of life—the Word of God. So we need to be under the influence of the Word. No other agency will effect the practical union of Christians.

The world is characterized by chaos. Men conjure pictures of the Utopia in which all confusion and the strife of tongues will have ceased, and so a League of Nations vainly operates in the midst of warring nations (or preparing for war as fast as their shattered resources will admit, notwithstanding the profession of peaceful aims). Scripture shows that the League of Nations is a forlorn hope, destined to prove a disappointment and failure. The only sphere where peace is really known is where the Lordship of Christ is owned.

When the Lord cast a legion of devils out of the demoniac, the latter was found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. He was no longer the sport of demoniacal

influence, but at the disposal of his new Master. The man was in a state of peace, typifying the conditions obtaining in the millennium, when all the confusion will have been brought to an end. But the Gadarenes preferred the presence of demons to the presence of the Lord, and they besought Him to depart from them. The curiosity-mongers were afraid of the state of peace, although they were not afraid of the devil's power. The imaginary state of peace is one in which every person may do what is right in his own eyes, but that must necessarily result in confusion, as there is no consonance in the human will. There is a complete resolution of these forces into a common resultant, *viz.*, the Lord's will, when the gospel, which is the power of God, intervenes.

So the Lord's words on the night of His betrayal, "Peace I leave with you," have a special inflexion of meaning in the further communication, "My peace I give unto you." Again, the apostle enjoins the Colossian Christians, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." (Col. 3, 15). There must be complete acquiescence in the will of God if peace is to supervene. In being transformed by the renewing of our mind, we prove or test what is that good, acceptable, perfect will of God. (Rom. 12, 2). The Scripture says "let," *i.e.*, "allow," which suggests that there are hindrances to the peace of Christ having a free course of control, but we are responsible to remove these hindrances.

There will be no need for a president in our discussions if the peace of Christ presides at our council board, for that is the present purpose of our being called in one body, and in the process we shall be marked by thankful hearts. The natural tendency is for everyone to have a right to express his opinion, and so a Babel of voices will proclaim the failure of human effort in bringing about millennial conditions.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation." But the Lord spoke words of comfort to His own in order that they

might understand that in Himself they might have peace. (John 16, 33). His peace is given to us; not as the world gives, in a conditional way, since His gifts and calling are without repentance, *i.e.*, there is no retraction of what He gives.

The result of truly apprehending the significance of His unchanging peace given to us, and our being enclosed in an impervious envelope of peace, is that we are found conducting ourselves soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; being marked by acquiescence in God's will and confidence in Him that He can, in His own convenient time, effect His own will.

Meanwhile, the personal peace of Christ rules in our hearts, giving a practical demonstration of God's dwelling in His house.

AARON'S BEARD.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity! Like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. (Ps. 133: 1, 2).

Everything in Christianity tends to express unity, even as the same principle was true of God's earthly people. But if this was a desirable end in the old dispensation, how much greater significance must we attach thereto when the Holy Spirit is present uniting every member of the body of Christ to the Head in heaven. Hence the unity of the Spirit must result on earth. We may walk in the Spirit as individuals, but the unity of the Spirit involves relationship to others. Unity is not by Lordship which relates to the individual. Christ is Head, not Lord, to the body, although individual obedience will help to express the unity. But all unity is in and by the Spirit. The unity of the Spirit is an abstract idea, rupture of intercourse between the saints of God will

not invalidate the unity of the Spirit but such a regrettable incident will hinder this unity from being practically expressed or illustrated. Most of the difficulties amongst Christians arise from giving undue prominence to natural considerations and also through lack of apprehension of the nature of the unity of the Spirit. For a brief period after Pentecost we have a clear view of how the unity of the Spirit is maintained, when all who believed continued with one accord in the temple (Acts 2, 46) and the multitudes of those who believed were of one heart and one soul. (Acts 4, 32).

Although the truth has been covered over with the dust of centuries, whenever there has been a response to the light of God's revelation, something similar if on a smaller scale has followed. Personal, social, ecclesiastical and national distinctions have been obliterated, and Christians have taken up their responsibilities as still living in this life but in the light of another world. (The Age of the Ages, Eph. 3, 21). They viewed their responsibilities in their correct perspective, and as subservient to the heavenly calling. The holiness of God's House was maintained, and hearts were united in devotedness to the interests of an absent Lord in glory but still rejected by the world as much as when He was here. In the psalm the fact of "brethren dwelling together in unity" is likened to the holy anointing oil put on the head and running down Aaron's beard. This truth finds its substantiation in Christ as the One who is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows and who as the Holy One ministers to us the unction or anointing which abides in us and teaches all things to us. But this anointing recognises nothing of the flesh: "Upon man's flesh it shall not be poured." (Ex. 30, 32). Ever since the first attempt relative to the erection of the tower of Babel, man has sought to establish a unity of his own device, but God has never allowed such to last for a long period. He has always introduced a circumstance which wrecked a

man-made unity. The best-laid schemes continually miscarry. Mere organisation will not hold Christians together in peace. The only security lies in allowing the Spirit of God to have His way with us. There will then be a display of the love of God and we shall give expression to what will obtain uninterruptedly throughout the universe in a future day.

Oh, what a home! there fullest love
Flows through its courts of light;
The Son's divine affections flow
Throughout its depth and height.

The composition of the holy anointing oil was not to be imitated. Ananias and Sapphira were the first who sought to simulate the action of the Spirit of God when they professed to give the whole proceeds of the sale of their property to the Lord's service and incurred the judgment of God. God is sovereign and must punish any infringement of His rights. So that mere natural fervour in God's service, no matter how commendable it may seem to be in the eyes of men, will only meet with the Lord's scathing rebuke. Moreover, it will mar the dissemination of the fragrance of Christ. We can only contribute to the advancement of God's interests according to our apprehension and appreciation of the excellencies of Christ. In spite of the specious pleas usually advanced, every imitation of the unity of the Spirit is bound to fail ultimately. The upholding of a Christian's social status is a great hindrance in keeping the unity of the Spirit because there is no respect of persons with God. An early example of grit getting into the mechanism is shown when the Grecian Christians thought that the Hebrew widows were getting an advantage in the daily ministration. (Acts 6). But observe the magnanimity of the apostles who invited the murmurers to choose seven men of honest report and full of the Holy Ghost to look after the business. Strife soon ends when one of the two elements disappears. Abram could put the question of pasture un-

reservedly to the choice of Lot, because he had his eye on "the future" which rested on the stability of God and not on the precarious nature of human choice. The sequel shewed that he was endowed with "long-sightedness." For the above reasons Aaron's beard stopped at the skirts of his garments. Man would have argued that good would result by allowing the beard to reach the ground, and so to give the desert the benefit of the oil. Following the type, God does not communicate his Spirit to a stranger nor to the world. The garments speak of the display of the heavenly character of Christ, and this can only be effected by the saints of God in the power of the Holy Ghost, and so Aaron's beard stopped at the limits of God's requirements.

Recently we listened to a scientist discoursing on the lubrication of wool preparatory for manufacture. He stated that the finest wool hair had a diameter of one-two thousandth part of an inch, and thus one pound weight of such wool had the immense surface area of 1100 square feet, and more wonderful still two ounces of oil were spread over this surface in a film less than one-forty thousandth part of an inch thick. These are marvellous facts brought to light by modern scientific measurement. But following the Scripture illustration, the Christian knows a much more intangible film than the wool hair lubrication. The Spirit of God typified by the oil on Aaron's beard transcends any physical anointing, and, moreover, can only be appreciated by an intuition which did not come to him in virtue of possessing human descent, but in consequence of being born of God linked with the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

The process summarised as "being diligent in keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" is previously stated in detail as walking worthy of the calling with

(1) *All lowliness* which is descriptive of the Christian's normal state, before God and is consequent on being consciously in the presence of God.

(2) *Meekness* relates to our conduct towards other people

and will follow on true humility. If there be a proper sense of our own nothingness and being in the presence of God, there will not be any cause for complaint on the score of arrogance and superciliousness towards our brethren.

(3) *Long-suffering*. This will eliminate all harshness from our dealings. What is so natural to us is excluded by the Spirit's power producing a trait which was so prominent in the Lord's life while here. Who but He would have borne with Judas Iscariot until the moment he went out into the darkness of the night unable to bear the presence of Infinite Light and Love.

(4) *Forbearing one another in Love*. We frequently "bear" or suffer those whom we cannot expel from our company, but that is not the meaning of the term. Forbearance has the force of "suffering gladly." The Apostle averred that the Corinthians suffered fools gladly (using the same word in 2 Cor. 11, 19); a procedure not commonly observed among men.

O Patient, spotless One!
Our hearts in meekness train
To bear thy yoke, and learn of Thee,
That we may rest obtain.

While we appreciate the great accession in apprehension of light during the last generation, the question arises as to whether the light has been received so as to become formative in our souls, and to what extent we have been led consciously by the Spirit into what is characteristic of Christianity.

THE DEW OF HERMON.

"As the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing—
life for evermore." (Ps. 133, 3).

Although doubtless this psalm refers primarily to Israel the state portrayed is aptly descriptive of God's thoughts for

His people in every dispensation, and is one which we may earnestly desire as being in accord with "the way of superlative excellence" shown by the Apostle in 1 Cor. 13 and of the diligent keeping of the unity of the Spirit in the co-bond of peace. (Eph. 4, 3). The unity of the Spirit is the power by which the Holy Ghost harmoniously associates very diverse elements in God's work relative to the Church. This is a hidden power, not recognised by the world, but is rendered evident by God's people exhibiting peace as the uniting bond. The world cannot see or understand the unity of the Spirit, but the maintenance or rupture of peace is readily observed. So the abstract truth of God is concretely illustrated by those who profess to belong to Him. All the subtlety of the enemy is directed against this desirable end being attained, therefore there is a call for diligence. The unity of the Spirit is marked by perennial freshness. Zion means a "high and very dry place," but the dew of Hermon descending upon its mountains was the only means afforded for changing its character. So the only influence which will keep our souls fresh is the power of the Spirit, causing us to own practically the headship of Christ, and to enjoy God's favour, manifested to our souls and bodies in unceasing goodness and mercy.

That all Thy gracious favour
May to my soul be known;
And, versed in this Thy goodness
My hopes Thyself shall crown.

In this refreshing process our souls expand in the atmosphere of God's love, and we experimentally prove the meaning of the song of Moses:

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain
My speech shall distil as the dew,
As the small rain upon the tender herb,
And as the showers upon the grass."

(Deut. 32: 2).

And also the song of the Psalmist:

“ The people shall be willing
In the day of Thy power,
In the beauty of holiness,
From the womb of the morning,
Thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

(Ps. 110: 3).

Physically, at the end of the Millennium, the saints of God constituting the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, in spite of the flow of time, will be marked by the dew of youth, “ as a bride adorned for her husband.” But at present we have the benefit of the same revivifying power for the maintenance of freshness of soul. No mere high place of privilege, no mere association where the truth is known, will maintain us in that delectable state. The mountains of Zion, although high were naturally very dry, but the dew of Hermon produced a rich crop of smiling verdure.

Subjection of spirit to Him, who is the Head, will alone enable us to exemplify the unity which He wishes to see in His saints. United by the living link of the Holy Spirit to our Head in Heaven, living in the light of the knowledge of God, fully revealed in the face of Christ, we shall apprehend, maintain, and express the unity of the Spirit in the co-bond of peace. Every effort of the enemy to bring in dissension and disruption will then fail. The conditions will exist for the collective as well as the individual enjoyment of eternal life, the *summum bonum* of God’s blessing. Note the presence of the adverb “ there ” in the third verse of the 133rd Psalm. It is in the condition of unity that the Lord commands the peerless blessing of the experimental enjoyment of eternal life, which, the apostle John informs us, is the knowledge of Him that is true—the true God and His son Jesus Christ. We shall thus be enabled to dwell together in unity to the glory of God, and morally suitable to Him who has saved us and called us with a Holy calling.

We must feel sorry for those who allow themselves to be

defrauded out of their birthright as children of God, *i.e.*, the present enjoyment of eternal life. The incessant quibbling about points which are frequently forgotten ten years later, is somewhat like the waters rushing down the narrow gorge of the Jordan, carrying much solid matter in solution into the great depression of the Dead Sea, which is nearly 1300 ft. below sea level. Hence no water can escape by outlet drainage. But the sun's rays falling on the surface of the lake change the liquid water into vapour, lifting it high above the sources of the Jordan and in course of time the winds cause part of it to become the dew of Hermon, which revives the verdure of the mountains of Zion. However, observe that not one solid particle is lifted from the sea by this process. The Dead Sea becomes gradually saltier and the solid matter accumulates. Does the above process not exemplify conditions which are not unfamiliar amongst the people of God? Wrangling factions tumble down the gorge of fierce dissension into a Dead Sea of absolute futility, in which the spirits of men become saltier and more bitter in the deadness for God. The only remedy is in the objective presentation of Christ. We need positive ministry. The light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ alone will lift us above the dissension and will cause our thoughts and speech to distil and condense as the dew of Hermon spreading refreshment instead of discontent wherever we go. In doing so, we leave those who choose to shut out the light of God to continue in the lake of bitterness which will mean loss now and at the judgment seat of Christ.

DEVOTEDNESS TO CHRIST.

(Substance of an Address at Edinburgh on Jan. 1st, 1930).

Scriptures read: 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15; Rom. 8. 34, 35, 37-39;

Heb. 7. 23-25; John 14. 2, 3; 17. 23, 26.

Personal devotedness to Christ is a laudable ambition. Current evangelical literature presents various solutions to

the problem, but unless the solutions are based on the foundation of the Word of God they cannot be helpful. Hence at the outset we refer to Scriptural passages which present the matter in a perfectly clear light.

From 2 Corinthians 5, 14 we see that the essential spring of devotedness is the constraining power of the love of Christ, because the apostle and his associates had come to a certain judgment as to the bearing of the death of Christ. The love of Christ first came to us in a state of death. His death proved that all were dead* and that no solution of the problem was admissible other than that He should die. The heart of every Christian should be affected by the fact that we were all in death, which is the judgment of sin, and that Christ actually came into the place where we were. When we realize that love was behind the action, then that love constrains us, and now that His death and resurrection have formed a new envelope of life into which we have been introduced in the superlative grace of God, we have no longer any right to an opinion as to how that life should be directed. Christ came into death that He might establish over us an absolute irrevocable claim, the claim of love.

A claim to the contrary effect would not be argued by any advocate in a court of law. Such a contrary claim would find a parallel in the following supposition. If a commercial man failed in business and was not able to pay the proverbial "penny in the pound," but was absolutely without assets against overwhelming liabilities, then, in the event of that firm being re-constituted with external capital and under new management, it would be readily conceded to be gross impertinence for the debtor to offer advice as to how the business should be conducted subsequently.

* Some expositors say that the dead state was in consequence of the death of Christ, but the grammatical structure as well as the context show unmistakably that the dead condition was an antecedent and not a consequent of His death. The latter dictum is substantiated by other passages of Scripture.

But the conditions in the case of a Christian are even more acutely accentuated than the illustration shows.

In effect Christ says to us, "There is no love like mine. You were all in death, the universal condition, and I came into that condition and rose clear out of it, that I might subsequently have over you a claim which could not be gainsaid by any adverse advocate." Hence when that is apprehended by the Christian there must be a response to the death of Christ in devotedness to His interests.

But the fact of the death of Christ does not exhaust the argument. The love of Christ was not exhausted in death. It is now manifested in the power of an endless life. We turn to the end of the eighth chapter of Romans and to a parallel passage in the seventh chapter of Hebrews, where we see that Christ's intercession springs from His love. He first expressed His love in death, but now that He lives the next great consequence of His love is His intercession. He saves to the uttermost with the end in view that we should be more than conquerors over every circumstance.

The expression, "Save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him," is often paraphrased as His being an "all-the-way-home Saviour." One would not seek to disparage a cherished thought which is fully supported by other Scriptures, but the context of this particular Scripture lays stress on the microscopic rather than the telescopic view of salvation. It is blessedly true that the end is as secure as the beginning, but often it is not realized that our course is under perfect administration. The minutest details of our lives are delicately adjusted and harmonize with the trend of the ways of God. When we apprehend this harmony we exclaim with the apostle, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God."

Moreover, the new Priest at the right hand of God has a continuing priesthood, in contrast to the conditions of office in the old dispensation. Historians tell us that there were eighty-four performers of the high priestly function, and

simple arithmetic gives a period of eighteen years as their average tenure of the office. "They were not suffered to continue by reason of death." But because the new Priest continues ever He has an unchanging priesthood. Moreover, there is no possibility of lapse of His function during its duration, as seemed inevitable in the beautiful type of Exodus 17. when the hands of Moses held up in intercession became heavy, and required to be reinforced by the support of Aaron and Hur. The priesthood of Christ knows no discontinuity nor variation in intensity. He intercedes for us because He loves us, and we are more than conquerors over every difficulty through Him who loves us.

The apostle raises the question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Tribulation and the other enemies of the wilderness journey are powerless, and we join the apostle in his unfaltering persuasion that no conceivable agency, be it in the psychical sphere as angel, principality or power, or in the physical sphere of time and space, can separate us from the love of God which has secured us in the new envelope of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prominent features of the priesthood of Christ are typified in the high priest's bearing the names of the children of Israel on his shoulder, the place of strength, and on his breast, the place of affection. Intercession is the fruit of affection, and the practical result is that we are supported in this world by intercession of Christ. Thus we shall be able to maintain the position of devoted Christians, as our hearts are under the influence of the love of Christ.

But the culmination of the love of Christ is not reached in His death nor in His intercession for us, but in leading us to His Father's house, as stated in the beginning of the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel. Someone has well said that we are "the Father's love gift to the Son," but we are His gift with the object in view of bringing us home. The love of Christ will never be satisfied short of having us there. "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself."

That moment has not yet arrived, but meanwhile He brings us to the Father's heart. He declares the Father's name, and causes us to know the love of the Father. He causes us to know that we are loved of the Father with the same love as He Himself is loved. (John 17, 23). In declaring the Father's name he declares the Father's love. He declares that "the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17, 26).

When we apprehend that, we can appreciate the apostolic prayer in the third chapter of the Ephesian epistle. We become enlightened as to the mind of God, so that we comprehend with all saints the dimensions of the sphere of purpose, and a further step is to know the love of Christ which transcends knowledge. This seeming paradox vanishes, when we realize that our knowledge will always be qualitative. To make a quantitative analysis of the love of God is conclusively beyond our powers. But the experimental result is that in the currency of our explorations in the sphere of purpose, jointly with our testing the love of Christ, we are in the process of being filled to all the fulness of God. So that there need be no lack of power.

That the character of God should be displayed in His saints on earth was the apostle's great desire. When Christ was here there was a perfect expression of God in Him. If all His people apprehended the love of Christ, there would be a corresponding expression of God now. "No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us." (1 John 4, 12). The same expression is stated of Christ in John 1, 18.

Christ was once here in testimony. Nothing short of the display of Christ now will suit God, therefore the church is to be filled with the fulness of God; and the secret of this being effected is through the knowledge of the love of Christ. Nothing else can make a Christian devoted. The apprehension of formal doctrine will not bring the desired result to pass. The object of devotion is Christ Himself.

Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His Word because she responded to His love. John leaned on His bosom and His heart-throbs were communicated to him. Every increment of appreciation brings a further increment of support in the continuance of devotedness to the interests of Christ.

In conclusion, may we recapitulate the elements in the chain of development of devotedness to Christ? (1) His absolute claim in death. (2) The consequence of His love in intercession in the power of an endless life at the right-hand of God. (3) The continuance of His love in leading us out of the world to His Father's house, and the loving care which He manifests towards us on the way there, must bring to bear upon our course of action an irresistible conclusion that we should be loyal to Christ and His interests. May this prove to every one of us more than a beautiful sentiment, but a living bright reality indeed!

LOVE FOR CHRIST.

In Matt. 26, when the whole current was going against Christ, there was a woman who showed her love for Him in a remarkable way, and her commendation was that wherever the Gospel would be preached this that she had done would be spoken of as a memorial of her. She was in the current of His mind, and though what she did was in all human weakness, the Lord took notice of the spring of her action. There is no power in corporate action, unless the individuals are personally strong. The strength of a chain depends upon its weakest link, and therefore we must be strengthened by the personal love of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Epistle to the Ephesians with all its height finishes with the words, "Grace with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." If this is right, everything else will be secured. Do you love the Lord to

take you by the hand and lead you? Peter speaks of Him as the One "whom not having seen, ye love."

Deut. 6: 4, 5 shows that the Lord our God, Jehovah, requires the affection of the whole heart. The reason is found in chap. 10, 12. Chap. 11: 13-15 shows if they would only love the Lord with all their heart, everything they could wish for they would have. Thus the important thing is to love the Lord. Deut. 30, 1 shows the back-sliding heart finding the power of the world too strong, but He is faithful and just to forgive. If reality of heart is there, the Lord is ever the same. He allows chastening to come in that we may be restored. Then in the 15th verse of the same chapter, life is spoken of and contrasted with death, and good with evil, and then we are exhorted to choose life. That is the antidote. Again in Ps. 18, 1, "I will love Thee, O Lord." It is David's autobiography, his own history. Solomon also loved the Lord, and he could speak of Him as the chiefest among ten thousand. He is easily first against 9,999 rivals, and then the writer becomes lost in the sense of His love, and takes Him out of all comparison by saying, "He is altogether lovely." If we realize this then it will be easy to serve Him. It is not naturally easy to be insignificant, but if we become such we shall be glad to sweep a crossing in His interests.

His dealings with men are all in order that His will may be accomplished. Jacob's thigh was put out of joint. Saul became Paul. Self becomes pulverized in order that He may use us. We are so apt to look at the object or result of ministry rather than the source from which it springs, and so are apt to place first our instrumentality in the conversion of many souls rather than the doing of His will. The branch of the appletree is never fruitful, unless it abides in the stem. There is no effort on the part of the vine, and there should be no effort on our part either, except that of exercise. The sap of new life passes through us.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PSALMS.

INTRODUCTORY.

It has often been said that the Psalms do not give true Christian experience. If that means true in the sense of complete then we shall quite readily endorse the dictum. Until the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the heavenly line of blessing could not be opened up to human view, but collaterally with that there is the line of responsibility which undoubtedly takes character from the apprehension of the former in the power of the Spirit. Thus it is in the latter line that the teaching of the Psalms has valid application. Consequently it is of prime importance that Christians should study the prophetic bearing of the Psalms.

In the study of the Psalms it is necessary to distinguish between what is relative to the Spirit of Christ personally and to the same Spirit animating the remnant of His people. Moreover, the expression of their own exercises are freely interspersed with those prompted by the Spirit of Christ. Unlike the summaries which form prefaces to the chapters in other books of the Bible, the Psalm headings are inspired and thus demand equal attention with the subsequent subject matters.

The Psalms are divided into five books ending with the 41st, 72nd, 89th, 106th and 119th respectively. Psalms 120 to 150 form an appendix to the Psalms proper, although they are often classified as part of the fifth book.

In the first book, the prominent thought is the Lord as an object for the heart. The subject contemplates the people as still resident in Jerusalem. Thus the name of the

Lord (*i.e.*, Jehovah, the Covenant name) and covenant mercies receive abundant reference. The mass of the people are still considered as under probation, very much in the same way as the Apostles viewed conditions in the first six chapters of the Acts in the New Testament.

In the second book, the conditions are viewed with relation to the remnant cast out of Zion consequent on the Lord having been rejected. Therefore, the name " God " is prominent. The people are less considered as connected by covenant. The need of a deliverer receives emphasis. The writers no longer rely on covenant relationship, but on the unconditional mercy of God.

In the third book, the subject is largely the deliverance and restoration of Israel as a nation. There is only one Psalm in the book specifically attributed to David, eleven Psalms are of Asaph and one each by Heman and Ethan, while the authorship of three others is not specially mentioned. Hence mercy is more expressed than righteousness. The outlook is wider than in those intimately connected with Jerusalem. The book ends fittingly with the 89th Psalm which speaks of the New Covenant proclaiming God's attitude to all men.

In the fourth book, the proclamation mainly celebrates the coming of the Lord and the establishment of His throne and His kingdom in display to the eye. The characteristic expression is " the Lord reigneth." That will bring Israel into blessing and the Gentile nations will come under perfect administration.

The 90th Psalm opening the book is entitled " A Prayer of Moses, the man of God." If that information had not been communicated in the heading, we would never have arrived at that conclusion. On the other hand, Psalm 91 speaks of the Lord in human circumstances, and the subject matter presents a marvellous contrast to that of the preceding Psalm. Only two Psalms in the book are stated to be of David, most of the others are without headings.

In the fifth book, emphasis is put on the Lord acting on behalf of man, promoting confidence in the heart of man as to the rectitude of His administration. Hence there is an explanation of the ways of God radiating from Himself resulting in a universe of unmixed blessing. There is also a paucity of specific heading to the Psalms of this book as occurs also in the fourth book. The subject matter is largely retrospective, indicating the end of God's ways with His earthly people. Righteousness is a characteristic expression. Thus on that line a climax is reached in Psalm 118 "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." The faithful await the coming of that Man. In Psalm 119, we see the law written in man's heart involving the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, each having its due weight of importance. Each selection of eight verses gives adequate testimony to the perfection of the ways of God.

In the appendix the first fifteen psalms are "Songs of degrees," *i.e.*, a stair of fifteen steps. They give the exercises of the faithful remnant moving towards the summit of their aspirations in Zion, which is the place of God's rest. The people are viewed on their way to that goal through an enemy's land. But the goal is full of blessing and resultant praise in the subsequent part, in which six are Hallelujah psalms concluding with "everything that has breath praising the Lord." That is no mere poetic fancy, but a sober statement of the conclusion of the ways of God surely moulding everything to His will in spite of the machinations of the Devil and the rebellion of man. These thoughts show the transition of the idea of rest to that of reconciliation!

Of the Divine Titles mentioned in the Psalms, Elohim (plural) speaking of God in creatorial power (trinity acting in unity) is the usual expression. El (singular) is less frequent, expressing unity in power and action, the mighty origin of all! Eloah, indicating the true God in contrast to the false, occurs still less frequently. Jehovah, the self-

existent "I am," is the name of relationship in blessing to Israel. That is the usual form translated "the Lord" and occasionally "Jehovah." Jah is often associated with the expression "praise ye" in the word Hallelujah. The title indicates the One who dwells in eternity, merging past, present and future in the "eternal now." The title is sublime and yet is the simplest of the divine names, well fitted for infant lips to pronounce "Yah." It occurs 43 times in the Psalms. Shaddai, the Almighty in sustaining resource, occurs only twice, *viz.*, Ps. 68, 14, and Ps. 91, 1, also Adon, the Lord as possessor in power, Adonahy (plural) the Lord in blessing, Jehovah-Rohi, the Lord my Shepherd. Jehovah Heleyon, the Lord most High, occurs 22 times in the Psalms. Messiah, "anointed," occurs 10 times in the Psalms. There are 11 Psalms for the Sons of Korah, 13 Maschil and 4 Lily Psalms. Of these we write a little in detail.

THE MASCHIL PSALMS.

The word Maschil means to be intelligent through receiving instruction, which implies nearness, intimacy and company of a guide. There are thirteen psalms of the group, *viz.*, No. 32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142 (with 43 as a small corollary to 42).

There were those like Nicodemus who hailed the Lord as a teacher sent from God, but they could not make contact with Him on that line. Nicodemus had to learn that a radical change had to take place ere he could receive teaching. An excellent lawyer wanted instruction as to inheriting eternal life, but he wilted at the implication of the first lesson on the Law of which he was a professed master! It is thus fitting that the first Maschil psalm No. 32 should raise the necessity of forgiveness of sins. Well might the Psalmist break forth in ecstasy "Oh! the happiness of the one whose transgression is forgiven," literally, the effect of

his lawlessness is borne away. Man in misery keeping silent, sought to evade confession of sins to God. But as soon as he acknowledged his sin he found a full forgiveness. (A modern perversion is to confess sins to intimate associates. Instead of relieving the guilty conscience, the practice is apt to spread the disease in an interminable series of offences and confessions, in which the confessor will never know absolution. The ancient perversion in confessing sins to a priest had at least the merit of forgiveness pronounced by a man in authority). Scripture is perfectly clear that God alone can give eternal absolution. "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us sins." (1 John 1, 9). The Psalmist tested the security of God's care, finding a hiding place in the Lord who surrounded him with songs of deliverance. He was instructed in the way he should go and was guided by the eye of the Lord. That was ample provision for the future of his pathway!

In the next group No. 42-45, souls though blessed on the basis of Ps. 32 are disquieted, and feeling the oppression of the enemy are cast upon God in prayer and have the experience in consequence of being buoyed up by the brightness of an imperishable prospect. That was prophetic of the experience of the remnant in a future day as well as that of the Christian in the present era who fills the breach sustaining remnant character in reproach. On the other hand, they thirst for the Living God, who becomes their exceeding joy, the object of their hearts and the subject of their praise. The ways of God in discipline lead them to appreciate the peerless qualities of the Man of His counsels, the fairer than the children of men, the King of God's appointment, Who, enthroned in Zion in the coming day of Glory will associate the remnant, His earthly bride, in the highest place. Psalm 45 is God's answer in grace to the prayers of the saints in the preceding psalms. The end of the psalm speaks of the glory of the Queen, the King's daughter, because the Jewish bride as well as the heavenly bride owe their positions to the grace of God.

In the next quartet, Ps. 52-55, heavy troubles crowd in on the remnant associated with the Messiah. They are instructed as to the character of the evil around, *viz.*, violence and deceit. Doeg, Ahitophel and the Ziphims were testimony in the life of the Psalmist. They present the elementary features of Antichrist. To-day we have the same characteristic evinced by men vested with overwhelming authority and power. Deceitful accusations by the wicked are directed against the people of God. But these are frustrated by the divine constitution "like a green olive tree in the house of God" and it trusts in His mercy. (Ps. 52, 8). Thus the knowledge of Christ secured in the preceding quartet prepares souls for withstanding the machinations of Antichrist in the second. Man's atheistic will leads him to say secretly "there is no God!" Contact with corruption makes the heart long for the exercise of God's power in righteous judgment. The righteous have to contend with the virulence of enemies in Ps. 54, but it becomes more intimate in the concluding psalm of the subgroup. Organised opposition arises from within. The psalmist met that in Ahitophel. The Lord bore that in Judas, His intimate associate, and the remnant will meet it in the subtlety of Antichrist. The Christian is attacked not only from without but within the walls of profession. But the antidote is found in casting our burden on the Lord. He will never permit the righteous to be moved. (Ps. 55).

The third quartet, Ps. 74, 78, 88, 89, in the third book, are not Psalms of David but of his three minstrels Asaph, Heman, and Ethan. They reach a higher level in considering God's thoughts and interests as paramount and such consideration involves the soul in contact with the depths of sorrow. Zion was in "perpetual desolations," the enemy's evil deeds were seen even in the sanctuary of God. The dwelling place of the name of God was cast down to the ground and His name was blasphemed. In spite of these circumstances the poor and needy remnant (His turtle dove)

are encouraged to praise his name. (Ps. 74). The dishonourable history of Israel in the wilderness and subsequently in the land is reviewed in the light of the Lord's action on their behalf in Egypt, culminating with the smiting of the first born there and the overwhelming of their enemies in the Red Sea. Notwithstanding their sad lapse from the Lord that only formed a background for the display of His sovereign mercy. Prominent on that line was the evidence in His discarding Joseph's line and the tabernacle of Shiloh from the premier place and the choice of Judah, Mount Zion, and David His servant. (Ps. 78). There was a further development of the purpose of God in His elective grace towards David in Psalm 88. The burden of overwhelming sorrow portrayed in the Psalm does not crush the zeal for his God. The same will yet be realised in the remnant and it was displayed perfectly in the sufferings of Christ while He was here. He was reckoned with those going down to the pit, wrath lay hard upon Him, He was afflicted with the flood tide of God's judgment at the Cross. The magnificent Psalm which concludes the quartet is the answer of God to the sorrow, perplexity and devotion of the preceding psalm. The Psalmist sings of the mercies of the Lord, speaking five times of mercy and twice as loving kindness in that Psalm. (*Chased* is translated altogether 93 times as mercy, 23 times loving kindness, 7 times goodness). The sense of that was the key note of the Psalms. Through His death the Lord secured not only for the remnant of Israel but for the saints of this era and indeed in the resplendent day to come for all men the blessings of a Covenant which cannot be alienated through misdeeds. Hence they are justly described as the sure mercies of David. The God of Peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant. In consequence the Apostle prayed that God might make the Hebrew Christians perfect in every good work to do His will. (Heb. 13, 20).

Great as these blessings undoubtedly are in the Psalms they do not reveal God as Father, nor do they confer upon us Sonship in the Spirit nor give the distinctive relationship of the church to Christ as heavenly bride of the Man rejected by earth yet accepted in heaven. The sensibilities produced are the fruits of exercises prompted by the experience of His mercies on earth. The Psalms unfold Kingdom blessings which form the basis and are finally developed in the heavenly company consequent on the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The isolated Psalm 142 in the appendix gives the end of the instruction in view in the Maschil psalms, when God becomes known as the portion of the soul. In Deuteronomy 32 we see that "the Lord's portion is His people." At the end of the process He will find in them a response. He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied!

THE SONS OF KORAH.

The first sub-group of Psalms under this heading comprises seven in number in the Second Book, *viz.*, No. 42-49, reckoning No. 43 as an appendix of No. 42. There are four others in the third book, *viz.*, No. 84, 85, 87 and 88 forming a second sub-group.

The "sons of Korah" were a remnant saved through the rich mercy of God from the judgment which fell justly on those related to them by family ties. From the historical record in Numbers 26, one would not glean that any of the rebels against the authority of Moses and Aaron had escaped the consequences.

As set forth in our introduction, the first book of Psalms gives the conditions obtaining in Israel when the Lord was in Jerusalem with a feeble remnant true to Him, while the leaders and the multitude were busy in the consummation of their general attitude of refusing Christ. In the second book the Lord and His associates are viewed prophetically

as in complete rejection. At the outset of the Second Book the members of the faithful remnant are reminded of the power and desire of God to help them, in His attitude of unfailing mercy when judgment would fall on the rebellious oppressors.

In order that the remnant might be blessed, the significance of death had to be learned in association with Christ. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over Me." (Ps. 42, 7). That is followed by God commanding His loving-kindness in the day time, on the basis of the atoning sufferings (which they could not share) described in Psalm 22. He had gone into death and by that means had put the enemy who had the power of death out of business. He had delivered them from the clutches of the enemy. The central feature of the exercises described was the wholehearted desire for God. The day is surely coming when they will enjoy living under the sceptre of "Great David's Greater Son." (Ps. 45). They will rejoice in the assurance of the unfailing refuge to be found in God. (Ps. 46). The universal rule of the great King will be administered through them, subduing all nations under their feet. (Ps. 47). In that day the Jew will not be a helpless suppliant trying to circumvent circumstances by his own cleverness. To-day the Jew is notorious for underhand cunning. Then he will rejoice in the transparency of walking in the light of God. Zion will be securely established as the centre of government for the whole earth. (Ps. 48). Wisdom, wealth and honour are unavailing. They do not survive death, hence the true knowledge of God is a prime necessity. The redemption of the soul is precious because it continues forever, while the actual matter in the body may undergo seven complete changes in the course of a lifetime. (Ps. 49).

Psalms 42-44 coincide with three Maschil psalms indicating that instruction is necessary for the proper appreciation of the encouragement supplied by God. The seven psalms in the first sub-group suggest perfect encourage-

ment. In the process of application the exercised faithful are led from the depths of experience in persecution by tyrants to supremacy over every enemy, nations being crushed under their feet. No modern European distator can succeed permanently in crushing God's earthly people, because no one can fight successfully against God!

In the second sub-group, the Psalms speak of universal blessing, the nations being brought into the joy which will mark His people. The stages leading up to the climax are of exquisite beauty. The soul exclaims "How lovely are the tents of the Lord!" That will be the experience of the remnant in a future day, similarly it also appertains in a higher degree through grace to the people of God now who have a heavenly calling. When the soul is imbued with such a sense of the grace of God, it is delivered from all affinity with the selfish pride of the Pharisee who despises those less favoured with Christian instruction. Moreover, it stirs up interest which extends to the utmost bounds of the work of God on the earth. At the same time being marked by the spirit of "The Sons of Korah" will lead us to appreciate the administration of the House of God as set forth in Scripture. The knowledge of God will be world wide "He will speak peace unto His people . . . that Glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed, truth shall spring out of the earth." (Ps. 85, 8-10). That is a very different picture from what is exhibited at present. Egypt and Babylon, rivals in the world's military might, Philistia and Tyre, the commercial giants, Ethiopia at the zenith of its wealth, fail alike to arrest more than passing attention. The gates of Zion, the seat of God's administration, will yet eclipse all the renown of other cities, in spite of having been under the plough. (Ps. 87).

The last Psalm under the heading (No. 88) describes more intensely the spiritual distress of the remnant in repentance. At the same time there is a vivid background of the abundant grace of God. The words will be for the

encouragement of the people of God in the fierce tribulation of the era to which specific reference is made as the day of Jacob's trouble. In measure the Christians of the present day have similar trials and derive comfort from the same source. The unrelieved distress expressed is unique, although hope is suggested in the initial words "O Lord God of my salvation!" The remnant not merely confess their sins, but abhor themselves as Job did. The repentant are separated distinctly from the unbelieving nation which will go on to judgment. Consequently the repentant remnant replaces the nation before God. In verses 10-12, six questions are propounded to the Lord as a challenge. They are answered in the transcendent terms of the following Psalm, expressing the New Covenant. Mercy or loving kindness shall be built up forever, thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens, and so on. Some expositors have sought to adapt the language of the Psalm as describing the experience of the Lord while He was here. But the facts that He wept over Jerusalem and wept at the grave of Lazarus show that He entered into the griefs of the remnant in His own day in perfect sympathy. While the opened heavens and the salutation from the Glory proclaiming the infinite delight of God the Father in every step of His journey are sufficient evidence to show that the contention as exclusively applying to the Lord is invalid.

That Heman (meaning "faithful"), the author of Psalm 88, is in the central place when the service of song was appointed by King David, is interesting. He was descended from Korah. Heman had fourteen sons and three daughters, thus they were descended also from Korah. All these were under their father's tuition for music in the House of the Lord. How marvellous will be the stage arranged in the day of Glory by the One greater than Heman, the faithful and true witness, the Amen, the beginning of the creation of God. He who spoke the first word will also have the last word!

THE LILY PSALMS.

In the divine inscriptions of the psalms, four are found bearing titles which may be so translated. Three are described in the plural as Shoshanim, *viz.*, Psalms 45, 69, 80, while Psalm 60 is entitled Shushan-Eduth which is the singular meaning "the lily of testimony." The term "lilies" reminds us of the Song of Songs where it occurs seven times. "Feeding among the lilies" is there indicated as the pinnacle of spiritual happiness. Israel will yet blossom as the lily for the good pleasure of God. (Hos., 14, 5). That is a beautiful figure of souls loyal to Christ in all the qualities of the lily, *e.g.*, perfect form, spotless purity and vivid whiteness, representing the true sons of the light. (1. Thess. 5, 5). In its subjective aspect the light is the teaching of the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is the true source of all formative work in the soul. Sonship is relative to the day of glory which is analogous to the coming of age celebration of the heir. Hence anyone with the consciousness of such a destiny will be marked by the peculiar dignity of that scene now, however little external circumstances may seem to support the view. Moreover, the testimony will unite souls in the bond of loyalty to the Lord. That will have a startling effect on the bodies of the Christians too. They will be found presenting their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. (Rom. 12, 1).

In the Song of Songs, the term "Lilies" indicates what the Lord thinks of His people. In the Psalms, the force is rather what His people think of Him! There is a beautiful harmony between the two usages. In the 45th Psalm there is the joyous utterance of appreciation of His moral excellences. While the aspect of "the Sons of Korah" may be expected to dwell upon the power and majesty by which He will deliver His people and establish His universal dominion. The Shoshanim or Lily aspect expresses the moral per-

fections of the One Who is far fairer than the children of men, Who loved righteousness and hated lawlessness and as a result is set over everything, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. Christ eclipses the glory of all others. The transcendent expressions suggest the inward exercises of praise from souls instructed by God.

In Psalm 69 the Lord's people meditate upon Him in the scene of suffering, reproach, sorrow and death and praise Him in His perfections exhibited there. In divine grace He condescended to identify Himself in loving sympathy with them in the scene of humiliation. He goes on to bear their sins and suffers the forsaking of God which is the prominent thought in Psalm 22. The first 21 verses of Psalm 69 dilate on the sufferings associated with the line of martyrs or witnesses to the righteousness of God in opposition to the lawlessness of the world. Primarily the words expressed the exercises of David, when the people spoke of stoning him. (1. Sam. 30). The consideration of these expressions stimulates a sympathetic line of testimony in believers as witnesses to the ways of God, so that the meek and afflicted see and are glad, and the conclusion of the Psalm shows the purpose of God in the blessing of His people.

In Psalm 80, we find reference to Israel marching through the wilderness. The progress of the Ark is the focus of interest for God. According to the purpose of God it is the Ark of Testimony in Exodus. In Numbers it is the Ark of the Covenant which is introduced. The usage is continued in Joshua, but later on when Israel had sadly vitiated the principles of the Covenant, the Ark was described as the Ark of God. The witness had broken down so that God could not associate them with Him in what the Ark set forth. He remained faithful in spite of their unfaithfulness! Psalm 80 is God's way for the moral restoration of the remnant in a day of ruin. He had been the Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock in the wilderness, dwelling

between the cherubim in the Ark, and going before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh in the march. The common thought is in people's minds that God changes with the times, that is He will manifest Himself in a different way in the twentieth century than in the first! But God is faithful, *i.e.*, absolutely consistent with His eternal character. His face is always towards us in unchanging grace. Although in government He may have to deal very firmly with us, restoration is in view. Those intelligent in the mind of the Lord pray "*let thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand.*" (Ps. 80, 17). We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God. When we see Him there we are confident of God's victory. He will ultimately show forth His glory both in the Church and in Israel to the wondering universe.

The singular usage "*Shushan-Eduth*" in Psalm 60 expresses the united purpose of the remnant in the maintenance of the testimony. Their faithfulness will incur the greater opposition of their enemies. But in spite of that they will display a banner in the cause of the truth and God will reward their faithfulness. He is not occupied with the doings of the great on the earth. He refers to Succoth and Shechem, because they are in His land. Gilead, Manasseh, Ephraim and Judah are His special portion, while he speaks in terms of the greatest contempt of Moab, Edom and Philistia in spite of their natural relationship and the intrusion of the last mentioned in the land of promise. Vain is the help of man. The people of God are assured of victory, not through human agency but by the intervention of God. True Godliness looks beyond second causes, owning God's hand in everything. Israel will yet turn to God eschewing all efforts and the help of man. How encouraging is such testimony, stimulating the faith of the people of God in trial in every era.

Psalm 60 is also the last Golden Psalm, inscribed as "*Michtam.*"

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN.

The title of this article appears in the superscriptions of fifty-five Psalms and is thus of more frequent occurrence than any other. Expositors say that the term in the original indicates the thought of the one who is the origin of the music, *i.e.*, its inspiration. That would not be true in the first instance relative to the individual who was the overseer of the music in the time when the Psalms were written. But in its prophetic significance then the term will apply to no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Leader of the praises of His people in every era. Psalm 22, 22-27 undoubtedly refers to the Spirit of Christ inspiring the Psalmist and so throughout the Old Testament. Hebrews 2 is more specific in adapting the foregoing scripture to convey the intelligence that in the midst of the Church, Christ Himself is the leader of the praise which goes up in an unbroken stream to God the Father. That is descriptive of what has been going on throughout the Christian era. But subsequent to the Church being translated to her proper home there will be a brief period when the language of the Psalms will apply with equal force to a revived earthly people who will be loyal to death and in the process will be led in praise to God by the same person, who is Leader now.

Psalm 4, although primarily connected with the experience of David, applies with greater force ultimately to his Lord who was enlarged when in distress. His Glory was turned to shame by the sons of men and gladness was put in His heart. ("For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame. . . Heb. 12, 2"). Psalm 6 speaks of the many sorrows of Christ in the midst of His enemies. Psalm 12 shows the same experience developed in the persecution of "the poor and needy" remnant by the treacherous and evil rulers of the day in which they live. In His devoted love He associated Himself with the poor of the flock while here. While since He has gone on high He is still watching their interests in deep perfect sympathy!

GITTITH.

The title occurs in the superscriptions of three Psalms, *viz.*, Nos. 8, 81 and 84. It is generally considered to be the name of a musical instrument, possibly used by the Gittites or inhabitants of Gath. Be that as it may, there is undoubtedly an element which refers to thoughts analogous to "wine-pressing," with which Scripture constantly associates the idea of judgment followed by gladness in the hearts of the people of God in consequence of the righteousness of God having been vindicated.

Psalm 8 looks forward to the world-wide rule of the Son of Man, when as the Psalm puts it the outburst of the redeemed creation from the beginning to the end will be "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth!" At present His Name is sadly maligned and pushed into obscurity. Nevertheless His Glory is securely set above the heavens and hence is not affected by the explosions of man's day. Meanwhile out of the mouth of babes He has ordained strength. That refers to the simplicity of faith which takes God at His word and in spite of the adverse circumstances around enables the individual to participate in the gladness of heaven. The Son of Man through death has laid the basis whereby all the purpose of God will be effected in perfect consonance with His Glory.

Psalm 81 is primarily occupied with the celebration of the salvation of Israel from Egypt, on the ground of judgment having been executed on their enemies. The body of the Psalm is mainly a survey of the ways of God in infinite grace and mercy, in spite of the obvious waywardness of His people. Yet notwithstanding the breakdown the words have a prophetic bearing as pointing forward to the faithfulness of God in testimony. That end has been consummated in the headship of Christ in relation to all things effected on the sure foundation of redemption. He feeds those redeemed by His precious blood with the finest of the wheat

and satisfies them with honey out of the rock. (Ps. 81, 10).

In Psalm 84 the people of God are brought to the goal of happiness in God's dwelling place. Two extremes of human constitution described as the worthless sparrow and the restless swallow find their homes there, learning the resources of the House of God. Anna, who had long been relegated to the supernumerary category of the world's usefulness, as also the erstwhile restless Saul of Tarsus, found their joy and subject of testimony in God's centre. The earnest desire of the soul of such tends towards where God is adored. The realisation of that will lead to the people of God being constantly praising Him. Well might the Psalmist conclude with the exclamation "Blessed or happy is the man who trusts the Lord!"

MUTH-LABBen.

To the chief musician upon Muth-Labben. A Psalm of David (The super-scription of Psalm 9).

Muth-Labben is one of the terms occurring in the inspired superscriptions of the Psalms which are obscure in meaning. Scholars have not agreed as to a satisfactory interpretation of the word, but the best linguistic evidence is in favour of the translation: "the Death of the " (or His) "Son." The Septuagint gives it as: "Concerning the secret (things) of the Son."

Primarily the words of the 9th Psalm would be doubtless evoked by the Psalmist's exercises relative to the death of his self-willed and ambitious son Absalom but in their prophetic bearing they will also express the exercises of the remnant of Israel placed in adverse circumstances in the land of Palestine during the last days. In the beautiful outburst "I will sing praise to Thy name, O Thou Most High." (verse 2) the Psalmist was anticipatively using the double title peculiarly attaching to God in the accomplishment of the promises in the Millennium. The blessings from God to man and from man to God will be exercised mediatorially

in Christ, Who alone is able and worthy to bear the double glory of regal power and priestly grace. However, at the same time this Psalm is a choice treasure for the enjoyment of the saints of this dispensation who are found in earthly circumstances notwithstanding their heavenly calling. There can be no dubiety in our minds as to the identity of the reference: "Consider my trouble which I suffer of those who hate me, Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death " (verse 13).

The Christian recognises the harmony of the passage with the first translation of Muth-Labben while contemplating with all holy reverence. He perceives in Christ the One who passed through adverse circumstances, ever showing his rich sympathy with His people in affliction, irrespective of dispensation. But we may draw very helpful conclusions from the Septuagint translation as well. How intimately connected are the ideas of "the secret " and "the death " of the Lord Jesus! There was no admission to the "mystery " hid in God through ages past until that death opened wide the gates that His love might flow forth carrying the secret of His counsel to those who are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.

As a consequence of admission to "the secret of the Son," the honour and authority of His name acquire a peculiar significance: "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee " (verse 10). Another link in the chain of confidence is forged: "The Lord will also be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble " (verse 9). Then the fruit of that confidence becomes manifest in singing praises to the Lord who dwells in Zion. Even as that is the activity in the inner shrine, so in the outside place we are found declaring His doings among the people (verse 10). The essence of this is in the propagation of the Gospel. As the wonders of His own works in Christ Jesus spring up before our spiritual vision our hearts are bowed in adoration and ultimately our lips are filled with His praise.

MAHALATH.

The bearing of this word in the superscriptions of Psalms 53 and 88 is rather obscure. In his translation of the Psalms, J. N. Darby did not seem to feel justified in offering any explanation of the term. While the Revised Version suggests that it was the name of a musical instrument. G. V. Wigram and other expositors attribute to it the meaning of sickness and sorrow. The latter significance can easily be understood when we consider the text of Psalm 53. If the fool said in his heart "No God," (*i.e.*, the atheistic character of evil in opposition to God) then what must have been the thoughts of God as he looked down from heaven upon the children of men? They must have been akin to His thoughts when he contemplated the great wickedness of man on the earth in Genesis 6, which led to the ultimate judgment of the Flood, blotting out man and his evil deeds from the face of creation.

In Psalm 88 the word occurs with the addition of "Lean-noth" which brings in the illuminating idea of indicating a different state of affairs for God. Most authorities render the meaning as pertaining to singing. G. V. Wigram indicates that the singing involves "bitterness of sorrow." But other competent expositors say that the aspect of the singing is in the way of response or answer to an experience. In view of that the earth is no longer shrouded in the silence of death, because in the language of Samson's riddle "out of the eater came forth meat; and out of the strong, sweetness has come." Death had yielded nothing but sorrow, swallowing up the human race and keeping its prey. Lo! One came according to the mind of God in absolute perfection, entered into death and emerged a triumphant victor from the jaws of the eater! Up to that point God had looked in vain for any response. Psalm 53 contemplates the ruin of man according to nature and practice. Psalm 88 indicates a new order of man who came in infinite grace and perfect truth to earth as the true revela-

tion of God the Father. He was accounted with those who went down into the pit. (Ps. 88, 4). Lover and friend were put far from Him. (v. 18). The wrath of God fell upon Him, and yet in deep sympathy with the remnant He could submit the challenge "Shall Thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, Thy faithfulness in destruction, Thy ways known in the dark, Thy righteousness in a land of forgetfulness." (v. 11, 12). The sequel is shown in the great New Covenant Psalm 89 in the glorious response to all the sorrow of Calvary!

As a proper name Mahalath has significant appellation in Genesis. When Esau was 40 years of age (*i.e.*, age of normal discretion) he took to wife (a deliberate selection) Judith, daughter of Beerli the Hittite and Bashemath, daughter of Elon the Hittite. They were a grief of mind (marginal reading, "bitterness or sorrow") to his parents. (Gen. 26, 34-35). Later when Esau saw that Jacob had been sent away with his father's blessing and charged not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan who were not pleasing to his father, He went to Ishmael and took his daughter Mahalath for a wife. (Gen. 28, 6-9). Later the Spirit of God giving the genealogy of Esau, (Gen. 36, 3), said that he took Bashemath, Ishmael's daughter for a wife. Historians say that the writer of Genesis made a mistake in mixing the names! We submit that the revised name had deliberate significance. In the eyes of God there was no difference between Ishmael's daughter and the daughter of Canaan. So in the record she was given a name of Canaan. She was a sorrow by name and no less so in nature and practice to the parents and to God. In his second selection Esau came near to the right line, but stopped short of the mind of God for the descendants of Abraham, the friend of God. How often intimate associations are formed by Christians with those who are externally connected with Christian profession, but who prove to be not different from the world.

“THE DOVE OF SILENCE IN THE DISTANCE.”

In the inspired superscription of Psalm 56 occurs the expression *Jonath-elem-rechokim* which is a title of obscure meaning. This is one of the Golden Psalms and was prompted by the exercises of David when the Philistines took him in Gath. Doubtless David's enforced sojourn in Gath prefigured the exclusion of the remnant of Israel from their Godgiven inheritance and from their privileges to be enjoyed at a future period.

Jonath is used as figurative of a company forced together by adversity, and also indicates a dove-like character because emblematic of the meekness shown by those who are defenceless and exposed to the attacks of cruel enemies.

Elem suggests the idea of silence impressed by fear and oppression.

Rechokim implies being pushed away into the distance and it has a moral bearing as well as a spatial significance. As in Ps. 73, 27, where the same root word occurs and where it is rendered “far from thee.”

J. N. Darby's alternative rendering “The dove of the distant terebinths (or turpentine trees)” would seem to introduce a still more obscure reference, but G. V. Wigram's rendering, “The dove of silence amongst strangers,” would be singularly apt with reference to the primary incident which evoked the Psalmist's expression. It is also aptly applicable to the Lord himself as the man in the distance of Ps. 22 and in the condition of the Gospel reference as forsaken by His closest associates and amongst strangers, subjected to cruelty and ignominy.

So this complex word actually unfolds to us the true attitude of the people of God in every dispensation as subject to the reproach of Christ. The trial of their faith is in the assessment of the Lord much more precious than that of gold which is perishable, in spite of its being one of the most resistant of materials to the eroding influences of time.

So the exercises expressed in Ps. 56 are very appropriately called "Golden."

"The oppression of the handful," one of the cognate ideas suggested in Ps. 56, would indicate what has been to a greater or less degree descriptive of the experience of "the little flock" of true believers in every phase of the annals of time from Abel downwards. They have been distressed and dispersed among the Gentiles. The apostle Peter writing to the same class described as strangers scattered throughout the province of Asia Minor in the first century of the Christian era, exhorted them in terms of endearment as "Dearly beloved, strangers and pilgrims, to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles."

The word "conversation" in the English language of A.D. 1611, when the authorised version of the Bible was translated, meant much more than it does nowadays. It was descriptive of the whole manner of life, while the word translated "honest" would be literally rendered "beautiful." So in spite of persecution it is incumbent on God's people to show forth the excellencies of the One who has called them out of the realm of darkness into the sphere of marvellous light, *viz.*, the Kingdom of the Son of God's love. Then their whole manner of life will be beautiful amongst those who are still strangers to God's grace and will be a powerful advertisement for the gospel.

What a peerless privilege is ours to follow in the lineal extension of the path of Christ who was oppressed and afflicted yet opened not His mouth, brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers was dumb (or silent)!

The apostle Paul commenced the appendix to the Corinthian epistles by beseeching them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. (2 Cor. 10, 1). But the immediately preceding sentence closing the main part of the epistle was a doxology of great sublimity "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable (lit. inexpressible) gift." There is rich compensation for all the trials in the fellowship of the hand-

ful of believers who are exclusively those who have the capacity to esteem the preciousness of Christ. "Unto you therefore who believe he is precious." (1 Peter 2, 7).

THE VALLEY OF BACA.

"Who passing through the Valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also fills the pools." (Ps. 84, 6).

The Valley of Baca means the vale of tears. To some Christians it may only be a shallow depression in an even plain of easy circumstances. To others it may prove to be a deep dark ravine in a continuous succession of untoward circumstances. Even as different characters of wind must blow on different gardens to cause the spices to flow out (Song of Songs 4, 16), so differences in depth and character of the valley are necessary that God's work may be rendered effectual in our souls. To one, the valley of Baca may be the removal by death of him or her who has become the idol of the heart; to another, it may be the rupture of bosom friendship; to a third, it may mean the loss of health; to a fourth, it may involve the loss of the means of subsistence; to a fifth, it may be merely the thwarting of the will. The last mentioned may seem to some a very shallow valley in the plain of human experience. But these little realise the thralldom of the human will, and what a very painful process is involved in the breaking of the will. It is, however, in the painful rather than in the pleasing paths of life that we get refreshment from God. When a man or a woman has come to the end of self, God has found His opportunity to bless that person.

Hagar got no sustenance from God until weary and foot-sore with an empty water-bottle she had cast her child under a shrub in the desert and retired that she might not witness his death, and that she, too, might die. She had not only come to the end of her efforts, but to the end of herself as well. God, then, opened her eyes and she saw a well of water in her "valley of Baca." (Gen. 21, 14-19). The

well had been there but she had not been able to see it. How often have we in time of trial allowed nature to obscure our spiritual vision and we have failed to find a well in the valley! Again Samson in the moment of victory over the Philistines, exulting in the glory and strength of his own will, just as he had made an end of boasting, suddenly found himself precipitated into the valley of Baca. (Judges 15, 14-19). He became sore athirst nigh to the point of death, but he turned to God in his extremity and God opened his eyes to see a "well" of water in the dried jawbone which he had cast away in the moment of his triumph. As a consequence, Samson's spirit revived in contact with God's resources.

The valley of Baca is then not merely a valley of sorrow. It is also a valley of blessing and very great joy. Well might the Psalmist in the eighty-fourth Psalm ascribe blessedness to the man whose strength was in the Lord, because it makes all the difference in passing through the valley of Baca. The unexercised soul may pass through the salt vale of tears but finds no well there: The one whose heart delights in the Lord and is confident in the precious thought that He does everything right finds not only a well in the valley, hidden from the careless glance, but the blessing of God to his soul is such that there is rain filling the pools or surface depressions too. The well is fed from secret springs, but the rain betokens blessing so much in evidence that even the sceptical mind cannot gainsay.

The Psalmist concludes this psalm with the exclamation "O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in thee." He goes from strength to strength and has the cheering prospect as someone has said that "there will be no dark valley when Jesus comes." To the natural mind God's movements are shrouded in mystery, but there is a key which unlocks the whole mystery. Now for a moment there is the gloom of the dark valley. But following on the sorrows which inspire weeping will yet come the coronation with rejoicing.

WANDERINGS AND TEARS.

“Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?” (Psalm 56, 8).

Man has been a wanderer, ever since Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod (lit. the land of “wanderings”) (Gen. 4, 16). So one of the most interesting of secular studies is presented in the problem of the “Migrations of Peoples.” Ethnologists tell us that the main factors causing a migration are expulsive and attractive. As to the former it may be caused by a dearth of food supply or lack of water or from over-population. The attraction of better conditions elsewhere is averred to be a less potent cause than the expulsion of necessity, as people are naturally inert and will cling to their fatherland. Yet cupidity has determined many human “drifts.” The control of a migration once started is said to be mainly due to geographical conditions. Streams of men, like those of liquids, take the line of least resistance, being deflected by various barriers.

We do not seek to belittle the investigations of students of the subject. But we do well to observe that they ignore the testimony of Scripture as to the initiation of the process. Because it is well-known that the seed contains all the principles and features which later become manifest in the fruit. So whatever may be the features and controlling influences of human migration, they are contained in embryo form in the inception of the matter. Anterior to all the material causes is the deep-seated moral cause that Cain slew his brother through envy, and went out from the presence of the Lord to follow a path of self-will described in the last epistle of the New Testament as “the way of Cain.” (Jude 11). Moreover, we should take note of the precision of Scripture, Cain went out from the presence “of the Lord.” The term “Lord” implies complete domination. So that the person who remains in the presence of the Lord becomes subject to the Lord’s will. Henceforth his prayer becomes, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

On the other hand, man in the " way of Cain " has rejected all idea of the control of the Lord and consequently he has become the plaything of forces over which he has no control and into the nature of which he has little insight.

But the primary purpose of this article is not to dilate on the features of man's wanderings away from the Lord. But to show that the Christian, although not immune from the fruits of the world movements, has a resource in the sense that he is essentially in the control of the Lord's will. Nothing happens to him by chance. Indeed all things work together for good to those who love God. (Rom. 8, 28).

The passage of Scripture forming our text is an extract from the first of a group of five psalms described as "golden" because esteemed as such in God's assessment. The Psalmist wrote the lines in the sense of the unfailing mercy of God which had preserved him through countless jeopardies. So the Christian, although having his real interests in heaven, is a man on earth. But these interests lead to his being involved in a heavenly calling which causes him to differ from the mere worldling whose interests are earth-bound. Hence the Christian is supported by Divine power which is available to faith. The life of faith, marked out by the footsteps of the Lord Himself while He was on earth, is a path characterised by submission to and dependence on the will of God. The apostle Peter speaks of the trial of our faith as being more precious than of gold that perishes. (1 Peter 1, 7).

The Psalmist records his sense of God's perfect accountability. "Thou tellest (lit. countest) my wanderings." (Hebrew word, "Nod."). So the man of God may not differ in appearance from those around him. He has to work for his living. In times of industrial stress such as the present period, he may come to be out of work, and may have to move to another sphere of action. In that new set of conditions, he may still remain unemployed and he may be tempted to view the conditions as constituting an enigma. He may feel akin with the common expression at the close of

the Old Testament times, "It is vain to serve God!" (Mal. 3, 14). Does God really care for His people? That there were many similar mysteries indicated in the Old Testament is evident, in spite of the fact that then the people of God had only an earthly calling, and hence all their blessings were earth-centred.

However, there need be no dubiety on that point in this dispensation, because the blessings of the people of God are not now earthly. Every condition obtaining for the Christian has a distinct orientation. The apostle James exhorted his brethren to be patient in view of the coming of the Lord. (Jas. 5, 7). That is the purpose of all the discipline through which God's people are caused to pass. Jacob stated before Pharaoh that the days of the years of his life had been few and evil. His is a striking instance of God's dealing in mercy. In spite of all Jacob's wanderings to little evident result, he undoubtedly profited by the process, because his life had a golden sunset, as witnessed by his prophetic words in the 49th chapter of Genesis. The Christian's pathway may seem to be as much a maze or "tangled skein" as that of the worldling. But the manifestation of the end on which this apparent maze debouches at the judgment seat of Christ will explain everything.

God's merciful dealings with us in our wanderings produce results. These are described by the Psalmist as "tears." The alternative reading is "My tears have been put in Thy bottle." It is very striking that there should be a resemblance in this verse which linguists describe as a paronomasia, between *Nod* 'wandering' and *Nod* 'bottle' (i.e., a skin or leather sack). God has taken perfect cognizance of our devious way and has so arranged matters that there are precious results from the spiritual exercises stimulated therein in the form of minute drops. Moreover, He has provided the receptacle for their collection, so that not one of them may be lost. He counts the tear-drops as well as the wanderings which are antecedent. There are said to be 60 drops of water in a teaspoonful. (Of course,

the number will depend on the size of the drops which in turn depends on certain physical conditions). The apothecary is very careful in gauging potions by the number of drops. Moreover, he enters up the details of every prescription in a book which he preserves with great care. Shall we not join in the Psalmist's beautiful concession to God's care? The result of our spiritual exercise due to discipline may be very small, but it is preserved safely in God's bottle, and the record is entered in His book. How encouraging to know that the process and results are immune from all the evaporating influences of time!

From the word "tears" being used to describe the results of exercises incident to our secular affairs, we would learn that they are definite entities and not continuous streams, *i.e.*, there is a definite result or "tear" for each exercise. A teardrop is a perfect sphere. But when it is dropped into His bottle, it becomes merged with the results of previous exercises. But its identity is preserved by the entry in His book. By these statements, we are not seeking to gainsay the very wonderful correlation of exercises which undoubtedly exists. This correlation is one of the features of the Holy Spirit's business. So that there is a repetition of what occurred at the close of Old Testament times. Those were times very much like our own. External evidences belied the real state of affairs. The proud were acclaimed as happy; the wicked were set up; the tempters of God blaspheming His name were prospered. What a riddle was presented by such features, and how these features are duplicated in our own day!

However, it is well to see the other side of the picture. Those who feared the Lord spoke often one to another. They could derive no comfort elsewhere. Consequently, there was at once established a correlation of exercises. So it has always been in the fellowship of God's people. This process is perfectly recognised by the Lord, "and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the Lord and who thought upon His name." (Mal. 3, 16).

May we then not be found amongst the doubters as to God's care who are cast down by the apparent success of the opposition! But that like the Psalmist and those obscure people in his lineal descent in post-captivity days, we are found walking in the fear of the Lord and enjoying the preciousness of His name.

AJELETH SHAHAR (The hind of the morning).

The inscription of Psalm 22 suggests a new day introduced for God's eternal pleasure as full of blessing for His whole creation. (Rom. 8, 21, 22). In the beautiful oriental thought of a deer silhouetted on the horizon at dawn with the background of the sun rising in all its splendour, we have presented the glorious prospect portrayed unmistakably in the second part of the Psalm commencing with verse 22. That is the consequence of the momentous transaction in the first part of the Psalm in which two eternities meet in rapturous wonder. As the consequence of the question of human sin being completely solved by the One of whom the Psalm speaks prophetically, God would engage His people, redeemed at such infinite cost, with the results in resurrection of what has brought eternal glory to His name. Every attribute of God was completely vindicated at the Cross! The results are presented in the form of praise in the three concentric spheres of blessing, *viz.*, "the church," "the seed of Israel" and "all the ends of the world." A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. That is the answer to the question in Isaiah 53 "Who shall declare His generation?" His life taken from the earth has resulted in superabundant fruit. They shall come and declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born what He has done. (Ps. 22, 30-31). In its application the statement includes the proclamation of the Gospel in all the dispensations.

THE END OF PRAYER.

“There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; . . . Blessed be the Lord 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. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” (Psalm 72, 16-20).

The literal rendering of the first verse of our text is that there shall be abundance of corn in the earth, so much so that the valleys will not be able to hold the profusion, but it will reach up over the tops of the mountains. That is a great contrast to the conditions obtaining now. The tops of the mountains are simply rocks, in the crevices of which minute traces of vegetation may exist. Trees are found often thousands of feet up the mountain sides, but corn makes little headway if far removed from the valley.

That will undoubtedly be a feature in the material creation during the millennium. But the same profusion of fruit will mark the spiritual sphere as well. “The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon.” A servant of the Lord was once asked for terse Scriptural evidence of the revolution introduced in the millennium. His reply was:—“The meek shall inherit the earth.” If so, a radical change must take place! The meek are at present pushed to the wall. The world has no use for the backward contemplative frame of mind. The bustling “go-getter” is the man who inherits the earth under existing conditions. But all that will be changed when the glory of Jehovah Elohim shines in on this sad earth. “He will bid the whole creation smile and hush its groan.” The creation itself shall be set free from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Rom. 8, 21).

Man has had a long innings of nearly 6,000 years interrupted only once by wholesale judgment in the Flood. During the last generation, his wondrous doings have eclipsed the sum total of the achievements of all preceding

generations. So that the Psalmist's dictum, "The Lord God only doeth wondrous things" would seem to be somewhat antiquated ! However, human doings have never got beyond the physical sphere. The wonderful manipulation of ether waves which seems "uncanny" to the ordinary observer, is nevertheless strictly within the realm of inanimate creation.

Man has never performed the feat of evolving life. He has devised many improvements in the art of killing or taking life away, but he has made no progress at all in communicating life to inanimate matter. "If a man die, shall he live again?" is one of the oldest propositions enunciated by Job. (Job. 14, 14). He certainly has never lived again by human agency. So the most wondrous doing is reserved for the operation of the Lord God alone. At first, He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Of greater significance is the New Testament revelation, "The last Adam is a quickening, or life-giving, Spirit." (1 Cor. 15, 45).

The integration of the process is that the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. So this peculiar aspect of doxology is a fitting climax to the second book of the Psalms and receives the double Amen from the Psalmist as the emphatic seal of his aspirations. His prayers were ended! Why? Because there was nothing left for which he could pray. When the glory of the Lord fills the earth, every need will be satisfied. There will be no further desire.

Now, there is a phase in which this desirable end is achieved now. The Lord's people have the privilege of coming together in the bonds of His love and in the authority of His name. In such assemblies His presence is realized. The sense of the honour which is His right becomes paramount. The glory of the Lord fills everything. So like the disciples on the mount of Transfiguration, they see no one save the Lord of glory.

When the climax of the Psalms is reached, there is no room for any other idea than praise to the Lord. "Let

everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." (Ps. 150, 6). So when in assembly we sample the state of affairs which will superabound ere long in the universe of bliss, we, too, have no petitions to make; we are simply enveloped in a garment of praise. May that delectable condition be sought after and better realized by Christians everywhere!

PSALMS, HYMNS, AND SPIRITUAL SONGS.

One might be tempted to think that these terms imply but trivial distinctions, did the Apostle not make specific use of them in Eph. 5, 19 and in Col. 3, 16. We may thus be sure that in their use the Spirit of God has something special to unfold for our profit. A psalm is not necessarily a psalm of David. The thought of God's mercy was the prominent impulse which inspired the Psalmists to pen the psalms. So, too, it is the deep sense of the mercy of God in our souls which will lead us to burst forth in a psalm to gladden the heart of the Lord, *e.g.*,

"Our Shepherd is the Lord,

Hymns have reference to the greatness and majesty of our blessed Lord calling forth our audible praise. This is not shutting out the fact that unless we are stirred in our souls we shall not be able to give expression rightly to a hymn. But that does not give essential character to the hymn. Everything sinks into insignificance in the presence of the greatness of the Lord, *e.g.*,

Jesus, Thou alone art worthy

Spiritual songs on the other hand, refer more to the greatness of the work of the Spirit of God within leading us not only to make melody in our hearts to the Lord but to break forth into singing. The gladness in our hearts is called up in response to the joy of His heart. What stirring impulse can prompt such words as :—

"Praise ye the Lord" again, again

RICHES IN GLORY.

The term "glory" has a varying significance in Scripture according to the context in which it is found. For example, the apostle gloried in his infirmities, *i.e.*, he tested their value, and as a consequence made his boast in them, and thus rejoiced; and similarly, in the summary of the "Pilgrim's Progress" in the 5th chapter of Romans, he associates himself with others who glory or rejoice in tribulations. Then there is the glory of man, which denotes all the pomp and tinsel associated with the display of the results of human achievement, and this is described in Scripture as the "flower of grass which withereth and falleth away."

The glory of God in creation is of a different order, and speaks of the distinctive character of His handiwork. Then even the glory of God has different bearings according to its context. This is a subject which transcends human comprehension, not to speak of human expression, and it is essentially the subject of the Holy Spirit's teaching. Spiritual matters are communicated by spiritual means, and they are compared by spiritual standards, but since the only vehicle of communication of human thought is by "words," so like those who feared the Lord at the close of the last dispensation, we are found speaking often one to another of our essential interests, *viz.*, the precious things of heaven. Since the Scriptures abound in references to God's handiwork in the material creation, we do well to pay attention to their distinctive character and magnitude. Geographers tell us of the size and wonderful physical features of the earth, which is a spheroid of 8,000 miles diameter containing 6,000 trillion tons of matter and we have only direct knowledge of a few miles thickness of its crust or exterior layers, and much of

its surface has not been explored. It may be instructive to consider a series of magnitudes in the physical creation. A rain-drop is a sphere of about one-eighth of an inch diameter, and yet its physical characteristics are no less wonderful than those of the earth.

Physicists tell us that the ratio of sizes between the ultimate atom of its constitution and the rain-drop is similar to the ratio of size between the rain-drop and the earth. While the atom itself is no longer the hard, indivisible point conceived in the minds of 19th century scientists, but is believed to be a system analogous to the solar system in which negatively charged electrons circulate round positively charged protons in marvellous adjustment. Again, in the ultra-megascopic sphere, the distinctive features of God's creation are no less marvellous than in the afore-mentioned ultra-microscopic spheres. The earth is a mere speck in the solar system, the outpost of which is over sixty times the distance of the earth from the sun, which, nevertheless, controls every member of its system according to an exact uniformity; but the solar system itself is also a mere speck in the immensity of space. Every

star in the bespangled firmament is a sun possibly with attendant satellites. There are about six thousand stars visible to the naked eye, but millions have been brought into evidence by the aid of the telescope, and moreover, stars have been photographed which are beyond the power of the telescope to reveal, and the star-maps and catalogues record the existence of at least one hundred millions, and each star is separated from each other by distances of inconceivable magnitude.

The nearest star is at such a distance from the solar system that it takes light three and a half years to come therefrom, and light travels at the great velocity of 186,000 miles per second. Thus undoubtedly the more distant stars are seen as they were hundreds of years ago, because the light has been so long on the way. Someone has illustrated the magnitude by putting a speck in the midst of Madrid to

represent a star, another in Oslo, in the north, and a third in Bukharest in the east. Recognising all the space between the suburbs of these cities as empty, we get some idea of the prophetic reference in the 34th chapter of Isaiah, "He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion and the stones of emptiness." Yet the last expression is suggestive. Space is completely filled with a subtle medium which has been styled the luminiferous ether, as it has the power of transmitting light, although it differs from ordinary matter as it does not affect our senses and thus may be described as empty relative to matter which can be weighed in a balance. Yet physical discoveries would suggest that the emptiness contains the essential stuff or stones out of which the universe has been built. The things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Heb. 11, 3). Albeit the initial framing of the universe was by the Word of God.

With such conceptions in view we understand the reference in Isaiah, chapter 40, that the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance, and He has meted out heaven with the span; yet the apostle in concluding his pæan of joy to the Philippians says, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus," not "in creation," as might have been concluded from the foregoing recital of the magnitude of His operations therein. The acme of God's glory is in Christ Jesus. Great as the glory of God in creation undoubtedly is, it is strictly limited in scope and duration, and will ultimately be displaced by a new universe with righteousness permeating its entire fabric. Material creation cannot contain the things of the Spirit ("things of Mine" John 16, 14-16).

To the soul delivered from the thralldom of sin there is opened up a new sphere of objects, the centre and periphery of which is in Christ Jesus. That sphere is beyond responsibility and experience altogether. The Ephesian epistle, which deals markedly with what is in Christ Jesus, occupies us with the sphere as the result of what God

planned for His own glory in eternity, before there was either responsibility or experience. "He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. 1, 4), as seen in the perfection of Christ "holy and without blame before Him, in love." According to the revelation in Ephesians, we have been brought unto both Christ's place and relationship. From the text in the foregoing paragraph we have stated how God saw us in the counsels of His own love. But the scripture goes on to say that we have redemption also in Christ, because that provided the righteous basis for the accomplishment of God's purpose. Moreover, there is an inheritance suited to the dignity of His calling. When the dispensations of time have run their course, He will head up all things in heaven and on earth in Christ, who has been the object of all His ways in the dispensations. In Christ, we have been made heirs of the whole inheritance of glory, having been predestinated to it "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

To complete the glorious position and outlook of the Christian, he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of our inheritance, *i.e.*, a qualitative sample of the glory to come. So that the Holy Spirit's taking up residence in us and with us is evidence that we are invested with an inner glory no less real although unseen and which enables us to be in the sphere of responsibility in measure as a continuation of Christ. His life was taken from the earth, but His generation is being declared in the Spirit's day. So that although the sphere "in Christ Jesus" is relative to what is outside responsibility, there is a definite reflection in our ways here, as the Holy Spirit makes progress in forming Christ in our souls. People will then take knowledge of us (as they did of the apostles in the record of Acts 4) that we have been with Jesus. The consummation of all His ways with us will be in the day of display when the redemption glory in which grace has placed us will transcend every possible glory in the realm of matter and energy.

THE WILL OF GOD.

Algernon Swinburne, the greatest master of metre in English literature, once wrote:—

“ Space is thought’s, and the wonders thereof, and the
secret of space;
Is thought not more than the thunders and lightnings? shall
thought give place? ”

When he wrote these words, he was doubtless thinking what a great and wonderful being he was. “ Thought ” was akin to his thought. That his words would ever be a poetical expression of scientific ideas as to created things was very far from his mind. Yet the new theory of Relativity has revolutionised the conceptions of scientists. Matter and energy, the “ foundation stones of the universe,” according to the picturesque language of the nineteenth century materialists, are no longer esteemed as real entities. Everything is cradled in thought. ‘ But whose thought ? ’ is a legitimate question to ask. Certainly not Swinburne’s, and just as surely not that of any other man; but as certainly that of God. The thought or will of God is the only real entity in the universe. So well might the poet break forth in a pæan of praise:—

O God! the thought was Thine!
(Thine only it could be)
Fruit of the wisdom, love divine,
Peculiar unto Thee;

The poet had specially in mind, the origin of the sphere of spiritual bliss, but the lines apply with equal emphasis to the origin of material things. Constancy and consistency are essential features in the will of God. So the writer of the Hebrews speaks of the “ immutability of His counsel.” (Heb. 6, 17). The apostle James refers to “ the Father of

lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (Jas. 1, 17). The apostle Paul writes of "the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." (Eph. 1, 11).

Immutability or unchangeableness is in contrast to "change which marks the flow of time," and to "changeableness" which marks the character of mankind. The lusts or desires of man are wrapped up in change or the fashions of the world. In the physical sphere, the form of creation is subject to slow change. So that there is sober truth in the apparently fanciful expression of the poet:—

"The hills are shadows."

Ultimately when the firmament itself will have served its purpose, it will pass away. "The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together" (Rev. 6, 14) are the words of prophetic vision. As to consistency, only "God is faithful." (1 Cor. 1, 9). It is a matter of commonplace observation that man in his best estate is unreliable. So that vows are essentially made to be broken. Expediency dominates everything. In the fulfilment of collective responsibility, even Christians have rendered invalid the most pretentious claims. Finding themselves in untenable positions, they did not scruple to extricate themselves from the positions at the expense of consistency. Only God could "confirm by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie." (Heb. 6, 18). There is one course impossible to God, and that is His actions should belie His character.

The will of God and the will of man are two great principles in the moral sphere and they are diametrically opposed to each other. We read of Christ that He loved righteousness (*i.e.*, what is according to the former principle), and hated lawlessness (*i.e.*, what is according to the latter principle). In the volume of God's purpose it was written of Him, "Lo, I

come to do Thy will, O God.” (Heb. 10, 9). The sequel to His coming was a path of unvarying and perfect obedience to the will of God. The prophetic Scripture could speak of Him as “setting His face like a flint.” (Isa. 50, 7). So in conformity to His Father’s will He steadfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem. (Luke 9, 51). No ulterior consideration could turn Him aside. Even Peter’s well-meant remonstrance to turn Him aside from that straight course brought His drastic denunciation as proceeding from Satan. (Matt. 16).

In the days immediately following the Flood, man’s self-will culminated in the erection of the tower of Babel whose top should reach unto heaven. Their idea was not only to render themselves safe from any future flood, but to tap the resources of heaven and so render them independent of God and to establish the name of man in opposition to the name of God. The inception of a process or principle always presents the features of subsequent development. So the features of Babel are essentially the features evinced by the modern age. How aptly and tersely is every modern tendency foretold and summarised in Scripture:—“Nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.” (Gen. 11, 6). Man’s will is unrestrained. However, as in the plains of Shinar, so nowadays, man’s effort to render himself independent of God will come to nothing. When the Lord comes, all that man has built will be tumbled over just like a four and a half inch brick wall erected without mortar would do when pushed.

These two principles thus control everything. We must either be here for the lusts or desires of men or for the will or good pleasure of God. We are saved that we may be for the will of God. Grace has come into action that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. (Rom. 12, 2). It is impossible to receive the grace of God and to lack the desire to see the character of God shining

out in Christians while sojourning in this world. But the will of man is not quiescent and moreover is impelled by all the forces of evil emanating from a common centre in Satan, "the prince of the power of the air." Hence all who are in the line of God's will must meet opposition and thus suffer. In this connection, the apostle Peter opens up a beautiful train of thought in the following passage:—"For it is better, if the will of God be so (lit. 'wills') that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil doing." (1 Pet. 3, 17). In support of this course, the apostle adduces the best evidence, *viz.*:—"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust." If the only Just one suffered for the unjust, then there is an excellent precedent why we should suffer for well-doing without remonstrance if that procedure happens to be in the will of God.

"Christ having suffered for us in flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind for he that has suffered in flesh has done with sin, no longer to live the rest of his time in flesh to men's lusts, but to God's will." (1 Pet. 4, 1, 2, New Translation). Christ took flesh (the "body prepared" of Heb. 10) in which to suffer. Notwithstanding the perfection and holiness of that body, Scripture is explicit in description and His whole pathway in flesh was marked by suffering. He was indeed the "Man of Sorrows"! We should be careful to distinguish the usages of the term "flesh." Clearly in the above connection the term refers to the material structure of the body and not to the moral principle opposed to the Spirit as set forth in Romans 8, 4. Suffering is the antithesis of self-gratification. We should suffer instead of allowing self-indulgence. We are exhorted to arm ourselves with the same mind as Christ who did not His own will, but gave a perfect transcription of the will of God. Through grace we are on that line and our superlative privilege is to give a practical demonstration of the will of God. That should be the governing principle of our lives.

THE ANTIDOTE TO INTELLECTUALISM.

We may well have every sympathy with Christian parents whose minds are torn between two considerations. On the one hand they wish to give their children all the benefits which education confers as to this life, and on the other hand they are apprehensive as to the detriment which may befall the souls of the young people in the process. The seminaries of learning have now openly thrown overboard every vestige of belief in the Bible as the Word of God, and most philosophers have turned away after Theosophy, New Theology and similar empty speculations. There is an increasing call from young Christians for a lead as to their conduct in relation to the strong current of modern thought. We can only refer them to the despised old Book, in the perusal of which we are not astonished to find a complete solution of the problem, thus testifying to its prophetic character as a lamp shining in a very dark place to give certain guidance, and the darker the place, the brighter the light appears to be. The light of philosophy is very much like the *ignis fatuus* or "will-o'-the-wisp" which vanishes before one can fix its place. At one period we are given the assured results of philosophic research and lo, ten years later the whole system is changed.

In reading the Epistle to the Colossians we cannot fail to observe the striking parallelism between the conditions obtaining in the first century and those existing in the twentieth century. There is nothing essentially new under the sun, history is constantly repeating itself. Before considering the main features of the epistle it may be well to review the conditions which called for its being written. The circumstances which prompted the apostle to pen the Epistle to the Colossians were briefly as follows:—Epaphras, a Colossian who had been the agent in founding the Church at Colosse, had brought news of a heresy which was mainly philosophic. His zeal for the apostle led him to become his fellow-prisoner. The Colossian heresy circled

round a subtle error, Gnosticism, a false mysticism, to which only the privileged few could be initiated. It accounted for evil and creation. God is good, matter is evil, God and the universe must then be connected by a descending series of angelic orders (principalities and powers), and the consequent dethronement of the Son of God, with the accompanying worship of angels. (Ch. 2, 18).

The practical outcome of such speculation was one or other of two conditions of life, either : (1) Rigid Asceticism, "touch not, taste not, etc." If matter is evil, then abstain from contact with it, or (2) Unbridled Licence. If matter is evil then it can be abused with impunity. The apostle met the "intellectual exclusiveness" by showing that the gospel is for all. (Ch. 1, 23, 28). He met the "mystic speculation" by proclaiming the deity of Christ. (a) Who contains the fulness of Godhead. He did not share this with successive angelic orders, no matter how high in dignity these might be. (Ch. 1, 19; 2, 9). (b) Who created and sustains all things, even angels. (Ch. 1, 16). (c) Who is head of the natural as of the spiritual creation. (Ch. 1, 17, 18). (d) Who is in vital union with His Church as Head to the Body. (Ch. 2, 19). He met the "ascetic rigour" by proclaiming the Christian's living association with Christ risen. (Ch. 2, 17). The Jewish rules, although devised by God, were only a shadow of coming things. (Ch. 2, 22); while these Colossian rules were of human device, and thus worthy of far less credence. He went further and took up the very terms of the philosophers giving them a Christian significance, *e.g.*, (pleroma) fulness, (epignosis) knowledge, (sophia) wisdom, (musterion) mystery, (teleios) perfect, etc.

Even the casual reader must have observed the striking resemblance between the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians. There are few literal identities, but there are numerous parallel passages with characteristic expressions. The truth, common to both, however, is treated with a wider

scope in the Ephesians, but there is a personal touch in the salutations in a specific letter to a local company which is lacking in an encyclical letter like that to the Ephesians. The main difference between the aspects of truth unfolded in the epistles is that to the Colossians the central idea presented is the majesty of the Head of the Body, the Church. To the Ephesians the aspect which is emphasized is the unity of the Church of which Christ is the Head. In the Colossian epistle there are but few references to the latter, while the Ephesian epistle contains a magnificent description of the Church in the eternal counsels, *e.g.*, "the union of Jew and Gentile in one body," "the habitation of God through the Spirit," and so on. In the Ephesian epistle, the saints are viewed as in Christ for blessing, and the obverse side of the truth presented in Colossians is that Christ is in us for the display of His character as set forth in the words "Christ in you, the hope of glory." This is not in an individual sense although each manifests the features of Christ according to the inworking of divine grace; the body of Christ (composed of all saints) is necessary for God's complete reproduction of the heavenly Christ in testimony in this world.

The Colossian epistle has seven structural elements which blend into one harmonious whole. The first twelve verses form the introduction. The next ten verses, forming the second section, present the glories of the person of Christ in language which is unsurpassed for majesty and range in all Scripture. There is first a sevenfold presentation of His essential glory in His Eternal Being which shines forth like a constellation of stars of first magnitude in the hemisphere. These are mainly in relation to created things. They are:—

1. "Son of the Father's Love." In pre-creation as during creation, He was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him. (Prov. 8, 22).

2. "Image of the Invisible God." No man hath seen God at any time. The Son hath rendered Him visible.

Adam was created in the image of God and was thus, in measure, the representation of the invisible God. In 1 Cor. 15, those who are heavenly in constitution and origin, do not yet bear "the image of the heavenly," because, when that is effected, all that they are as heavenly will be displayed to the universe. The Second Man from heaven is, in the final sense, "the image of the invisible God."

3. "First-born of Creation." This is not in point of chronological order, but in respect of pre-eminence. This usage is illustrated in the Old Testament in various types, *e.g.*, Manasseh was Joseph's elder son, but the Scriptural record is, "Ephraim is my first-born." Again, of Solomon (although he was one of David's younger sons) it was said, "I will make him my first-born higher than the kings of the earth"—although this passage awaited its complete fulfilment in One who was greater than Solomon. Thus, in right, dignity and power, Christ has precedence over all.

4. "He is before all things." He could say, "Before Abraham was, I am." (Not "I was" but the term which peculiarly marked Him as Jehovah).

5. "All things were created by Him."

6. "All things subsist in Him."

7. "All things were created for Him."

These passages tersely state that He is the Preceder, Author, Sustainer, and Purpose of every created thing. In verses 18-22, there shines out another sevenfold presentation of His glories, but composed of those which have come to Him in resurrection. It is necessary that in this hemisphere of display also He should have undisputed pre-eminence. They are briefly as follows:—

1. "Head of the Body," the Church, which takes inception from Christ's death and resurrection.

2. "The beginning of the new creation of God."

3. "First-born from the dead."

4. "All fulness is pleased to dwell in Him." Thus He is not a mere emission of radio-activity from the God-head.

5. "He has made peace by the blood of His Cross," which is the central feature of His redemption glory.

6. "By Him all things will *yet* be reconciled." The earnest expectation of creation waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. . . . The creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. (Rom. 8, 19, 21).

7. "But even now He *has* reconciled *us* in the body of His flesh, through death." That implies the removal of discord and establishment of harmony, this has been consummated in the new man and in one body, after the removal of the old man from God's sight. In the death of Christ, the love of God has been revealed which has displaced the enmity towards God from our hearts. So that in the hemisphere of redemption, the display of glory is as perfect as it is in the hemisphere of creation, and there is the reinforced interest, that whereas creation is mainly relative to things, redemption has its focus on persons.

The third section deals with the dual ministry of these glories with reference (a) To the gospel. (Ch. 1, 23), (b) To the Church. (Ch. 1, 25).

The fourth section deals with the essential presentation of the mystery as the central truth of Christianity, round which all others revolve, *viz.*, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Ch. 1, 27). The sense is not collective, not "*among*" you (as some commentators read), but "*in*" you. There is a corporate display of Christ's character.

The fifth section of the epistle shows the complete position of the saints as related to Christ, and thus they do not require supplementary knowledge from the philosophy and vain deceit of men. The sixth section shows that the perfect understanding and relationship of the saints to Christ entail certain responsibilities—responsibilities which should and will be maintained as the truth is apprehended. The concluding section, comprising the larger part of the last chapter, expresses the apostle's loving care for those bound

up with him in the bundle of eternal life. Thus we find that even as the antidote to intellectualism in the first century was a further knowledge of Christ, so in the twentieth century the only influence which will render us immune from the diseases which are apt to be contracted through contact with philosophy, is the warmth of soul which flows from communication with Christ in glory. However improbable the Christian revelation may appear to the philosophic mind, faith substantiates things as yet future, and establishes the unseen on an irrefragable basis in the soul of the one who knows God in Christ.

THE MAJESTY OF HIS NAME.

Many Christians present their petitions in the name "Jesus"—"in Jesus' name." One would not seek to hinder earnest souls, but the practice is unscriptural. Holy Writ is very guarded in securing due honour to the majesty of His name.

How careful the apostle Paul was in his salutation, and he speaks of the "Lord Jesus Christ"! We never read of the Lord being addressed on earth as Jesus. His exalted position in the glory calls for greater deference.

Earthly dignity cannot be ignored with impunity. It is related that Beau Brummel, the bosom-friend of King George IV. of Britain, when Prince Regent, over 100 years ago, foolishly wagered that he would address the prince by his Christian name. Using that name, he asked the prince to ring the bell. When the page appeared the prince was equal to the occasion, issuing an order to show Beau Brummel out, and the latter never entered his presence again. If the puny majesty of this world calls for such scrupulous recognition, how much more important it is that we should duly acknowledge the greatness of the name of the Majesty in the heavens above!

ULTRA-VIOLET RAYS.

When sunlight is passed through a wedge of glass, it is refracted or bent out of the straight line in which it was travelling away from the edge towards the broader portion of the wedge and is separated into its coloured constituents, the nature of which may be determined by receiving the image on a white screen. This image consists of coloured bands ranging through every hue in the rainbow from red to violet. The solar spectrum is the term applied to this multi-coloured image. There are other constituent elements in sunlight which are not rendered visible in the spectrum by this simple experiment, and since these are more refrangible than the visible portions of the spectrum, they are called the ultra-violet rays. The presence of the ultra-violet rays may be shown by placing a strip of white card, which has been painted thickly with a paste of sulphate of quinine moistened with dilute sulphuric acid, beyond the violet end of the spectrum. The surface of the card will emit a bluish glow or light of peculiar quality, constituting the phenomenon of fluorescence. One day while pondering over this experiment I was struck with the analogy which holds between the behaviour of the little strip of pasted card and the normal state which should characterise every Christian. The light of the glory of God shining from the face of Jesus Christ is streaming down into this dark world, yet not a ray is visible to the eye of the natural man. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1, 18).

God was exhibited on earth in the person of Christ who left the palace of the glory and came down into this sin-stricken unprofitable earth, though never ceasing to dwell in the Father's bosom, nor losing for one moment the perfect sense and enjoyment of the Father's love. He veiled his glory in the form of a man, declaring God by His life for thirty-three years. While throughout the last three years constituting his public ministry, God was still further

declared by his words and deeds, to the most enlightened religious people existent on the earth at the time; so that people could not but admit that never man spake like Him. Yet men did not recognise in Him God manifest in the flesh. The light shone in the darkness, but the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1, 5). The natural man being darkness could not understand light from God. The eyes of men are not one whit sharper to recognise God now than they were 2000 years ago; in spite of all the learning of modern philosophers and their searchings after the essence or nature of God by the examination of the wrinkles in their own minds; in spite of all the vaunted greatness of the human mind, so tritely expressed in the aphorism of the late Sir William Hamilton, one of the greatest of 19th century philosophers.

“ On earth there is nothing great but man
In man there is nothing great but mind.”

The mind of man is still as dark as ever with reference to the knowledge of God and divine things. Ignorance of God caused the Athenian philosophers in the days of the Apostle Paul to erect an altar to the *Unknown* God. The same ignorance still shrouds the minds of their progeny in the present day. But it is not the wish of God that in this day of grace He should be concealed in clouds and thick darkness as in the former dispensation. He wishes to be known. He wishes to be seen, even if man cannot pierce His nature by the strivings of his mind. But those who have been brought to God and who have been made the recipients by His abounding grace of the power to recognise divine things; whose eyes have been endowed with spiritual perception; whose hearts let in the rays of heavenly light, are no more the sons of darkness but the sons of the light. Their proper function in this world is to render visible some of the glory and excellencies of Christ to the eyes of those who are still strangers to the grace of God. “ No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.” (I. John 4.)

A CONTRAST IN TWO SETS OF THREE V'S.

On the facade of the great church of St. Stephen in Budapest, there is an inscription taken from the Latin Bible, *viz.*, *Ego Sum Via, Veritas et Vita, i.e.*, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." (John 14, 6). These are three words with the initial letter V which are highly significant, because of the One who uttered them.

Caius Julius Caesar, probably the greatest man of ancient history, lived in the century immediately before Christ. He was famous for the success of his lightning attacks in war. After one of these in the province of Pontus in Asia Minor he sent the following laconic report to his Senate in Rome, also in three words with the initial letter V., *viz.*, *Veni, Vidi, Vici, i.e.*, "I came, I saw, I conquered." The authenticity of that statement has been disputed, but it has earned celebrity and at any rate was aptly descriptive of the general procedure of one of the most extraordinary of men. It was relative to man's way on the earth, admirably summarised by Scripture in the expression in John's epistle, *viz.*, "the lust (or desire) of the flesh, the lust (or desire) of the eye, and the pride of life." Caesar desired to have the province. On arriving there he saw that it was worth having and he took it by force and the pride of life was manifest in his despatch.

Man's covetousness is insatiable. The more he gets, the more he desires to have. But there is no permanency in the hold that he takes in seizing the bit of the world he has coveted. Three years after Caesar sent that memorable message he was stabbed to death by his most intimate associates who all owed their perferment to the grace of their chief. Such is the ingratitude of man in his natural state! But Scripture is emphatic about the transient nature of man's possessions. The world passes away, and the lust thereof, but he that does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2, 17). The world itself is slipping away so that there is no use trying to seize something in the hand which will be found on opening the hand to have evaporated.

Nobody is anxious to acquire land on the edge of the cliffs of North Suffolk because it is gradually slipping over the edge into the sea. Sweeping as that consideration undoubtedly is, the second in the text is more so. The lust or desire for the world is passing away too! If we have not yet reached that point in the experimental assessment of values, we are very shortly going to be face to face with the contingency. When everything pertaining to the world fades into oblivion and we have to face eternity. The Lord Himself in His ministry stated the problem in the words "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" That is the only property which is indissolubly his own. The only permanency is in doing the will of God. So that even the will of a Caesar vanishes in course of a very brief period of time. A dictator can do nothing more than he is permitted to do by a higher power, and he has not long to exercise his authority!

What a comfort it is to turn from the dictum of the greatest of mankind boasting of his power to the quiet statement of the Lord to His disciples in the upper room on the night of His betrayal. The Latin translator of the text did not miss the import of the passage in rendering "I am," as emphatic. That was the same proclamation from the burning bush to Moses by the self-existent Jehovah, the One who had life in Himself, the author of life and the life-giver. That gives character to the statement. Three disciples gave expression to the thoughts which were perplexing the company. (1) Thomas was concerned about "the Way." Primarily the way lay through the death of the cross. But the specific import of the passage is that He was personally the way. He had attached the disciples to Himself and so detached them from the world. He would conduct them spiritually to the Father, so that they might know God (in Whom they believed) as Father.

(2) Then Philip was concerned about the problem as to how they were to see the Father. They had been for 3½

years intimately associated with the Lord and yet they had not apprehended that He was the complete revelation of God as Father, *i.e.*, the Truth. Not merely had He stated things as they really were, often to the intense discomfort and discomfiture of His enemies, but He was in an intrinsic way the perfect exhibition of One Who was foreign to the best of mankind by nature and Whom nobody had seen. Even an excellent man like Nicodemus had not understood the Truth!

(3) Judas (not Iscariot) was concerned about "the Life" in his question "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us and not unto the world?" Jesus answered "If a man love Me he will keep My word and My Father will love him and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him." (John 14, 22, 23). His words were public testimony to the Father. That there should be the introduction of divine persons to dwell within a man would necessarily be supernatural! That was the intimation of a new kind of life which would keep a man in the light of the new revelation, *i.e.*, the truth of the revelation of God as Father. The law revealed God to man but it took the Son of God who dwelt in His heart of intimate counsels and love to reveal God as Father to man.

In the language of the 10th Chapter of the Hebrews we find in consequence of God having come out, a new and living way (*i.e.*, continually "fresh," incapable of getting stale) had been constituted whereby man could have liberty to enter the inmost shrine of the presence of God, the Holiest, where God the Father is adored. If God had not come out, we could not have gone in. The Comforter, the Holy Ghost "whom the Father will send in My name, he shall teach you all things." (John 14, 26). The spirit of Truth is the living spirit of the revelation of God, the Father. So that gives the answer to the question of Judas. The Holy Spirit would manifest the Lord so that the disciples would be enabled to do greater things than they

had seen. But these things would not be essentially different in character from what they had seen in Christ while here. His words and His acts testified the character of God, His Father. After His ascension, the disciples in the power of the Spirit would carry on the same kind of work but in greater volume, due to the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit.

THE VICTORY OF FAITH.

“ See! I am with you always unto the end of the world (age).” (Matt. 28, 20, German translation).

“ Our faith is the victory which overcomes the world.” (1 John 5, 4, German translation).

“ But, of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.” (1 Thess. 5, 1).

In the year 1938, I stood in one of the largest squares in Berlin looking up at the Dom Kirche, the large Lutheran Church. As I contemplated the gross secularism of that great city of four million people which had officially repudiated God, I was somewhat depressed. Presently, my eye lighted on the two texts (first mentioned above) displayed conspicuously on the facade of the church. My depression was instantly dispelled! One would seek to transmit the impression conveyed. The Apostle in writing to the Thessalonians referred to the times (*i.e.*, the duration) and the seasons (*i.e.*, the characteristics of the period until the Lord's return), He did not require to occupy time in the matter of detail, because they had an accurate understanding of the significance of both the duration and characteristics of the period. The first text on the Berlin church directs attention to the duration of the age. There has not been a moment in the whole period when the Christian could not count on the Lord's presence with him because in the moment before the Lord ascended, He said “ See! I am

with you alway," *i.e.*, unbroken continuity. Then the second text occupies us with the characteristics. Our faith is the means of victory over the world in its multitudinous phases, but yet partaking of one character, *i.e.*, shutting God out. The world may shut God out in a straightforward way as exemplified in Germany, or it may do so in the subtler way in vogue in this country. But whatever may be the phase of its action there is only one agency on which the Christian can rely to overcome it, *i.e.*, his personal faith.

Six hundred years before the first advent of Christ as described by Habakkuk, the prophet, times were very bad. Wickedness was at a premium and righteousness at a discount in human affairs. The Chaldean invasion was a far more terrible scourge than Hitlerism or any other of the dictatorial enemies which afflict civilisation to-day. Habakkuk was greatly perturbed at the apparent triumph of evil over good. He cried to the Lord for enlightenment. He got a wonderful view of the day of the Lord and of the true path for His people in the intervening period and so came to know the secret of how to be an overcomer in very adverse circumstances, *viz.*, "the just shall live by his personal faith!" However, before God can bring affairs to a climax, His people must be dissociated from pride and constrained to walk in His ways, while the nations must fill up their cup of sin and apostasy and become ready for judgment. Although primarily the prophecy of Habakkuk relates to the immediate judgment on the Israelites, it undoubtedly also looks on to the future, *i.e.*, after the church will have been caught up to heaven. God will then work in the hearts of the scattered children of Israel bringing them to repentance and ultimately back to the promised land. Then they will cry out to the Lord as they will see the rising flood tide of evil and the power of the enemy. That God should allow their oppression is an enigma to reason, but they will learn that their hard discipline is in view of lasting blessing! God is about to intervene to accomplish the work of estab-

lishing a universe of blessing filled and ruled by Christ, that for which He has been working through all the ages.

In all this there is a lesson for the Christian in the interval of grace between the two dispensations to which reference has been made. In spite of the unfaithfulness, the strife and the anti-christian doctrines propagated in what bears Christ's name, faith connects our hearts with the world to come, where everything that has breath will praise the Lord. There is a striking parallel between the days of Habakkuk and our own day. Secular matters dominate everything on the surface, and what purports to be of God is too often mixed up with worldliness in all its phases. There is a general apathy as to the claims of Christ. The divisions amongst God's people are a sad contradiction to the harmony which is normally associated with His name.

True Christianity involves a heavenly calling, but that has its bearing on earthly relationships, so that we should be walking in all lowliness (as to ourselves) and meekness (as to others), with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4, 2-3). But we need not be cast down, because God is about to intervene and the enemy will be utterly defeated. Faith connects us with a brighter day, in spite of all around which would seem to cast a blight upon our hope. The conclusion of the prophecy of Habakkuk is a magnificent hymn of praise, consequent on the prayer "O! Lord revive thy work in the midst of the years." He could rejoice in the Lord, in the God of His salvation. His feet were like those of the hind springing forward to the age of glory and joy, although there was complete failure of crops and flocks and everything on which the heart could naturally rest. The prophecy ends on the top note of praise with reference to the chief singer on his stringed instruments (Neginoth) as a contrast to the prayer in the beginning of the chapter upon Shigionoth which was a wind instrument of variable tunes implying a good deal of blowing with little music.

THE CREATURE THAT TURNS UP THE EYE.

The Shorter Catechism commences with the proposition: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." It was God's purpose in creating man that in contrast to other animals, man alone should have aspirations heavenwards. It is striking that heathen mythology should have been imbued with the same idea. Indeed, the derivation of *anthropos*, the Greek word meaning "man" signifies "the one who turns up the eye" (*ana* upwards, *tropo* I turn, *ops* the eye). Man has failed signally to fulfil the end which God had in view in creating him. At the beginning in Eden, Adam dishonoured God by listening to the serpent's insinuation to his wife and so far from enjoying God he, filled with fear, hid himself behind the trees of the garden. Man's signal failure has, however, never altered God's unwavering purpose. But in order that His purpose should be effected it was necessary that His Son should assume manhood. When that event took place, there was for the first time on earth a man who could truly lift up the eye to God and who could glorify God and enjoy Him perfectly. For the first time also there was an object on earth which could claim the whole attention of heaven. "What is man that Thou art mindful of Him? . . . Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Ps. viii. 4, 5). In consequence of His perfect obedience and His having by the grace of God tasted death for every man, He is bringing many sons to glory. (Heb. ii. 9, 10). They have been endowed with capacity to glorify and enjoy God and they can now turn up the eye to Him. But if the Christian can turn up his eye to God he also finds that his eye meets the eye of God and in that eye he can read guidance for the pathway. "I will guide thee with Mine eye." (Ps. xxxii., 8). When the good sheep-dog is far away from the shepherd, his movements must be controlled by the hand or by whistle. But

when he is working at short range he is controlled by the shepherd's eye. It is a matter of common observation how much better he does his work at close quarters than at long range. So in order that we may be guided by the eye of God we must not seek to roam afar, we must be at short range and have the eyes of our understanding turned heavenwards.

THE SINGLE EYE.

“If thine eye be single thy whole body will be light.” (Matt. 6, 22).

This scripture apparently involves a paradox, *i.e.*, an impossible conclusion, because the retina of a man with a single eye receives and transmits the sensation of half the light received by the brain of a person of normal vision. The meaning of a word is, however, best obtained by considering its usage, and Scripture is always its own best commentator. The word translated “single” occurs only in this passage and in the corresponding one in Luke, but the similar noun *aplotees* occurs eight times and is translated variously as follows:—

Thrice as “simplicity.” (Rom. 12, 8; 2 Cor. 1, 12; 2 Cor. 11, 3).

Twice as “singleness of heart.” (Eph. 6, 5; Col. 3, 22).

Twice as “liberality.” (2 Cor. 8, 2; 2 Cor. 9, 13).

Once as “bountifulness.” (2 Cor. 9, 11).

It means literally “one-foldedness” or “simplex structure.” We are all familiar with the annoying experience of seeing objects distorted through a common sheet glass window. Light travels slower in glass than in air and in passing through the thicker parts of the glass is retarded so that the wave front of the light becomes bent and clear vision is impossible. The Scriptural meaning of the word is then that there should be no ulterior motive or duplicity

in the Christian's action, indeed, he should be what is commonly termed "transparently honest." The perfect example in this as in every other respect was presented in the Lord Jesus Christ and what was true in Him while He was here, should now be true in the Christian.

In Second Corinthians, Chaps. 8 and 9, the word is used three times in connection with the Christian's stewardship of material resources, in this connection Ananias and Sapphira are seen at the outset of the era showing the "duplex" eye in their apparent generosity. That the Christian should be transparently honest in his ordinary business may be taken as a *sine qua non*, because judged even from temporal considerations, honesty is the best policy and business confidence once shaken cannot be again rendered stable, and the Christian has a higher object than what is dictated by time and sense. Where the duplex eye has been most in evidence amongst Christians is, however, in connection with their association or fellowship one with another, and it is in this that the greatest dishonour has been attached to the name of the Lord. The enemy has taken advantage of the characteristic to separate the people of God, and every division has been consummated by the most shameful duplicity.

It is strange that men of proved uprightness in worldly matters should have evinced such untrustworthy character in relation to their spiritual stewardship, which is vastly more important because position in ecclesiastical circles can only last for a few years, while the kingdom of God will be permanent, and our position in the latter will be determined by our faithfulness to His interests in His absence. The day is coming when the light of the presence of Christ will be perfectly displayed. An indication of which was given on the Mount of Transfiguration. However, at present He is absent, the Church has failed and is no longer available for guidance. How then can we as individuals be guided right? "The entrance of thy word

giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple." (Ps. 119, 130). The common idea of "simple" is "weak-minded" and ignorant, but the Word of God puts no premium on ignorance or sloth. How often the apostle adjures his readers "I would not have you to be ignorant!" The scriptural idea of simplicity is "one-folded" moral texture. The honest man is the one who has spiritual illumination by the Word of God and who is thus guided right. The Word penetrates deep into the recesses of the heart and reveals perfect grace.

The apostle John opened his epistle in the light of the beginning of Christianity, and not in the light of the candle of human tradition, and he judged everything by the former. He investigated the darkness arising from Satan's lie in Eden that there was a spot on God's honesty and he boldly refuted the insinuation of 4000 years standing by proclaiming that "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

He than measured profession of fellowship and refused to recognise man's claim to fix the standard "If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." In the second chapter, profession is subjected to certain infallible tests. Prominent amongst these is "the light." He that saith (profession) he is in the light (verse 9), *i.e.*, the light from the Word of God, must manifest the characteristics of the light. The central ray of light from God is His love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost which manifests itself by the illuminated one loving his brother, and the one who hates his brother merely evinces the fact that he has not been illuminated by the Word of God, no matter what specious pretension may be advanced in support of his contention that he is in the light of God's revelation. May we be found viewing things through the single or simplex eye so as to obtain the correct perspective and act rightly for our blessed Lord in His absence.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

“Wherefore seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.” (Heb. 12, 1, 2). This expression is frequently held to mean that the Christian pathway is viewed as a Marathon race and that the cloud refers to our departed friends, like a dense mass of spectators in a grandstand, viewing our progress. It is held that their presence admitting of our running under their eye, subject to their verdict, and their being absorbed in the interest of our efforts should prove a wonderful stimulus to our running successfully. The above statement may be the expression of a beautiful sentiment to many people, but Scripture does not entitle us to conclude that the saints with Christ are conversant with our life here, and that they are fascinated by the interest of it. It is quite true that the Christian pathway is a very real Marathon race, in which we have need of patience and perseverance, and we need all the encouragement possible to press on, but in adducing such encouragement we must not do violence to the body of Scriptural evidence.

There are two ways in which the Greek word *martyres* may be taken, (1) as spectators or eye-witnesses, (2) as those who bear testimony by words and actions. The context will usually show the specific meaning of a Scripture passage and obviously in this case it is the latter interpretation which is valid, as there is no real interruption of the argument by the arbitrary chapter division of the subject. The beginning of Chapter 12 is a corollary of Chapter 11. The witnesses are necessarily composed of the long list of those whose brilliant acts of faith had been recapitulated in Chapter 11. Their example was the strongest witness or testimony that faith was no new principle peculiar to the Christian era. But it had always been the principle of life for the people of God in every dispensation. So 700 years previously Habakkuk enunciated the matter tersely in his prophecy in the statement “The just shall live by his faith.”

It is quite true that Habakkuk's view of the matter was very limited, but God was behind the statement. An old servant of the Lord used to say "There is no one behind God." So however limited might be the view of the prophet, the statement itself was perfect.

In consequence of such encouragement then "Let us lay aside every weight." We must distinguish between "weight" and "sin." A matter which may be quite proper in our ordinary life may be well calculated to prove a hindrance to our making efficient progress in the Christian pathway. Just as a successful runner must divest himself of clothing and undue weight of body, the Christian may have to discard social status, cultural associations, life of ease, esteem of friends, wealth, etc., that he may be able to run to the glory of God. "And the sin which doth so easily beset us." That has no reference to the specific defect, commonly spoken of as a "besetting sin." The expression "which doth so easily beset" is the translation of one unique Greek word *euperistatos* which does not occur anywhere else, and it means "well surrounded" or "standing round about," *i.e.*, like bystanders hindering progress in running, *e.g.*, if in a town we wish to get to a railway station in order to catch a train, with little time on hand, and we have the option, we shall not run down the main street in preference to a by-lane because the bystanders in the former will hinder our progress. So the reference is to the negative quality of sin as a hindrance rather than as to its positive defect. Thus sin is viewed as an entanglement rather than an antagonist. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." That is the character sustained by the one who runs. The process may mean a good deal of affliction, and is thus akin to faith, which is the present dynamic agency operating so that hope is developed. The Apostle wished for the Roman Christians that the God of hope might fill them with all joy and peace in believing (faith in its dynamic aspect) that they might overflow in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Rom. 15, 13).

But the Christian does not run merely under the stimulus of the achievements of the Old Testament worthies, he is encouraged by the present view looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith. Literally it is "looking away" from the present circumstances to contemplate Jesus. In the 1611 version of the New Testament, the translators spoiled the sense of the passage by inserting a word thus of "our" faith. The word "our" is not in the original, the sentence cannot therefore mean that as Author He originated faith in us and as Finisher sustains it and brings to a perfect issue, true as that may be. But He was the only one who began a pathway of faith and perfectly exemplified the principle, finishing the whole Marathon race without defect or halt. Each of the Old Testament worthies cited did his little bit of straight running amidst much which might be tortuous in his life. But in Heb. 11, God concentrates attention only on what will form links in the chain of faith. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The idea of Author and Finisher is expanded in this passage. What controlled Him in His path on earth and the patient endurance of the Cross was the reward, *i.e.*, the joy which is now His at the right hand of God. He sees of the travail of His soul and derives infinite satisfaction therefrom.

THE ACCURACY OF BIBLICAL SCIENCE.

The scientific accuracy of the Bible has been so frequently challenged and ridiculed, that the apologists have become very weak in defence or altogether silent. During the 1600 years which elapsed from Moses, the first, to John, the last of the Biblical writers, many erroneous systems of science were propounded. Yet Scripture shows no evidence that the writers were under the influence of any of these systems. "Holy men of God" spake as they were moved (or carried along) by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1, 21). When the fantastic theories of the ancient philosophers are subjected

to modern analysis they will not bear a moment's examination. Let us compare the natural philosophy of Job with that of Plato or Aristotle. The blunders of the latter are often grotesque, but the wisdom of Job has stood the test of time. Yet the vagaries of Plato are considered fit studies for the ablest minds of Oxford and Jena, while the Bible is relegated to the nursery.

The ancients believed that the earth was supported on the shoulders of a hypothetical giant, named Atlas. The balancing of the earth in space and its maintenance in an orbit by gravitation was known to Job, 1000 years before Socrates. God "hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26, 7) was his inspired reference. While Egyptian philosophy was propounding the "flat earth" theory, Isaiah was found stating that God sits upon the circle of the earth and sets a compass or decrees a circle on the face of the deep, thus proclaiming the spheroidal shape of the earth. The Psalmist tells us that "His going forth is from the end of the heaven." (Ps. 19, 6). The refined astronomical measurement of the 19th century has revealed the fact that the solar system is moving through space towards a point in the constellation Hercules.

The apostle James uses the astronomical term "parallax" to set forth the unchangeable character of God. Parallax is the apparent change of place of a body viewed from different points. By sufficiently extending our base of observation even the most distant parts of the universe will appear to shift, but this is not so with God, He manifests no "parallax" or variableness, neither shadow of turning (*tropées apokiasma*) which is obviously derived by analogy with the shadow arising from the apparent turning of the sun at the solstice. The noonday shadow of an upright stick is shortest at the summer solstice. The tides are due to the differential attraction of the moon and sun. These are negligible in the Mediterranean, the only sea known to the ancients. Yet Job was enlightened to say "He that compasseth the waters with bounds until the day and night come to an end,"

(Job 26, 10) and again "Hither shalt thou come and no further and here shall thy proud waves be stayed. (Job 38, 11). He stated what he could never have seen nor even heard from mortal lips.

But the examples need not be all selected from the astronomical sphere. Boastful modern philosophy has often laughed at Solomon's ignorance of chemistry when he spoke of the action of vinegar upon nitre in Proverbs 25. For nitre does not effervesce when acid is poured thereon. But the fault does not lie with the origin but in the medium of transmission. The estimable Westminster theologians although great linguists knew nothing of chemistry and were misled by the form of words. The Hebrew word used by Solomon was *nether* corresponding to *nitron* in the Greek which really describes sodium carbonate (our familiar "washing soda") the source of all effervescence on a modern commercial scale. The proper use of the word is well shown in Jeremiah, "For though thou wash thee with nitre and take thee much sope." (Jer. 2, 20).

Who but a Divine Person could have revealed to the Psalmist such meteorological data as the following? "He causeth lightning for the rain" and again "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the end of the earth." (Ps. 135, 7). These are scientific facts which were only discovered nearly 3000 years later by scientists. "All the rivers run into the sea yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come thither they return again." (Eccl. 1, 7). Even Solomon's acute observations could not have led him to know that evaporation is equal to the rainfall. The direction and speed of the wind depends on the differential pressure of the atmosphere at different places. This fact is beautifully expressed by Job with the reasons relating to electrical phenomena in regulating the rainfall. (Job 28, 23-27).

There were no volcanoes in the land of Israel or in the neighbouring countries yet we find the following records of the Spirit's dictation. "He looketh on the earth and it

trembleth, He touched the hills and they spake." (Ps. 104, 32). "Who removeth the mountains and they know not: who overturneth them in His anger." (Job 9, 5). There were no mines or deep borings in Mesopotamia yet Job could leave on record that "under the earth is turned up as if it were fire." Modern investigation shows that for every 54 feet descent one degree Fahrenheit rise in temperature is observed. Although easy to supply further examples it will suffice to say that while the textbooks of science are changing twice every generation and as a philosopher aptly said "the curiosity of to-day may be the common-place of to-morrow," Scripture remains securely established and sees human cosmogonies framed and displaced by more feasible propositions. All are illustrative of the Scriptural declaration "They shall perish: but Thou remainest—they shalt be changed, but Thou art the same and Thy years shall not fail." (Heb. 1, 11-12).

THE PRIDE OF LIFE.

Man delights in exhibition. The testimony is simply to be lowly in heart. This is not a natural habit of the mind. In seeking to avoid display one may easily make an idol of apparent humility. There is the humility of flesh as well as the pride of flesh and they come both under the category of pride. To make an exertion to appear humble is to be proud. God resists the proud (Jas. 4, 6); He knows them afar off (Ps. 138, 6); A proud heart is sin (Prov. 21, 4). The proud heart never gets near to His sanctuary. God has respect only to the lowly! Moreover pride of life is a hindrance to seeking after God (Ps. 10, 4). "The pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2, 16). The world is passing; even so must the pride of life as a constituent element of the world be passing. Its consummation will meet its end in the day of the Lord (Is. 2, 12). May God preserve us from either of the extremes and from the "in-between" of the pride of life!

OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES.

ENOCH.

It may be of interest to consider the conditions under which Enoch walked with God. His day was one of measureless wickedness. The earth was filled with violence and lawlessness. So much so that in his great-grand-son's time, God had to blot out the world by a flood of water and only eight people were saved in the Ark (a type of Christ). In short, Enoch's day was not unlike our own. Murder was not a capital offence. It was not until God established a covenant with Noah on the cleansed earth that man's blood was to be required by man of the murderer. Whenever murder goes unchallenged and man fails in government God's government comes into evidence in a marked way. For a number of years before the Great War, civilization was becoming squeamish on the question of execution. France had abolished the capital sentence, even as she disclaimed belief in the existence of God. Murder, however, became so frequent that the guillotine had to be re-instated. Belgium failed to bring to book the authors of the Congo atrocities. Swift judgment fell on Belgium and France. That has been confirmed in the disasters of 1940.

It was then no Paradise in which Enoch obtained the witness that he was well-pleasing to God. Moreover, he did not drift with the current of the times. The Apostle Jude tells us that he warned his contemporaries that lawlessness was not always to go unpunished, that the Lord was coming with myriads of His saints to execute judgment on the ungodly. Evidently, then, this simple Mesopotamian pastoralist was no hermit. He faithfully discharged his responsibility in the scene with which he had no fellowship. As in the case of Elijah, his acquaintances did not believe that he had ascended to heaven, and they sought for him in

vain. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that he was not found, and this may well imply that a search had been made.

Unlike Elijah, however, no details are given of the translation of Enoch. We may think of Enoch as typifying the man in Christ, and it would have been inconsistent with this character to enter into details about his translation. The Apostle Paul speaks of a man in Christ being caught up into the third heaven. He could not say whether he was in or out of the body. Indeed, such a qualification was of no consequence. Paul was not dealing with the responsible life on earth which relates to the body, but to the new life in Christ Jesus, and hence being in the body or out of the body was immaterial to the man in Christ. It is therefore only in the Christ-life we can walk with God. The flesh-life, even apart from sin, is hopelessly lame in that walk. Though there was a physical discontinuity involved in Enoch's translation, there was no moral break. He continued to walk with God.

Dispensationally then, Enoch gives us a type of the man in Christ. In this era of God's super-abounding grace the Christian calling is heavenly. He is called to walk with God. The precise statement in Genesis is significant. "Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah, 300 years." The coming of the first born does not often conduce to increased godliness in the lives of the parents. They are apt to be absorbed by worldly aims and interests. The New Testament teaching is beautifully summed up in that sentence in the Epistle to the Philippians, "Our conversation is in heaven." The word *politeuma*, translated "conversation," literally means politics or citizenship. Our political interest, the engrossing theme of our life, is there, so our translators very aptly rendered the word "conversation," because it is a man's politics, local or national, which absorb the major part of his conversation. A man's heart is where his treasure is.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Enoch's history is its brevity. It is summed up in that brief statement, "He

walked with God, and he was not." That should not surprise anyone, for the man in Christ has his place and portion in the heavenlies, and the Christian who walks in the power of heavenly things will not be making history according to the standards of this world. Though one of those of whom the world is not worthy, he will be accounted as sheep for the slaughter—in fact, as one who is crucified as far as the world is concerned—but he, in the reckoning of faith, will account the world to be *that* in the power of the cross, and so be an overcomer while he is in it, walking with God, and soon not to be found, for he will be taken to his own country at the hour of translation. Blessed hope! Till that hour comes, we are called to walk the path of individual separation so admirably set forth in the case of Enoch, and to exhibit not the pride of life but the mind of Christ, both in the assembly and in the world through which we are passing as pilgrims and strangers.

A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ENSNARED.

“And Noah began to be an husbandman and he planted a vineyard and he drank of the wine and was drunken.” (Gen. 9, 20, 21).

In the whole Word of God there is no more solemn lesson for the Christian than this terse statement about Noah. Noah was one of the most highly favoured men whose deeds are recorded in Scripture. Evidence of this is afforded in the following passages.

(1) He was the tenth in the chain of worthies descended from Adam. Of these he alone was the special subject of prophecy at his birth, “This shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.” (Gen. 5, 29).

(2) He found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (Gen. 6, 8).

(3) He was an obedient servant, he did according to all that the Lord commanded him. (Gen. 7, 5).

(4) Of that generation he alone was found righteous before the Lord. (Gen. 7, 1).

(5) As a coppingstone to his blessings he and his house were invited into the ark. There he spent over a year in communion with God, undistracted by the allurements of earth. As the window of the ark was in the top, his outlook was heavenwards.

Notwithstanding all this high favour and special experience, as soon as Noah was left to the devices of his own will, under the influence of Satan he became a slave to lust. Noah followed in the way of Cain and turned his attention to the ground. As a consequence grievous failure ensued, and so it is in Christian experience. As soon as we follow Cain's way and become occupied with the earth, Satan traps us in one of his snares. Although Noah lived 350 years after he began to be an husbandman, his name is never mentioned again. He was alive throughout the whole of that Godless period which culminated in the erection of the Tower of Babel, yet his presence had no restraining influence on his descendants. They quickly caused the cleansed earth to exhibit the features which had played such a prominent part in Cain's world, and there is no record of his remonstrance. Men did not take knowledge of him that he had been with the Lord. Satan had gained the victory over "the preacher of righteousness." With what living power this episode comes home to every Christian, the oldest as well as the youngest. We do well to be watchful. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10, 12). Spiritual progress is no occasion for self-glorification; but that God should be glorified for His matchless grace and mercy. A Christian who has been forty years with the highest privileges and under the most favourable conditions for expansion of soul Godward is not immune from failure and is liable to fall into the snares of the enemy, even as righteous Noah did after 600 years with God.

Christian experience is apt to become stereotyped and

materialised. We are very liable to become worshippers of ideals and to live in a fairy land of our own creation. But if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves. (1 John 1, 8). In his Epistle the Apostle John portrays three stages of soul progress. (1 John 2, 13). The mark of the young men was that they had overcome the wicked one. It is, however, important to see that it is he that is begotten of God that keepeth himself and that the wicked one does not touch. (1 John 5, 18). It is that which is born of God which does not sin and which overcomes the world and the wicked one. Every Christian still carries that which is born of the will of man and of the flesh. That is, no matter under what refined conditions flesh may have been cultured, its original characteristics are still exhibited. There is and ever will be throughout life, so much in our flesh which answers to our surroundings that what is born of God is apt to be dominated by what is born of the flesh. Of all the assemblies to which the Apostle Paul addressed epistles, the Ephesians had made the greatest spiritual progress, yet he repeatedly admonished them to avoid the lusts of the flesh. "Be ye not drunk with wine, but be filled with the spirit." (Eph. 5, 18). "Let no man deceive you with vain words because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." (Eph. 5, 6). Wherefore the watchword to everyone is "Ponder the path of thy feet." (Prov. 4, 26).

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be.
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to thee.

FOOTPRINTS IN THE WILDERNESS.

"*There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen.*" (Job 28, 7). The path which the sharpest natural perception, as symbolized by the vulture's eye, has not perceived must be a remarkable path. Such was the Lord's path here.

“ There is but that one in the waste,
Which His footsteps have marked as His own.”

That one path was a lonely one for the Lord while He was on earth. Foxes had holes, and birds had nests, but He had no pillow. But the lowly path of shame as a stranger and foreigner led upwards to His Father—the source of that river, the streams whereof make glad the City of God. Even as there is now one place for us in Heaven where He sits on His throne, there is in this benighted earth but one place for us, and that is in the path where His footprints are left.

The apostle Paul could say, “ I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus . . . reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3, 12-14). Ittai the Gittite answered King David, “ In what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.” (2 Sam. 15, 21). If we know the rest in Heaven in which our Lord dwells then we rejoice in tracing out His footprints here.

“ The pillar of the cloud went from before their face and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all night.” (Exod. 14, 19, 20). The cloud in this connection may be taken as symbolizing the death of Christ, which comes in as a mighty barrier between the world and us. The marked-out path is on the resurrection side of the death of Christ. Hence the sharpest intellect cannot apprehend it. The Egyptians could not see through to the Israelites because of the cloud which was darkness to them, but the cloud was light to the Israelites. “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2, 14).

THE HIDDEN MANNA AND THE NEW NAME.

“To Him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” (Rev. 2, 17). When the Israelites first saw God’s provision for them on the top of the dew of the morning they said to each other “Manna” (or Manhu), that is, What is it? for they wist not what it was. (Ex. 16, 15). How this illustrates strikingly man’s attitude towards Christ, the true bread of God which came down from Heaven. His life history was punctuated by incessant query: Who is this? The scribes and Pharisees began to reason; Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? (Luke 5, 12). Those who sat at meat with Him in Simon’s house said within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins? (Luke 8, 49). Herod was perplexed and said, Who is this of whom I hear such things? (Luke 9, 9). When Jesus made his final entry into Jerusalem, all the City was moved, saying, Who is this? This attitude bears out that He came unto His own and they did not receive Him and that the world knew Him not. The darkness had no comprehension of the light!

The manna was a small round thing, comparable with the minute particles of hoar frost. (Ex. 16, 14). Its insignificance was calculated to arouse the contempt born of the natural pride in the mind of man. Even so, Christ, becoming small, making Himself of no reputation and assuming servant’s form (Phil. 2, 7) did not come up to man’s expectations of the Messiah. Men love display and great things. Naaman, the leper, thought that Elisha should have done some great thing towards his recovery. (II. Kings 5, 11). That is, however, not God’s way. In this present time, He works not by exhibition and external display but by the revelation of hidden wisdom. Into that small manna God compressed the significance of something

incomparably great. The Lord Jesus as the Bread of Life, veiled His glory, came down from heaven into this wilderness world, gave His flesh for the life of the world, (John 6 51), ascended to the right hand of God where He is now hid in the heavens, the true embodiment of that omer of incorruptible manna which was put in the Ark of the Covenant in the most Holy place. (Ex. 16, 32).

The heavens—which now conceal Him
In counsels deep and wise—
In Glory shall reveal Him
To our rejoicing eyes.

The portion of the overcomer is then to feed on Christ, the hidden manna. "Whom having not seen, ye love." (I. Pet. 1, 8). The white stone doubtless has its analogy in the Jewish tradition that the Urim and Thummim (Ex. 28, 30) symbolical of the revelation and perfection of the Lord enclosed a stone of dazzling whiteness and purity and on this was written the new ineffable name of Jehovah. A new name always involves a new revelation of God—a further disclosure of His hidden wisdom. Abram, Jacob and Saul of Tarsus in receiving new names also received marvellous communications from the Lord. The book of Revelation is singularly associated with the declaration, "I, Jesus." 800 years ago, in the midst of darkest Romanism, Bernard in his monastery at Clairvaux had tasted of the hidden manna and had experience of the sweetness of the disclosures incident on the possession of the New Name when he penned the lines.

The love of Jesus what it is
None but His loved ones know.

That happy monk knew the secret of the Lord. The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him. (Ps. 25, 14). When Joseph made himself known to his brethren, he caused the Egyptians to go out from Him. (Gen. 14, 1). They could not enter into his love for his brethren. So it is to-day, none but His loved ones can apprehend the divine

affections of the Son subsisting in the home of God. In thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand pleasures for evermore. (Ps. 16, 11).

URIM AND THUMMIM.

“ Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place.” (Exodus 28, 29).

Only in a very perfunctory way could Aaron have represented the people. Indeed, merely the names of the tribes and not of the individuals composing the tribes were inscribed on his breast and shoulders. He had very imperfect acquaintance with their needs and exercises. He did not love all and sundry in that motley host. Yet the circumstance sets forth in type beautifully the character of One who was to come and who is now at the right hand of God as our adequate representative; the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Our High Priest has intimate knowledge of every individual Christian. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. (John 10, 3). He knows His sheep and He is known by His own. They hear His voice and they follow Him. Our High Priest loves us with an indulgent love and no agency, physical or psychical, can separate us from His love. (Rom. 8, 39). Aaron bore the names on his shoulders (the place of security) and on his breast (the place of affection). Thus the great Fulfiller of the type could say :—“ I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand ” (John 10, 28), and “ having loved His own which were in the world He loved them to the end.” (John 13, 1). So the eternal security of the believer is doubly pledged. A beautiful example of the force of His calling His sheep by name is presented in the incident on the resurrection morning, when He said to Mary Magdalene, “ Woman, why weepest thou? ” (John 20, 15). She did not recognise Him. She thought that the person addressing her was the gardener. But when

Jesus said to her "Mary!" she at once knew Him and confessed Him as "My Master!" Human names are not descriptive of character and are often merely accidental. But Scriptural names are descriptive and are thus not accidental. Moreover, when used by the Lord, the name is potent. His voice immediately evokes a response. So it is now, He speaks to us individually and it is our privilege to listen and to be enraptured by the modulation of His voice.

" Sweet it is to sit before Thee,
Sweet to hear Thy blessed voice,"

Recognition of His voice is a spiritual process emanating from love in our hearts. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4, 19) is a terse statement of a reflex action which is invariably descriptive of the process. That divine guidance is contingent on our hearts being formed in love is not generally recognised. That phase of truth is well set forth in type in the aforementioned passage in Exodus, where the Urim (symbolising "light") and the Thummim (symbolising "perfection") were also put in the breastplate of judgment on Aaron's heart before the Lord continually. So the perfection of light and guidance is bound up with love in a continual presentation. We might be tempted to think that light or guidance would be dependent on our mental apprehension, but that is contrary to Scripture. Every hard question becomes soluble because we have the Unction from the Holy One, the One who sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts. In the post-captivity period a question arose which defied solution and the Tirshatha wisely left the matter in abeyance until there would stand up a priest with Urim and Thummim. (Neh. 7, 65). That period has come for those introduced by grace to the heavenly calling. They have the Comforter with them (collectively) and in them (individually) and so there is ample guidance and support to meet every contingency which may arise.

THE EAGLE'S NEST.

Moses in his last exhortation to the children of Israel likens the Lord's dealings with His people to the eagle stirring up her nest. (Deut. 32, 11). The eagle is a very sagacious bird. It is said that in building her nest she lays the floor with sharp thorns and covers them over with soft down. In this cosy bed her young are hatched and grow up. As they become strong enough to fly, they are loath to leave the comfort of the nest. But that condition would not fit them to fulfil their normal functions in subsequent life. Hence the mother scrapes up the down in the bottom of the nest. When the young eagles feel the sharp thorns they jump over the side of the nest and thus the strength of their wings and the support of the air are tested. Christians are frequently placed in similar comfortable circumstances. Not a jarring note breaks in on the harmony of their life. As with the eagle's nest, however, underneath the downiest bed are strewn the sharp thorns swept in from the hedges of life's chequered pathway. If there were no thorny incidents in our career we should never be caused to experience the wealth of God's resources. He stirs up the most comfortable nest and causes the inmates to feel the thorn pricks. As a result, they are caused to jump out, metaphorically, into the atmosphere of God's resources, and the wings of faith are called into action.

That we should mount up spiritually with eagle's wings is God's desire. (Is. 40, 31). When the young eagle grows weary the mother flies beneath and bears it up on her wings. (Deut. 32, 11). So is the care of the Lord for His people. (Ex. 19, 4). "Underneath are the everlasting arms." The Lord never makes a breach or gap in our affections by removing someone or something dear to our hearts except for the purpose of strengthening the link already formed between our souls and Himself. If we can learn just a little bit more of His love then it will be worth all the sorrow which has ever fallen to the lot of man or woman to experience.

Because there is nothing in this world of change and decay to be compared with His love. It is as enduring as Himself, "Changeless throughout the changing years." That there is great variation in human experience is a matter of common-place observation. Some are passing smoothly through life, others are constantly involved in difficulty and trial. But it is a great comfort to realise that whom the Lord loves He chastens.

The apostle Peter, in encouraging the strangers scattered throughout Asia Minor, said "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptation (or put to grief by various trials), that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth . . . , might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1, 6-7). In view of this we should not feel downcast in trouble. The trial is but for a season, literally for a few moments or a little while, and it only comes our way if *need be*. The one who has the oversight and the control of the "need be" is God and there is no one can go behind His mandate. Nero, the infamous Roman emperor, set the beautiful city of Rome on fire and as he witnessed the spectacle from his window, he played a violin and sang songs as evidence of his pleasure in afflicting his people. Such is man, but God takes no pleasure in afflicting. If there is a need for it we are tried and then only for a moment. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby." (Heb. 12, 11).

It is important to observe that the fruit of righteousness which in Scripture is so constantly associated with peace only springs up within those who are *exercised* by the trial and it comes *afterward*. God has no respect to the stoical or to the slothful condition of soul. To the exercised soul there is no sweeter time than that of trial. Heaven becomes its

home. For a mere trivial affliction the Lord substitutes Himself in the soul. In time (a momentary interval) the sorrow passes, but our Friend remains. He has borne our griefs, He has carried our sorrows and will ere long make us co-sharers of His joy for ever.

Soon will the Master come: soon pass away
Our times of conflict, grief and suffering here;
Our night of weeping end in cloudless day,
And sorrow's moment like a dream appear.

THE BELOVED OF THE LORD.

“The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him.” (Deut. 33, 12). “The beloved of the Lord” is a term which may cause perplexity to some. We are apt to think that the expression can only be applied to one who is very highly favoured. That is undoubtedly the case! The man or the woman who is loved by the Lord is indeed very highly favoured. But there is no thought of graduation in Christian experience implied. The testimony of the Word of God goes to show that the “beloved of the Lord” has equal significance with the “redeemed of the Lord” those who have heard his quickening voice and on whom redemption’s glory has been shed. There is a striking analogy between the beloved of the Lord and the disciple whom Jesus loved in the following passage:—“Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom, one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.” (John 13, 23). John was not loved by his Master more than Peter or James or even the doubting Thomas was loved, but John was conscious of being loved. Hence he was found reclining on his Master’s breast. It is to be noted that the dwelling in safety is conditional on being “by Him.” Our safe dwelling or our preservation from the wiles of the tempter without and the tempter within depends upon our “trusting to the covert of His wings” (Ps. 61, 4) and that in turn is proportional to the measure in which we are enjoying the love of the Lord.

CALEB AND HIS LOYALTY.

Caleb was one of the less prominent men in the Old Testament, yet he presents one of the most striking examples of loyalty to God and the Scriptures also show that his reward was substantial. From the 14th Chapter of Joshua we learn that Caleb was the son of Jephunneh, a Kenezite who had probably migrated from the mountains of Southern Canaan and had become attached to the tribe of Judah, and consequently was a stranger to the covenants of promise. He was one of the first fruits of the Gentile harvest of which there were many samples in the Old Testament. However his birth barrier did not hinder him from being an Israelite in spirit. The apostle Paul writing to the Ephesian Christians addressed them as formerly aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, but now in Christ Jesus they had been made nigh by the blood of Christ, therefore they were no more strangers but fellow-citizens with the saints. (Eph. 2).

The name Caleb means "heartly." Achievement in every path of life depends on willing energy or heartiness, so it is not surprising that Caleb's history is written as if it were traced out by a sunbeam. He reminded Joshua of their association in spying out the land of Canaan, 45 years before, that they had the temerity to present a minority report thereanent, which was full of encouragement and cheerfulness because they had viewed the land with the eyes of God. "God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9, 7). The word "cheerful" is literally "hilarious" which denotes whole-heartedness.

The majority report of the spies was full of discouragement and gloom. Caleb strove to annul the ill effect of that report upon the hearts of the people by stilling their excitement. Blessed indeed is the peace maker who introduces restful influences. Caleb's associates had melted the courage of Israel. He strove to reinforce them in the sense of the greatness of God's power. The mob vote in the power of majority is seldom right, but the majority in Scripture record was never right. So it is well to sift the moral value

of a contention rather than to be guided by desire for mere popularity of the crowd.

At 85 years of age, Caleb was as strong as he had been in his youth. It is the end which tests the strength of a persuasion. The apostle Paul could say at the end of his course, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith." Many young Christians make a good start in the "marathon" race of faith but they fail to last the pace. It is good to see a flourishing old age marked by courage and spiritual fervour. The Christian is not normally going on to spiritual decrepitude but to the brightest and the best moment. Eternal life is a state of perennial youth! Caleb, speaking of the Lord having kept him alive, attributes his vigour to the mercy of God. At 60 years of age the apostle Paul spoke of himself as aged but he was very vigorous in soul experience to the end. Caleb's request was for the mountain of Hebron. The mountain in Old Testament type speaks of the faithfulness of God. "All the promises of God in Christ are Yea and Amen unto the glory of God by us."

Caleb expressed complete confidence in God to enable him to drive out the giants. Martin Luther once said that God and he were more than a match for all the opposition in the world, when his friends sought to convince him of the futility of striving against such odds alone. Hebron means fellowship. Its former name Kirjath Arba means city or stronghold of Arba, one of the Anakim giants. That reference forcibly reminds us that Saul of Tarsus was head and shoulders above his contemporaries in a moral sense, while after his conversion he became Paul, a nobody in the world's assessment, yet an assiduous worker in strengthening the bonds of fellowship. Caleb had wholly followed the Lord and his reward was the mountain of Hebron. He had rich compensation in this life, but required patience in waiting 45 years for it. So whole-hearted discipleship leads to fellowship. Caleb received blessing of Joshua who confirmed him in the esteem of the new generation of Israel. A faithful life can stand review in retrospect, so at the judg-

ment seat of Christ the whole panorama of life will be unfolded to our wondering gaze and above all we shall be impressed with the majesty of the mercy and patience of God. To anticipate the Judgment Seat by subjecting our lives to scrutiny now is good policy.

Twenty years later we find Caleb still going strong in the Lord's work as evinced by the record of Judges 1, he offered the hand of his daughter Achsah to the conqueror of Kirjath-Sepher, which means the "city of books." In these later days the printing press has been used in God's service, but perhaps it has been a more powerful agent in the opposition of God's work. There is not much to be gained by arguing with infidels. "Casting down imaginations (lit. reasonings or logic) and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10, 5), is more relevant to the annulling of reasonings which arise in one's own mind tending to reduce the spiritual fervour. And so the provision of an antidote to the fruits of intellectualism is a very important element in the equipment of every servant of the Lord.

Subsequent to this episode Achsah sought a blessing or a present from her father who had given her a south land and she desired springs of water and Caleb gave her the upper and nether springs. The Christian has got a rich land of inheritance in Christ on which the sun of God's favour ever shines. It is well watered by the Word of God which shows our spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus as the upper springs and the counterpart of the nether springs in Christ being in us as the sure pledge of future glory made good in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. So it is good for an aged christian to be passing on the blessings and responsibilities of Christianity to the next generation. One of the greatest of 17th century lawyers said that a good lawyer never died *improles* (i.e., without issue). He sought to transmit faithfully his ideals to his successors and so it is in Christianity. Such spiritual legacies never add any sorrow, but

transmit soul prosperity. Achsah's request was for a blessing or present. These are not necessarily synonymous. Many material legacies or presents result not in blessing but prove a curse to the recipient. Let us put increasing stress on the importance of spiritual legacy.

THE UPPER AND NETHER SPRINGS.

“She (Achsah) said unto him (Caleb), Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land, give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.” (Judges 1, 15).

The south land sloping towards the sun's rays was not necessarily pleasant and fruitful. The hot Eastern sun beating upon it might turn it into a dry and thirsty land. So Achsah asks for springs of water. Streams and springs turn wilderness into gardens. Such is the inheritance of saints, but what gives character to the inheritance is the fact of its being “well-watered.” “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well (spring) of water, springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4, 14). Water in the desert speaks of exquisite delight. Water in cisterns and pools is apt to be muddy and impure. So human delights are comparable to water in cisterns and pools which ultimately become dried up. The sparkling spring-water leaps up, giving continuity of refreshment. Achsah's pleasant south land had a dual attraction in the way of blessing. So the Christian's inheritance is symbolically watered by two springs. The Epistle to the Ephesians sets forth that we have obtained an inheritance in Christ, and Psalm 16 speaks of the fulness of joy in His presence and the lasting pleasures at the right hand of God. That aspect of the truth is illustrated by the upper springs. But we find also in that Epistle that Christ has found an inheritance in the saints, and the special delight which accrues to the soul in meditating on the latter aspect may well be considered as the nether springs.

TWO YOUNG MEN OF SCRIPTURE.

There is a striking similarity between the characters of Gideon and Timothy. Both were young men. Both had received good training in the school of God from their infancy. Both had exercised hearts as to what befitted the service of God. Both were naturally of backward disposition and thus tending to the shirking of responsibility. No committee of experts would have selected either of them for the work with which they were ultimately entrusted. But man's ways are not God's ways. He selects the most unlikely agents for the execution of His will.

The secret of Gideon's initial success is evinced in the fact that he was found threshing wheat by the wine-press, for the purpose of hiding it from the Midianites. (Judges 6, 11). In Timothy there was unfeigned faith which had marked three generations. Moreover, from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures; the only (yet all sufficient) resource that the servant of the Lord has. The typical teaching of Gideon's act was that he seized every opportunity of securing the preciousness of Christ so that his soul might be fed in secret meditation thereon. "Unto you, therefore, who believe, Christ is precious." (1 Peter 2, 7).

One is apt to think that the preciousness of thought in connection with the person of Christ is vouchsafed to those who can apprehend the meaning of scriptural texts and give wonderful expositions thereon. No! the simplicity of faith is the key which opens the door to that mine of wealth which transcends the richest store of this world's treasures. Gideon was engaged in this way when the Midianities would have destroyed the food of the people of God. So to-day in much obscurity the believers have the peerless privilege of making much of the precious jewels in scripture which reflect the exquisite lustre of Christ. The modern Midianites would do all in their power to destroy the food of the people of God. But thanks be to God! There are still many who prize the Scriptures.

While so occupied, the angel of the Lord said to Gideon,

“The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.” From the study of the chapter we would never have recognised him as such. But he was a man with an exercised heart. The Apostle Paul received from the Lord the intelligence that His strength is made perfect in weakness. However, notwithstanding such encouragement, Gideon pleaded his insignificance in Israel. It is important that the servant of the Lord should realise not merely his littleness, but his absolute nothingness. We are apt to be proud of our littleness, but if we are absolutely zero then there is no room for the exaltation of the flesh. God can easily dispense with our service, but it is matchless grace that one should be taken up and fitted for the Master’s use.

Gideon threw down the altar of Baal by night because he was afraid to do so in the day. How provoking he was in seeking signs from God to confirm his commission! Also it is worthy of note that God was long-suffering in reacting favourably to all his tests. On many occasions are we any better than Gideon, when we test God to see if our commission is valid? But ultimately Gideon came into the light of consciousness of divine favour. He built an altar showing that his service was linked up with God’s infinite spring of power. His first work was to throw down the altar of Baal in his father’s house. Thus testifying in the home circle with the result that his father was won over to the cause. The Spirit of the Lord immediately fitted him for the work and he blew a trumpet. His coward spirit was made brave! In his sallying forth against the Midianites, he was obedient to the Lord’s instructions. The first test eliminated 22,000 of his followers and left him with 10,000. Modern masters of strategy would have thought his action questionable. Surely with his skeleton army he would have been well advised to fight a rearguard action in retreat, and so have forestalled the fame of Xenophon with his 10,000 Greeks in their retreat from Persia across the mountains of Armenia, 850 years later. But the subsequent procedure was right in the face of all worldly-wise counsel. The

second test applied had the result of eliminating 97 per cent. of the reduced army and he advanced to the attack with only 300 men. So that the glory of any achievement might be of God and not of man. God will not give His glory to another!

As we have seen, Timothy, like his Old Testament prototype, was of a shrinking disposition. So the aged apostle impressed him to stir up the gift of God which was in him by apostolic delegation (that gift was in the realm of responsibility. There is a gift from God in the gracious administration of the Lord which is not subject to our effort). The apostle went on to say that the spirit of fear (lit. cowardice) which was liable to dominate as in the case of Timothy was not God-given. God gives the spirit of power, love and of wise discretion (2 Timothy 1, 6-7) so that we may effect the service which He has put in our responsibility. It is well to observe that power is intimately associated with love. Indeed all manifestation of power is contingent on our being imbued with love for the souls of saved and unsaved alike. Moreover, love is the connecting link between power and wise discretion. How often the exercise of power is marred by the lack of discretion on the part of the servant of the Lord. We may safely leave their effective conjunction in the efficiency of love.

ENCLOSED WITH CEDAR.

“And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was not a stone seen.” (1 Kings vi., 18). The cedar is characterised by extraordinary durability, glorious height, refreshing shadow and comely excellence and these qualities are typical of Christ. The cedar wood has a fine grain, fragrant smell, and is so incorruptible that cedar beams, little changed, have been found in the ruins of Asiatic temples between 2000 and 3000 years old. This sets forth in measure the abiding character of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Thou

remainest." Corroding time has no influence on Him. "Changeless throughout the changing years." Botanists tell us that the excellent preservation of cedar wood is due to its bitter taste which is not relished by worms and other destructive organisms. Even so, Christ is not relished by the world. The world cannot appreciate his value. They cannot taste that He is good. The countenance of the Bridegroom in the Canticles was excellent as the cedars. He is the altogether lovely one. On account of these desirable qualities, Solomon took care to have everything of his building, good though it might be, covered with cedar. The inner court had three rows of hewed stones and a row of cedar beams. (1 Kings vi., 36). In Peter's epistle, the living stones (hewed by a workman who never made a mistake) are built up into a spiritual house. They are, however, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, only inasmuch as they are wrapt up or hidden in the beauty of Christ.

As within His Temple olden,
Was there seen no costly stone,
Nought but cedar, carved and golden,
Nought but Christ, and Christ alone—
So the stones so dearly bought,
God in Heaven beholds them not. (F. BEVAN).

Again on the mount of transfiguration, Peter lost the sense of the greatness of his Master, but God restored the true perspective by catching away Moses and Elias in the Cloud, and the disciples saw no one save Jesus only. All again was cedar! God will not allow the choicest stone to peer through the cedar wainscot. "We have a little sister and she hath no breasts . . . and if she be a door we will inclose her with boards of cedar. (Song of Sol. viii., 8, 9). This is an excellent illustration of one not able to take care of herself, but how well she will be preserved if she is enclosed as a door with extra panels and casing of cedar. May our desire be to be inclosed or hidden by Christ that we may

show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. "As He is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv., 17).

THE GREAT THINGS OF GOD'S GOOD PLEASURE.

"Consider how great things the Lord hath done for you." (1. Sam. 12, 24). "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." (Ps. 126, 3). "Be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things." (Joel 2, 21). "Return to thine own house and show how great things God hath done unto thee." (Luke 8, 39). Let us consider the conditions which called forth Samuel's strictures. With a strong hand the Lord had brought his people out of Egypt and established them in a good land. They had been set in a highly favoured position with the Lord Himself for a King. He wished them to be a peculiar people unlike other nations. Yet they were not pleased; in direct opposition to the will of God they clamoured for a king that they might be "like all the nations." (1. Sam. 8, 5). God granted their request and Samuel exhorted the people to pause and consider the great benefits they had derived from having had the Lord for a King. The last exhortation of Samuel to the children of Israel is of prime importance to Christians in the present day. We have been redeemed with a wonderful redemption, blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, He is our King, who will be revealed shortly. He wishes His own to be satisfied with Himself as King and to be a peculiar people, in the sense of the dignity and honour of such a position. Yet how often our hearts hanker after likeness to the world and in disobedience to the will of God clamour for idols which ultimately reduce us to the apparent position of subjects of another king.

The first great thing the Lord has done for us must

ever be that in His infinite grace He redeemed us and as Mary Bowly, the hymn-writer put it:—

“Be nothing by our souls esteemed
like this great good.”

Could there be anything higher than to be “Beloved of God, saints by His calling on high in Christ Jesus? After the all-essential great transaction which started our new life with God, has been done for us, there is diversity of experience. The great things which the Lord has done for you may not be the same things he has done for me and conversely. But the point is that whether we are conscious of it or not he has done great things for everyone of us. The 126th Psalm speaks of the present gladness which springs from the past experience of the great things of God, while the prophet Joel looks forward to the future and hails the great things that the Lord will do for His own. The copestone will be laid when He presents them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. (Jude 24). There we shall reach the zenith of His grace. Boundless joy will fill our hearts as we see fully what is imparted by faith. If we ponder how liable we are to be faulty, we appreciate in measure the majesty of His power which is able to keep us faultless and to preserve us from even stumbling let alone falling over obstacles by the way. The 8th Chapter of Luke gives us the practical application. The man from whom the devils had been cast out, desired to be with the Lord. But that was not the best course for him, He was sent not merely to tell but to show what great things God had done unto him. It is in this point we are most liable to fail. Lip profession of Christianity is necessary but not everything; we must show forth the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into marvellous light; we must exhibit the moral traits of the Lord Jesus in our actions. May we be enabled through grace to keep ourselves in the love of God and to build ourselves on our most holy faith.

THE SECRET OF THE STAIRS.

“ O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice.” (Song of Songs 2, 14, N.T.).

Doubtless the returning remnant of Israel, the earthly bride, is primarily addressed in the above passage, but the secondary interpretation, bearing on the heavenly bride, is of paramount interest to us. In spite of all her obvious shortcomings, the bride is seen in the blameless character of the dove. Then as to safety, she is in the clefts of the Rock of Ages. As to approach, she is not in the *secret places* of the stairs as represented in the authorised version, but in the *secret* of the stairs. Stairs are for access to a higher place, and so the bride is made well aware of the way and privilege of access. “ Through whom we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” (Eph. 2, 18). “ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near.” (Heb. 10, 19-22). The literal meaning of the Greek word translated “ boldness ” is “ freedom of speech.” How wonderful that the believer should have perfect liberty of speech in the presence of One before whom, in the former dispensation, all fell down speechless!

But pursuing the lesson in the Songs of Songs, the order of approach should be noted. The freedom of speech is not to be exercised until we draw near. The instruction to the bride was “ Let me see thy countenance,” then, “ Let me hear thy voice.” A father does not like to hear his child making requests or communications outside the door. He wishes the child to be close to him when relating his confidences. If we were enjoying more communion with Christ there would be little complaint as to the formality and powerlessness of meeting and of private devotion, and then we would realise the significance of the following words

of the Apostle John, so incomprehensible to the average reader, "Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do these things which are pleasing in His sight." (1 John 3, 22).

Following on this blessed experience, the bride is immediately cautioned to beware of the little foxes which spoil the vines. After the Lord was baptised by John in Jordan and had the manifestation of God's good pleasure in Him, He was immediately subjected to Satan's wiles in the wilderness. Similarly, after seasons of great spiritual refreshment, the Christian will assuredly be tested, and therefore he must guard against the depredations of the little foxes which will ultimately rob him of the fruit of the vine, the joy of salvation!

THE YEARS THAT THE LOCUST HAS EATEN.

"I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm and the caterpillar and the palmer-worm." (Joel 2, 25).

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, the word "year" has a peculiar significance. What are the lessons which, in the past year, have been impressed upon our souls by God's gracious dealings? How much time has been spent in following the bent of our own wills, and how much in seeking the glory of God, are very searching questions for everyone who bears the name of Christ. In the thousand pages of the Bible there is no passage of greater encouragement to the man or the woman who has been a backslider than this single verse in the prophecy of Joel. There are some lessons which may be drawn from a consideration of the verse which cannot fail to be helpful to those who have turned to God from idols. It is well not to limit this turning to the all essential turning-round which commenced our spiritual life history with God. We need frequent restora-

tion. Every one is liable to have an idol, although in this enlightened age they are not of "stock and stone." They are ideals or creatures of our own imagination. Christians generally appear to have little conception of what constitutes an idol. The heathen must have some material object on which to concentrate his mind, but everything which is outside the sphere of eternal life is material for the formation of an idol. In all cases of spiritual declension and the subsequent restoration we must go right back in our soul's consideration to the very spot where the declension began, and judge the root of the evil. In Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" the pilgrim had to go back to where he lost his roll before communion was restored. When a Christian slips back into the world we are too apt to lose sight of the possibility of restoration. In writing to the Galatian believers, the apostle says that where a man is overtaken in a fault it is those who are spiritual, not those who are merely intelligent in the Scriptures, who are able to restore such, and they must do so in the spirit of meekness, considering their own liability to temptation or testing. (Gal. 6, 1). Looking at the verse a little in detail the following points are worthy of note.

(1) The palmer-worm is a rough hairy caterpillar and may be taken to represent the effect of the grosser forms of pleasure which are but for a season. We read in John's Epistle that if any man says he is without sin he deceives himself and the truth is not in him. It is painfully true that when the Christian gets out of communion he becomes a prey to the lusts of the flesh, and is no more able to resist the evil within and without than a man in his natural state. When Samson got out of communion he yielded to the seductive charms of the temptress and became as weak as another man. When failure comes in we are apt to accredit Satan as the cause of it, but Satan should not be blamed. He is not directly responsible that men and women fall victims to wicked passions. Satan wishes his subjects to

conduct themselves orderly and to be a credit to their prince. He wishes to establish a millennium on earth with God eliminated and in which he is the centre and its object of worship. How little the power of the enemy is understood is evinced by the frequent remark about someone who has fallen, "If so and so is really the Lord's." Such an expression only shows that the innate wickedness of the human heart and Satan's power are not appreciated.

(2) The caterpillar may be taken to symbolise the lighter forms of pleasure. The caterpillar is an embryo form of butterfly. The butterfly is usually taken as representing pleasure in its full activity. A Christian who has been really redeemed by the precious blood of Christ does not ever again fully enjoy worldly pleasure. He never indeed reaches the butterfly phase of pleasure. It is the incipient or caterpillar stage which is the most fruitful cause of his being ensnared and seduced from the path of faith. Quite innocent pastimes occupy his attention. But whist, golf or motoring can dominate the soul of the Christian and keep him out of touch with Christ just as effectually as gross licence can do. They are all the more seductive on account of their apparent harmlessness.

(3) The cankerworm may be taken to represent the influence of business. This conclusion is borne out by the following Scriptures, "Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven; the cankerworm spoileth (or spreadeth himself) and fleeth away." (Nahum 3, 16). "Your gold and silver is cankered." (James 5, 3). The canker in these references is obviously related to commerce. That a Christian often owes poverty of soul to the influence of business need not be dilated upon. The evidences are all too frequent and apparent. The sparks of heavenly light deposited in Christians are continually being hidden under a bushel (the symbol of business), or under a bed (the symbol of pleasure) instead of being as candles set on candlesticks to illuminate the world with the knowledge of God.

The Lord instructed His own while here, "Ye are the light of the world." (Matt. 5, 14). While the Apostle exhorted the Philippian believers, "Among whom shine ye as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life." (Phil. 2, 16). "Holding forth" is often thought to be preaching, but this is erroneous. It need not be preaching nor even speaking of any kind, it is just moving in the calm enjoyment of the love of God, *i.e.*, being truly meek and lowly in heart, so that we do not obscure the heavenly light which God has deposited in every Christian. Our responsibility is obvious. We are charged with the duty of light-bearers, not to obscure the light of truth but to let it shine. We are witnesses for Christ. The world does not read the Word of God, hence the necessity that the Word should be exhibited in human mould.

(4) All the afore-mentioned pests are creeping insects. They do not rise above the earth, but the locust rises up into the air and flies. The locust may therefore be taken to set forth the influence of the various forms of intellectualism, the most fruitful source of spiritual declension. Satan is styled "the prince of the power of the air." (Eph. 2, 2). Intellectualism finds its greatest pleasure in Satan's special preserves. Locusts are of different kinds. They are very fruitful (Nah. 3, 15), and they go forth by bands. (Prov. 30, 28). The wonderful achievements of the human mind in the twentieth century show the very fruitful character of the locust. Moreover, in every sphere of life intellectualism has demonstrated the secular advantages of association or community of effort, and thus the triumph of mind over matter. Every example of intellectualism then, sets forth the truth that locusts are gregarious, or go forth by bands. Locusts are of different kinds. What may be a locust to one would not prove the same to another person. There is the political "locust" which gradually substitutes the newspaper for the Word of God, and eats up every green leaf in the soul so that it becomes a wilderness for God. That we

are so unfamiliar with the Word is simply because we do not study it. The working man politician spends 15 minutes at breakfast time, 15 minutes at dinner-time and 30 minutes at night studying his politics. An hour a day keeps him well abreast of the times in his world, so an hour a day studying the Word of God would keep the Christian progressing very favourably in the politics of heaven. "Our *politeuma* or conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3, 20), literally our "politics" are there. We need not, therefore, be perturbed as to what faction or nation is in the ascendancy in the world, or whether the historic "balance of power" is preserved or not. Space forbids our considering in detail many phases of "locust" activity, but we need only enumerate the scientific, the artistic, the literary, the religious spheres to show how diverse may be the influences which cause "green" souls to become parched deserts. The "religious locust" would seek to occupy us with forms and ceremonies to the exclusion of the apprehension of the Spirit which gives life. This was well understood by the Apostle when he wrote "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit." (Col. 2, 8). Because our daily work does not involve flights of intellectual fancy, we must not be carried away with the idea that in consequence we are immune from the influence of the locust. The Bible itself may afford substance for the forming of a locust if we study it in a wrong way. Let us suppose a young Christian starts to study his Bible. He imagines it necessary that he must purchase a Greek grammar, lexicon and testament. He goes on very well for a time, but ultimately he feels that he knows more than his less fortunate fellows. An arrogant spirit becomes developed. His downfall is but a matter of time. God cannot tolerate pride. Therefore we must look to ourselves to be careful of the object of our study, that the purpose is but to enlarge our hearts and not to puff up by increasing the analytical power of our brains.

The preceding remarks have dealt more with how the years are lost than how they are restored. The latter is not

easily put into words because much of the process is unintelligible. As a physical asset the years are gone for ever. Hezekiah could by earnest prayer have fifteen years added or restored to his life, but we cannot by any action of our own add a minute to our days. However, the spiritual substance is of far greater moment than the mere interval of time in which it is developed. It is this spiritual substance to which the restoration applies. Mere longevity is nothing if it does not lead us to a greater enjoyment of eternal life. It is better that we should spend one hour under the power of the Spirit of God than a century under the soul destroying influences of the world, because the results of the former will come out in the glorious life of the beloved city which will come down out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband spoken of in the 21st chapter of the Revelation. The soul, open towards God, gets flooded with the sense of the love of Christ which so permeates the moral being that it filters through and shines in every nook of the physical being. Christian fellowship is most wonderful, far surpassing the wonders of wireless telegraphy. If a fibre in the moral being vibrates heavenwards the resultant wave runs throughout heaven, then is deflected to earth and passes through the people of God, causing great joy wherever it goes.

THE LAST WORDS OF THE TESTAMENTS.

“Curse” is the last word of the Old Testament, even as the closing idea of the New Testament is “grace.” Although these occurrences may seem to be accidental, the words are really representative of the aspects of the truth unfolded in the Books they conclude.

The word “curse” and its relatives occur 171 times in the Old Testament and only 19 times in the New Testament, while the latter are mainly references to the former or relative to human affairs. On the other hand, the word “grace” occurs only 12 times in the Old Testament, but is found 125 times in the New Testament. In the former

the usage is confined in some instances to the idea of "personal charm" merely and does not convey the New Testament idea at all.

The Old Testament is the record of "the first man" and his posterity, and is full of incidents showing man's continuous sin against and disobedience to God, so that the curse of God on man was the only logical conclusion. Indeed it is the end of man after the flesh. (Deut. 28). Its infliction by God in His governmental dealings was necessary when all His offers of mercy had been rejected. Moreover, what had merely a temporal bearing in the former dispensation, acquires an everlasting character in the full light of the truth in the New Testament. So that there will yet be those who will hear the Lord's final pronouncement on their case, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." (Matt. 25, 41).

Grace is the all-pervading thought of the New Testament. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord." (Rom. 5, 20-21). The expression at the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!" was indicative of the new quality introduced, *viz.*, that grace would displace law. The death of Christ comes in between the dispensations as that which explains the complete change in their characters. In grace Christ took the sinner's place. He redeemed us from the curse of the broken law, being made a curse for us. (Gal. 3, 13). As such He bore the judgment of God on sin, which should have fallen on man, but fell on Him instead. God in His infinite holiness is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12, 29). That fire after the consumption of every other fuel would have continued in unabated fury. But at Calvary it spent its utmost force on Christ. Him who knew no sin God made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him. (2 Cor. 5, 21). So that every attribute of the majesty of God was fully vindicated in the death of Christ.

There was such a superabundance of grace over sin and its cognate curse, that after the complete solution of the problem of sin in righteousness, grace is dominant. Everyone who comes into its realm finds that unexhausted increment of grace is inexhaustible, and that grace acquires a specialised character in being the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. That caused Him to come down from the infinite position of riches and majesty to the poverty of a homeless path which found its climax in the death of shame on the cross, in order that we might become partakers in the riches of His grace and glory. The grace which is our normal enveloping atmosphere is the same grace which so marked our Lord Jesus Christ in tracing out that course to the glory of God. May we therefore be found growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3, 18).

THE DAY OF BLESSING.

There is nothing like a day of blessing for making crooked things straight and rough places plain. When the sun shines in its strength the plant opens, the flower spreads itself to catch the rays; but when the chill evening blast comes shrinkage occurs. In the heyday of blessing there is no time for Satan; but when that is passed he seeks to renew his hold. The Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time were recovered to be with Saul and Jonathan (I. Sam. xiv., 21). Testimony against evil is cold, and often powerless for recovery; but one day of grace will bring back many a wandering sheep! A famine in the land of Israel drove away Naomi; but when she had heard that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread, she arose that she might return from the country of Moab (Ruth i., 6, 7). Blessing is God's power of attraction!

(Extracted from Present Testimony vii., 170).

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM.

“David therefore departed thence and escaped to the cave Adullam; and when his brethren and all his father’s house heard, they went down thither to him and everyone in distress and in debt, and everyone discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a Captain over them and there were with him about 400 men.” (1 Samuel 22, 1-2).

The history of David shows in manifold types the administration of God which is in faith in this era. We may first refer to his complete victory over Goliath which typifies Christ’s complete victory achieved at Calvary over the powers of darkness and him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil. Subsequent to that episode we have the incident of Jonathan whose soul was knit with the soul of David; analogous to the scene recorded in the 20th Chapter of John’s Gospel when the Lord on the evening of His resurrection day came into the midst of the little company of disciples and proclaimed peace unto them. And when He had displayed the unchallengeable marks of His passion they were overcome with joy. But the impression made on Saul was entirely different. Jealousy filled his heart, when he heard the song of the women, that David had slain his ten thousands while Saul was only credited with thousands. In the Gospel we read that it was envy which led the Jewish leaders to deliver Christ for execution by the civil powers. Saul became persistently the sport of evil spirits and his hand held a javelin in order to smite David. So orthodox religion has been ever ready to persecute the remnant loyal to the Lord’s name. Four hundred years

ago, the powers of evil all over so-called Christian countries in Europe were exerted in oppressing and seeking to stamp out the sparks of real light from God. With true prophetic vision, Latimer being burned at the stake encouraged Ridley, his partner in suffering, with the words "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, we shall this day light a candle in England that by God's grace, I trust, will never be put out."

So it has ever been through the centuries. The orthodox has persecuted what it did not understand. Even great writers with abnormal powers of perception failed to recognise the essential values. *E.g.*, in his writings, Sir Walter Scott poured ridicule on the Covenanters and sought to make a blood-thirsty monster like Claverhouse pass as a satisfactory companion. Again he stigmatised Cromwell and his associates as sanctimonious humbugs, and sought to read fine feelings in a shameless libertine like King Charles II. There never were greater men in Scotland than the Covenanters, nor was England ever so well ruled as under Cromwell! Yet that beneficent rule did not inspire confidence. Cromwell died of ague, literally apprehension, worn out at 59 years of age. There is only one rule which inspires confidence and it is that of the Lord Jesus Christ. His authority is owned by the Christian and a parallel confidence springs up in the soul.

The sequel to Saul's systematic persecution was that David ultimately took refuge in the almost inaccessible Cave of Adullam in the face of a great cliff, only about two miles away from the valley of Elah, the scene of his great victory over Goliath and the Philistines. The parallel presentation in the New Testament is: "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the Camp bearing His reproach." (Heb. 13, 13). The motley crew which accompanied David would have fallen out amongst themselves on the first day of their association, if it had not been for the magnetic power of their leader. Therefore in our times the passage in Hebrews would lose its force if the two small words "unto Him"

were omitted. If we seek an antidote to the ills which afflict the Christian profession by monastic seclusion outside the camp of orthodox religion we shall be grievously disappointed. The only bond which will hold us together is the appreciation of the peerless qualities of Christ, as the power of attraction. The elements of David's company looked refractory. They had been in distress, in debt, in discontent. It has been well said that common differences are not likely to prove a satisfactory basis of union. All the societies of men are founded not on negative but on positive considerations. It would be fair to expect that a chemical society is composed of members with a common interest in chemistry and so on. But there was a company with nothing in common but their grievances against society. So in Christianity the members viewed from natural considerations would be esteemed a heterogeneous association. But we have to learn that in the new state, there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free. So that racial, ecclesiastical, intellectual or social considerations are obliterated. But therein, Christ is all and in all. (Col. 3, 11). So that the Christian bond is not founded on natural considerations whether negative or positive, but by a complete disestablishment of these and the introduction of a new bond in the Lordship of Christ.

As we have seen, the camp is the symbol of organised religion. In every department of human affairs, organisation is the order of the day, so much so that man tends to worship the machine. People occupy themselves with the mere mechanism of Christian profession, with statistics of progress, usually measured in terms of numbers and affluence, while the sense of the reverence due to the Lord's name is being gradually eliminated from the mass of the profession. So that people disturbed with the unsatisfactory state of affairs to seek a remedy by going outside the sects of Christendom will find that such procedure will offer

no solace to the hungry soul, if the attraction is not unto Him. Any other kind of exodus will lead to barrenness of soul. As we realise the Lord's attractive power we shall find rich compensation for the reproach or special stigma which attaches to His name. David's ill-assorted company became the nucleus of his mighty men in the subsequent day of glory. He was their Captain or head, typical of the two-fold aspect of Christ's pre-eminence. (1) Lordship, (2) Headship. David's men were not a mere collection of freebooters. They were really the only defenders of the frontier of the country against the incursions of the Philistines and the Amalekites. So to-day the defence against the flood-tide of rationalism on the one hand and of ritualism on the other is not vested in the hands of organised religion, but in the hands of those who have gone outside the camp bearing the stigma of the Lord's name. Organised religion is torn between the forces of reason and ritual, so that right-minded individuals therein are powerless to offer any effective opposition. The Philistines robbed the fruits of the harvest in Israel. (1 Sam. 23, 1). So those who masquerade as Christians before the world without any real title thereto would seek to rob us of the sense of the preciousness of Christ, presented in the Scriptures.

Abiathar, the sole survivor from the massacre of the priestly company in Nob fled to David. Under the influence of the spirit of error Saul, who had started well, ultimately became a persecutor and his hands imbrued with the blood of martyrs. So Germany, the home of Luther and the cradle of a great part of the Reformation, has now dissociated itself officially from Christ's name, and ere long will be dyeing her hands with the blood of both Jews and Christians. But when Abiathar fled to David he did not come empty-handed; he brought an ephod in his hand. The casual observer would have said why did he burden himself with such a useless piece of luggage! He realised that the all-important matter was having connection with

the Lord. The ephod speaks of prophetic insight. We may be certain that persecution will tend to make us more desirous of having the Lord's mind on everything. We shall want to have special guidance. There is no doubt whatever but that very special guidance is being given to the people of God in these lands where persecution is rampant.

Samuel died and all the Israelites were gathered together and lamented him. (1 Sam. 25, 1). Samuel had long ceased to be a power in the land. The people, like their king, had resented his criticism. But after his death when they knew that no scathing indictment would fall upon their ears, they sought to salve their consciences by making a demonstration of sympathy. Many people act similarly nowadays. In Scotland it used to be fashionable in religious circles to commemorate the Covenanters, whose testimony would have been a stern rebuke to the conduct of the bulk of the commemorators. Recently there have been celebrations of the centenaries of the births of Spurgeon and Moody. Is it at all likely that the majority of the celebrants would have relished the sharp words of these men. Most of them would have faded away, considering the evangelists as too narrow-minded for the liberal ideas of the present day.

The last incident we shall consider is that of Nabal. (1 Sam. 25, 3). Nabal means "fool." He was obsessed with the idea of making all he could in this world irrespective of his indebtedness to either God or man. That he was descended from Caleb (the man of heart for the Lord) is a tragic reference. How often we find men of the world (real "go-getters") who did not respond to early Christian influence. Often such had been even brought up in Christian households, and now wholly given up to the worship of mammon. At this stage we may well express our thanks for the abundant mercy of God which has preserved us so as to have some measure of apprehension as to what is due to His interests and the honour of the name of the Lord. Nabal, like his successor in the Gospel parable, left God out

of his reckoning. The latter wanted to build bigger barns. But at that juncture, like the death knell of Belshazzar, came the word of the Lord "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!" Nabal took what was analogous to an apoplectic fit on hearing of the generosity of his wife at his expense. It is worthy of note how often he used the pronoun "my," as to his possessions. Yet he neglected his soul, the only real possession he had. Nabal's example is very much that exhibited in the parsimony of the twentieth century. Every where one hears that retrenchment is necessary. Churches which were full to overflowing in the nineteenth century have to coalesce. Their evacuated buildings are converted to the use of cinemas, shops and all sorts of secular purposes. That the Lord's arm has shortened is an impossible tenet! Then we must conclude that the contraction is in man's arm. Well, the challenge comes to ourselves. "What about the length of our arm?" Because it is an easy matter dealing with these things in the abstract. We require to let the keen edge of the Word have its own innate power on the individual.

FRAGMENT *Continued from page 288.*

If we ponder over the thought how the blessed Lord has borne with all our shortcomings, it will enable us to walk quietly and lovingly with those Christians with whom God in His wondrous grace has privileged us to be associated. Hence the Apostle exhorted the Christians in Ephesus to put away all bitterness and malice, to be kind to each other, tender hearted, forgiving one another in the same way that God for Christ's sake had forgiven them. (Eph. 4, 31, 32). To forgive in all the tenderness in which God forgives is a natural impossibility, but it is no more than the normal standard of Christianity. Until that fast approaching day when He shall call us up and all possibilities of the development of fissures be removed, may we be found gladdening the heart of Christ in this way.

ABOVE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE SUN.

Solomon, the wisest man of Old Testament times, in the heyday of his youth and regal splendour, wrote many songs. The choicest of all has been preserved to us in the Song of Songs! Literary people tell us that it is a superlative love lyric, which is matchless in any language. However, the Christian sees therein the added quality of prophetic character with reference to Christ and those whose hearts have been won by His love. In the zenith of his reign, Solomon enunciated a series of proverbs which have formed a book of reference of wise judgment for men in every clime and age. In his declining years (indeed only two years before he died), Solomon wrote a book of very different character to either of the foregoing. In the Ecclesiastes (lit. the Book of "calling together"), he sets forth a very pessimistic view of affairs. These were described repeatedly as being "under the sun." His summary of everything was vanity or emptiness, literally of soap bubble consistency! The soap bubble is very beautiful. Its film has been the subject of great scientific investigations of entrancing interest. But the bubble notwithstanding its beauty has little permanency and when subjected to small disturbance it vanishes. How aptly descriptive is that feature of "everything under the sun"! Solomon also mentions the added feature of "vexation of spirit." No one had ever before or have they ever had since such an opportunity of enjoying to hearts content everything under the sun. Yet his closing days were not joyful, indeed they were shrouded in gloom: the end of all whose vision is limited to what is under the sun!

However, on turning to the New Testament we see the principle emerging that there are things "above the sun." The way that this breaks in on the soul of the individual is well illustrated in the history of the principal writer on these matters in the New Testament. Saul of Tarsus, as proud and self-willed as Solomon, was in the hey-day of his

life and youthful vigour when he went to Damascus to blot out the Christian name from under the sun, when a "light above the brightness of the sun" caused a complete revolution in his being and subsequent conduct. It is of great interest to note the description of that light in the three records of the story. In Acts 9 "A light from heaven." In Acts 22 "A great light." In Acts 26 "A light from heaven above the brightness of the sun."

All three records refer to the same light. But the series of expressions show a growing appreciation in the heart of the witness of the excellence of the light. Henceforth the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ eclipsed everything under the sun for that man. His spiritual fervour led him to press forward towards the mark of the calling on High of God in Christ Jesus. Every excellent thing under the sun became to him only fit for the refuse bin!

The young man, Saul of Tarsus, head and shoulders above his contemporaries in a moral sense, became Paul, the aged Apostle, who esteemed himself only a little worker in God's plan of action. At the end of his career, like Solomon, he was a writer. But a great contrast is presented between the writings! Solomon, with everything to gratify the senses throughout his life, was nevertheless a disappointed man. After thirty years of continual trial and sufferings for the name of Christ, Paul could write amid the gloom of a Roman prison "Rejoice in the Lord alway." (Phil. 4, 4). "I have all and abound, I am full." (Phil. 4, 18). "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure (or analysis) is at hand, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only but unto all those also who love His appearing." (2 Tim. 4, 6-8). In Christ, the aged Apostle had found complete satisfaction and required no one else to supply his

needs or to add to his joy. Thus our affections are detached from things "under the sun," so that we may be attached to "things above the brightness of the sun" which find their centre in a man in the Glory of God.

JONATHAN'S PROBLEM.

The instance of Jonathan seeking to be identified with two courses diametrically opposed to each other has been frequently adduced as evidence that a Christian cannot serve God and mammon. Christ and the world are mutually exclusive! The soul of Jonathan was knit with that of David and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. So Jonathan was unmistakably attached to David and there were many proofs of his deep affection. Yet he continued with Saul and was ultimately irretrievably associated in the complete defeat and death of the latter. Jonathan failed to separate from his father and to unite his lot with that of David. In spite of his love he never shared David's sufferings and trials. In this connection he was a type of the Christian who seeks to go on with the world in order to evade the reproach or stigma attaching to Christ. We would not for a moment seek to weaken the testimony of scripture as to the grave danger of a christian seeking to go on with the world, and we admit that the case of Jonathan can be cited quite fairly as an illustration of the principle. But it is well to bear in mind that scriptural exposition is never singular or private. The first principle in the Old Covenant was honouring father and mother. That was the prime commandment with specified promise. Jonathan was devoted to his father. He seemed to have been a model son. Although his father was a strange moody person, often obsessed with melancholy and a victim of evil spirits, but at other times carried away with lofty sentiment, he is perhaps the most pathetic figure in Biblical history! Jonathan knew that his father's cause was lost and that David's would emerge ultimately in victory and glory but

he knew that his friend would not forget good service. However, God disposed otherwise! Thus Jonathan was torn between two irreconcilable courses. His heart was with David, but his feet followed his father to disaster.

At a later date John the Baptist came as the forerunner of Christ. It has been asserted that his failing to be associated with the Lord ended in his being beheaded, but the Lord's own testimony is sufficient evidence to dispose of that theory. *E.g.*, "Among those born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." (Matt. 11, 11). Hence John could not be a follower of Christ. His function was that of a herald or forerunner. John's own testimony was congruent with the foregoing, "He it is who coming after me is preferred before me." (John 1, 27). "He must increase, I must decrease." (John 3, 30). John's star had to disappear due to the outshining of Christ in moral glory. John was the last of the worthies of the old dispensation, he could not be in the ushering in of the new era. So it is well to be guarded against one-sided presentation of any instance in scripture. Similarly we cannot establish the whole truth from one chapter, else the other chapters would be rendered invalid or redundant.

UZZAH'S ERROR.

"Uzzah put forth his hand to the Ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah and God smote him there for his error (rashness), and there he died." (2 Sam. 6, 6-7).

That solemn incident is fraught with instruction for us, in spite of the passage of 3,000 years. The principle which is emphasised is that the work of the Lord must be done in His way, and not according to what we think is best. It seemed quite justifiable procedure, that if the ark appeared in danger of being thrown off the cart, then surely that undesirable contingency should have been prevented. That David should have conceived the idea of bringing the

Ark of God into the midst of Israel after a century's absence was quite proper, but he ignored the scriptural injunction that the Ark was to be borne on the shoulders of the Levites and by no other means. His arrangement of a new cart might have seemed an improvement, but it was not the Lord's way, consequently one wrong step led to another. If the Ark had been borne in God's appointed way on the shoulders of the Levites, there would have been no necessity for anyone being apprehensive as to its safety. But God's people and their leader had to learn that the Lord could look after His own interests.

Over 1000 years later, when the Lord was asleep in the little ship in the storm on the sea of Galilee the disciples failed to realise that no untoward incident could happen to them in the Lord's company. He was perfectly able to look after His own interests and their interests were indissolubly bound up with His. They must have felt that when He arose and stilled the tempest! How frequently we are tempted to interfere in the Lord's work as guided by our own reason. We may not have been greatly exercised as to whether or not our action would be approved of the Lord. If it is not according to His mind He may not execute such summary judgment upon us as fell upon Uzzah. Nevertheless our action may be just as displeasing to the Lord as that of the latter, and will receive similar condemnation at His Judgment Seat. Hence the injunction "Study to show thyself approved unto God." (2 Tim. 2, 15). Nothing else will be worth while. "Take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine" (1 Tim. 4, 10), *i.e.*, take stock of ourselves in relation to the doctrine. We may be able to explain our courses of action quite favourably in relation to secular considerations, but it will be altogether futile if these courses of action are not according to the doctrine. In other words the faith once delivered to the saints is not rendered inapplicable because of the lapse of time, since it is the word of Him with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

THE OUTLOOK FOR A REVIVAL.

A prominent Christian leader is reported to have said that it is extremely unlikely that a revival will occur in our time; indeed the idea of a revival is out of date. In referring to that statement there is no wish to cast a slur on the speaker in question, but the incident is adduced to show the character of the times in which we live. Some time ago, a daily newspaper propounded the question, "Have we lost God?" Prominent men representative of different walks in life, were called up to answer the question. Only one of them, a worker in the slums of London, had a clear-cut solution to offer, and he was imbued with the sense of the continuing value of the old, old story of redemption through the blood of Jesus. The others were greatly divided in opinion as to the need of revival, and where this was admitted it amounted to no more than a revival of religion. But we ought to remember that the great persecutors of the Christians in the first century were the greatest religionists of all history. With such evidence before us, we conclude that, in spite of the enormous sale of Bibles, there is a great famine of food for the soul analogous to the conditions relative to the body obtaining in Samaria at the period recorded in 2 Kings 7. The sale of an ass' head for eighty pieces of silver is an apt description in metaphor of what obtains in spiritual food purveying in many circles professedly Christian. It is not suggested that the theological philosopher has an ass' head. In common speech, an ass is averred to be typical of a fool and a fool is the Scriptural title of a man who says "there is no God." But that is not the thought we wish to impress, because it would be a libel on the ass, as the ass is a very wise animal. But the head of an ass is mostly skin and bone and affords little food. Those enlightened by the Holy Spirit will readily concede that the spiritual nourishment derived from the bulk of current theological disquisitions is very like the physical nourishment derived from an ass' head.

In such depressing conditions, the prophetic word of

good news came to the people: "To-morrow about this time, there shall be a measure of fine flour for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." Fine flour and barley set forth typically different aspects of the preciousness of Christ revealed in the Bible, as esteemed to be the Word of God. In the record of Philadelphian virtues (Rev. 3) prominence is given to keeping His Word—the Word of His patience. In every revival there is a recurrence with fresh zest to the Bible as the living Word of God. In quietness and confidence, Elisha with personal knowledge of his God could assure his hearers of immediate blessing. So the apostle Paul could encourage his ship-mates in spite of every evidence to the contrary in the words, 'Be of good cheer; for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me.' (Acts 27, 25). So again the prophet Zechariah could speak of the great mountain becoming a plain before Zerubbabel! Every obstacle to the accomplishment of God's purposes vanishes in His good time.

However, there was a man in high position, trusted implicitly by the king, who judging entirely by external evidences discredited the prophetic word. Faith alone, and not secular perception is required to see that in spite of the apathy all around, the people of God have still a link with heaven. The scoffer ridicules the idea that "the Lord will step in to the blue vault of heaven." The real Christian may not directly express his judgment of the idea similarly, and yet be culpable indirectly of fellowship with the scoffer. The Apostle writing to the Thessalonians addressed them as "sons of the day" and not of the night, and therefore exhorted them not to sleep as others but to watch and be "sober" (*i.e.*, properly balanced as to self-judgment), putting on (for heart protection) the breastplate of faith and love, and (for head protection) a helmet, the hope or prospect of salvation which involves the securing of the body as well as of the soul by the Lord. In order to do that He will open a door in heaven! There are always windows in heaven

because although God may not be interfering markedly in the affairs of men, He sees everything that is going on and is making perfect disposition of the affairs of those who shall be heirs of salvation. The nobleman was not only in the intimate counsels of the king, but was appointed to administrative position in being given charge of the gate. For the illustration of our point we shall pass over the source of his appointment. That he was in administrative capacity is sufficient, and probably he was well fitted by natural ability for the dispensation of authority. But he was swept away by the unceremonious rush of the people when they became aware that outside the city there was excellent food for their bodies. Analogous to the nobleman's position in that period long ago, we find at the present time, Christians placed in the gateway of supply from God, entrusted with the dispensation of the "fine flour and barley" (speaking of the preciousness of Christ) to the needy people of God. How is such trust being administered? That is a salutary question for everyone of us!

How often we are like the disciples absorbed with bickerings as to our relative administrative positions, altogether oblivious of the fact that not our greatness but our littleness will contribute to the efficiency of our administration of the Lord's interests in view of His speedy return. It is well to realize that the Lord will not be debtor to anyone. If any continue in self-complacency reckoning that they are indispensable to His service, they may easily suffer the fate of the nobleman so far as their usefulness to the Lord's interests is concerned—unceremoniously brushed aside as merely obstacles hindering the people from securing food for their souls, which is the prominent requirement at such a juncture as this. In a revival, the preciousness of Christ is always at a premium amongst the people of God. It is quite true that "souls being saved" is the prominent feature of a revival, but an essential accompaniment is that the Christians are shaken up from drowsy slumber to watch over the interests of their absent Lord.

A PRELIMINARY CONDITION OF REVIVAL.

That there is great need for revival of interest in the things of the Lord on the part of many of those who bear His name, may be accepted as a statement which does not call for much demonstration. But a revival of lasting value cannot be stirred up on the basis of sentiment or natural fervour. There was a great revival in the day of Josiah. (2 Chron. 34). That revival evinced two distinct phases. (1) Josiah became king of Jerusalem at eight years of age. He did what was right in the sight of the Lord. He walked in the ways of David, his ancestor, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left. Surely that was an excellent testimonial which compared favourably with the record of most of his predecessors! At twelve years of age he began to purge his kingdom from the high places, groves, images and altars dedicated to Baalim and he burned the bones of the deceased priests who had been associated with these upon their altars. He carried his activities into the neighbouring land of Samaria. Most of the inhabitants of which had been carried captive into Assyria about 80 years previously, but apparently the remnant left in the land had continued in their old idolatrous practice. Now, fourteen years after the initiation of his campaign against idolatry, *i.e.*, in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land thoroughly he sent his officers to repair the House of the Lord. They delivered the money which the Levites had collected to the overseers and they passed the money to the manual workers. There was no reckoning of the money that was delivered because all dealt faithfully. (2 Kings 22, 7). That history could offer better examples of reliability is very unlikely. Yet there was something lacking!

(2) We now reach the second phase of the revival. The money enabled Hilkiah, the High Priest, to make a thorough overhaul of the House. In the process he found the Book of the Law of the Lord, given by the hand of Moses. (2 Chron. 34, 14). Hilkiah sent a messenger with it to the

King. When the latter heard the words of the Law read, of which apparently he had previously but slight acquaintance, he was greatly affected. The divine Laws had been broken in a flagrant manner and fearful judgment had been incurred. After rending his clothes the king sent messengers to Huldah the Prophetess to be informed as to his future course of action. She assured the messengers that on account of Josiah's godliness and grief for the prevalent wickedness, the stroke of judgment would not fall in his time.

Moreover, as a consequence of the words of the Book being found and received by him the king became greatly exercised that his subjects should hear the same words. Thus in the House of the Lord he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant. He persuaded them to renew their solemn Covenant with the Lord. The people stood to the Covenant all the days of his life. Then he caused all the vessels which had been dedicated to the worship of Baal to be burned. He slew all the idolatrous priests, soothsayers and spiritistic media in the cities of Judah and Samaria.

But he was not content with crushing evil, he was now in a position to do good and he caused the Passover to be celebrated with an exactitude and alacrity which had not been in evidence in the palmy days of Solomon. Indeed there was no Passover which had been celebrated like it from the days of Samuel the prophet. It will be observed that the marvellous increment to the revival was consequent on the word of the Lord being discovered, read, received and enacted. The word is that of Him with whom is no variation nor retraction. So that it is safe to affirm that there cannot be any revival of lasting benefit which is not controlled by the Word of God. In evangelical circles there is frequently much stir, yet the Scriptures do not receive their rightful place as the Word of God, which is living and dynamic. Much ignorance of the letter of Scripture is evinced so that we cannot wonder that the still more subtle entity of the doctrine or

teaching of Scripture is not apprehended. May we be disposed to learn from the example of Josiah to put a premium on the Word of God as the initial requirement in our research after the much desired end of revival of interest in the Lord's work!

THE LOVE OF THE TRUTH.

The days in which we live are marked by unparalleled advance in all the accommodations and conveniences of living, also in the general culture of all classes. People boast in such advancement, but the Christian sees that the progress of the world has an inevitable end. At the zenith of its magnificence it will come under the judgment of the Lord. The essential tendencies in the progress of the age is to lead mankind in general to despise and even to pour ridicule on the grace and mercy of God. But God will turn the noon splendour of man's day into the shade of everlasting night. On the other hand for His own He will turn the shadow of death into the morning of everlasting day. Then will be brought to pass the consummation of the miracle "at evening time it shall be light." (Zech. 14, 7). The Christian contemplates these matters with mixed feelings. He will be sorrowful as he listens to the daily boasting of man. But he will be joyful as he hears the Spirit's voice to the churches with the promise that the day of his redemption is near at hand. His immunity from the blandishments and deceptions of the age will depend on his reception and appreciation of the love of the truth, in which lies his present salvation. (2 Thess. 2, 10). The Christian is not occupied with the possibility of the hand of God interfering with the rise of man's Tower of Babel. His prime occupation is with the Word of the Lord, *viz.*, the truth. The Lord permits the pride of man to nourish and distend itself. He lets the world prosper by its own device. The one who looks primarily for providential intervention is in danger.

In principle we see the deceitful character of religious activity set forth in Ezekiel's day. (Ezek. 8, 9-14). There were excellent paintings of the abominations on the temple walls. The ancient men of religion were raising clouds of incense in the dark and in their vain imaginations saying, "the Lord seeth us not." Then on the other side of the House women were weeping for Tammuz (a heathen deity). The last mentioned was illustrated some time ago in the South of England when a monster ritualistic procession was in progress, bathing belles overcome with emotion were seen kneeling along the roadside as the "host" passed by. Subsequently Ezekiel's vision portrayed men with their backs to the temple of the Lord and their faces to the East worshipping the sun. This is typical of the prevalent worship of nature's grandeur, to the exclusion of any desire for ascertaining the Lord's mind, which is learned in what corresponds to the temple of living stones. What fascination these imaginations have for the ritualist and the rationalist of our own time? The Lord did not interfere with these celebrations. He did not pour rain on the clouds of incense that rose in beautiful wreaths as if He who dwelt in the temple accepted them. No hand traced out a warning message on the wall! Nevertheless, the Word of the Lord described these fascinations as abominations. The prophet's safety (as ours at the present moment) lay in the love of the truth. The truth reveals the character of what is in progress and preserves us from being partakers in what is merely a fair show in the flesh. In spite of its apparent comeliness it is an abomination to the Lord.

NOAH, DANIEL AND JOB.

No historian would have combined those names in a Triumvirate relative to individual exercise in the way that the Spirit of God has done in Ezekiel xiv., 14, 20. They were separated by nearly a thousand years from each other.

The names are not arranged in order of time and yet they agreed in the features on which emphasis was put in the sacred page. Noah was born nearly 3,000 B.C., Job lived about 1,600 B.C. and Daniel 600 B.C.

Noah was the connecting link between two worlds *viz.*:—
(a) that which came under the overwhelming judgment of God and only Noah and his family were preserved in the Ark; (b) that which emerged from the waters of the Flood. The first is indicative of the eternal judgment to come and the only but perfectly efficacious salvation in Christ, the true Ark. The second is typical of the New Creation into which it is inconceivable that evil can come because righteousness dwells there; intimately disseminated through every atom of its constitution.

Job is the proverbial man of patience in the midst of the greatest trial and affliction. Daniel, although a captive, became the greatest man in the Gentile world. But in spite of the danger of being inflated with success his faith kept him in the mind of God. His eyes were not occupied with the magnificence of Babylon to which probably he had contributed greatly by his capability and honest administration. Yet thrice a day the aspirations of his soul turned towards Jerusalem. His philosophic contemporaries would speak contemptuously of the apparent futility of his outlook, because Nebuchadnezzar had compassed the work of destruction so perfectly that Jerusalem was only a rubbish heap; but the ruinous condition to the observation of the eye did not render invalid the statement that God had chosen to put His name there. Zion was still God's centre, the perfection of beauty to faith's transpiercing eye!

The fact that Ezekiel placed his illustrious contemporary between the two great men of ancient times is striking testimony to his unselfishness. Ezekiel was a lowly captive in a concentration camp beside the river Chebar in Chaldea, when he had the transcending vision of heavenly things relative to earth which formed his long prophetic statement.

While Daniel was of the seed royal of Judah and held in considerable honour from the outset of his captivity. He was treated with respect in view of reception into the philosophic circle in the greatest city of the world. He had never been associated with the mass of captives from Israel subjected to reproach and shame. Hence Ezekiel might have been pardoned if he had slighted Daniel for apparent lack of loyalty (indeed the Jews deny prophetic title to Daniel). No such consideration weighed with Ezekiel, yet the fact that Daniel's reputation for godliness was widespread would not have convinced the prophet. But the latter was guided by God to select an outstanding Triumvirate and put his younger contemporary in the centre, in establishing the principle of individual responsibility in matters pertaining to God!

EXPERTS UNSERVICEABLE.

Henry Ford of automobile fame has said that he always found it necessary to get rid of a man as soon as he thought himself an expert, because in that state of mind he was really a hindrance to progress of the work. If that dictum applies to such a mundane matter as engineering, with how much greater force will it apply to the Lord's service, which should lead people into the sphere of apprehension of heavenly things!

Elijah had that outlook when he fled from Jezreel to Horeb. He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts: . . . I, only, am left and they seek my life" (I. Kings xix., 10). He was obviously blaming the Lord for allowing affairs to get into such a low state. Elijah had been faithful yet he was left alone to carry on the Lord's work. Since they sought his life and were likely to succeed then the testimony would vanish. The Lord did not give him a direct answer, but simply instructed him to make a detour on his return journey to anoint Hazael as king of Syria (who was later to be a scourge of Israel), Jehu

to be king of Israel and Elisha to be prophet in his room. The last statement was virtually telling Elijah that since he had become expert and indispensable, the Lord had no further use for him. Although Elijah lived about 10 years longer, apparently he was not very much in view in God's work subsequently; although he did convey the message of judgment to Ahab, King of Israel, after he seized the vineyard of Naboth, slaying its owner.

At Mount Horeb, Elijah learned that the Lord had 7,000 obscure people who had just been as jealous for the honour of the Lord God of Hosts and as loyal to the Lord's name as Elijah had been. But the real sting in the message lay in the intelligence that his successor was to be Elisha, a simple minded ploughman who had not enough perception to see the significance of the stroke of the prophet's mantle. However, Elijah kept in perfect obedience to the command of the Lord and subsequently he was translated to heaven in a chariot of fire. Surprising to say that the former ploughman endowed with a double portion of Elijah's spirit accomplished greater and more voluminous work for the Lord than his great predecessor had done, simply because it was the will of God that it should be so! Subsequent to his translation Elijah was not in a dormant state, because nine centuries later on the Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and the Lord he discussed the features of the Lord's death (exodus) which He was shortly going to accomplish at Jerusalem.

It is a great matter to realise that God will not be debtor to anyone, since from the very stones he can raise up children to Abraham, (*i.e.*, the line of faith). We should not think of ourselves as indispensable to the Lord's service. He is quite capable of taking care of His own interests and making provision for the carrying on of the work from the most unlikely elements. However, it is very encouraging that the smallest service coupled with the name of the Lord will not escape recognition in the day of display and infallible assessment of service!

THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

An eminent clergyman, one of the chief pillars of the New Theology, has said that prayer is entirely subjective in its bearing; that is, it cannot effect any purpose outside the soul of the one who prays and is thus only useful in putting us in a more pleasant frame of mind. The devil is well aware that a flat contradiction of the truth would stand little chance of being believed. Hence he has always sought to substitute a half-truth for the whole truth. Ever since he beguiled our first parents in Eden how notoriously successful he has been. There he suggested that by obeying him, man would become as God, knowing good and evil. That was a statement perfectly true so far as it went, but one which required the complementary statement that man would also be unable to do the good or to resist the evil. So Satan wishes to instil into the minds of Christians the half-truth that prayer is subjective, well knowing that limitation of the truth invariably results in its being given up. That prayer is subjective is blessedly true. It has a wonderful, stimulating, purifying influence on the soul of the suppliant. But it is equally true that prayer has an objective side. It fulfils the purpose of moving the Hand that controls the physical universe, that holds the spirits of men, and that moulds everything material and moral to the accomplishment of His will! Elijah was a man such as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain. When Elijah stood before the people on Mount Carmel, he was God's envoy and as such, spoke and acted in virtue of his high commission. But at the close of that busy memorable day when he came into the presence of the Lord, he humbled himself in the dust. The beautiful view from Carmel's summit had no place in his thoughts.

After Elijah had wrestled with God in the depth of abasement of spirit, he said to his servant, "Look towards the

sea." The answer came back, "I see nothing." That help does not come at our first cry is a matter of common experience. Mer do not expect the harvest immediately after sowing. That this principle should be exemplified in prayer is not agreeable to the natural mind. But it is very salutary to the spirit. If the door of God's treasure house always opened at our first knock we should feel self-contained. We should seem commanders, become arrogant and forget our dependent state. We should be in danger of idolising prayer, and think that in it we have a legal claim to the bounty of God. We must always remember that the door swings on the hinges of His mercy. Our gracious God keeps us standing awhile knocking, because long waiting is beneficial to us. Nature thus receives crushing blows; the dull heart is opened up; the ruins of self-esteem tumble down; the foundation of truth in the soul is laid deep. At length when the answer comes, how great is the joy! When at the seventh time the servant returned and said, "There ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand," what pen can portray the feelings of Elijah? The apostle James brings forward Elijah's success in prayer as an encouragement to us to persevere in fervent prayer, because of its efficacy. But who can recount all the wonderful instances in Scripture when the fervent prayers of righteous men have availed. Through prayer Moses turned away the wrath of God from Israel and with outstretched hands he prevailed over Amalek. Manoah, by intreaty, drew down a visible manifestation from God in angelic form. (Judges 13, 8). Through prayer at Mizpeh, Samuel caused the thunder of terror to roll over Israel's enemies. (I. Sam. 7, 9-12). Through prayer, Josiah died in peace; fifteen years were added to Hezekiah's life; the three Hebrews were preserved in the fiery furnace of Babylon; and to Daniel it was said by the angel Gabriel, "I am come because of thy words." Prayer rebuked storms, healed the sick and brought back the dead to life.

The Word of God is full of the power and wonders of prayer and our Christian life would be full of them too, if we continued instant in prayer. But with us, prayer is apt to become a sleepy business. For what is so often called prayers (morning and evening) according to custom, may be dull listless repetition of devotional language which does not deserve the name of prayer. Prayer is not the repetition of scripture nor the rehearsal of certain dogmatic statements which may go to form a creed. God does not want ceremonious compliments. The confessions of a broken heart, the cry of the humble, the expression of godly sorrow, laying-down of cares, the breathing of grateful love, the acknowledgment of dependence, constitute true prayer. In short, all that brings us in contact with the fount of living power may be classed as prayer. Too often we fail to notice God's answer to our own prayers, otherwise frequently we should find, to our glad surprise, that, as in the case of Daniel, at the time of our supplication the command has gone forth to help us. (Dan. 9, 23). Hence let the call to prayer be ever looked on by us as an invitation to an unspeakable privilege. Let us pray in the Spirit and not in our own self-sufficiency and we shall pray with power. Pray in faith, nothing doubting, for in the sure and unchangeable Word of God it stands recorded, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (John 16, 23).

FORMAL PRAYERS.

In a day of great formal prayer, it is questionable if much of it effects really anything. The dull recitations of devotional language do not edify the hearers because of their repetition nor do they move the hand of God because of their formality! There are numerous prayer meetings for the Gospel work in places where there has never been a conversion for years. One may well ask as to the reason that prayer is ineffectual where there seems no lack of

fervency. But fervency refers to internal work in the soul and not to external evidences. During the War (1914-18) intercessory services were held all over Christendom. For the most part these were confined to stereotyped rehearsals by those fitted either by constitution or training for correct expression of thought. These were not necessarily real prayers; but there were very effectual prayer meetings on the battlefields! Effectual prayer requires faith. Recently we heard of an intercessory service being introduced by the expression, "O God (if there be a God)." What virtue could the interceder expect to be found in his subsequent peroration? "Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11, 6).

Formerly those who attended prayer meetings were often afflicted by long winded half-hour disquisitions on dogma which always left the impression that the audience was not God but fellow-men and fellow-women. Most of the old prayers died out with the old theologians, but it does not necessarily follow that reduction in quantity ensures improvement in quality. Where a man has the responsibility of a small prayer meeting put upon him, he is tempted to pray half an hour in order to fill in the usual time for a meeting. Needless to say, it would take a man to be imbued with extraordinary spiritual energy if such practice could be effectively sustained. It might be worth while that meetings in such places should be curtailed to suit a five minute prayer which is the longest recorded in Scripture.

The lack of real supplication and intercession should cause grief and consequent exercise to all, so that God may give the increase. If we come to Him in private prayer He will undoubtedly guide, by His Holy Spirit, those gathered together with burdened hearts. There will be blessing for those who pray and for those who are the subjects of the prayers and there will be great glory to the Lord's name.

THE ESSENTIALS OF PRIVATE PRAYER.

“Daniel went into his house; and his windows open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” (Daniel 6, 10). Public prayer will be of little avail apart from private prayer. Hence the consideration of the essentials of private prayer cannot fail to be helpful. One often feels in the matter of private prayer, as the priests of Baal must have felt when confronted with Elijah’s test narrated in the 18th Chapter of the second book of Kings. We are sometimes tempted to think that our God has forgotten our existence and that he has no ears. But the lack of answer may be due to our neglecting the essentials which cause the fervent prayer of a righteous man to avail. (James 5, 16). There were four noteworthy points about Daniel’s prayers. (1) “He went into his house.” The symbolical teaching of this statement is that we must withdraw ourselves from the pressure of worldly cares. How often we have formally sought to approach God in prayer with our minds working on our business and other secular matters! (2) “His windows were open in his chamber.” The lesson we may draw from this is that our souls should be open. The inertia of spiritual training may keep us saying very correct things in prayer after the spiritual stimulus has vanished. A fly-wheel will run long after the power has been cut off. But we cannot get near God with closed souls. (3) The third point about Daniel’s prayer was that his windows were open toward Jerusalem. Doubtless Daniel was considered a crank by everybody. People might have said “Daniel why do you look to Jerusalem? Jerusalem is a defenceless ruin; little better than a rubbish heap; inhabited by the poor, the pariahs of civilisation. Look at great Babylon; the pride of the nations; the wonder of the world; a city in which you are honoured. Why do you not regard Babylon?” Daniel was controlled by the unseen. He looked for a city which had foundations

whose architect is God. So in the anticipation of the advent of the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21, 2) we have a stimulus for earnest private prayer. That city is not in stone and lime as the ancient city was, but is a community of souls made meet to be the bride of the Lamb. Jerusalem means the possession of peace and we can have little stability unless peace reigns in the soul. (4) The fourth point is that Daniel prayed as he had done aforetime, that is, for seventy years. What encouragement to those whose hands tend to hang down! There was Daniel persevering not for a year merely but for seventy years, *i.e.*, from boyhood to hoary age praying thrice a day for scattered Israel. There was little evidence of restoration of the kingdom. Yet he kept his eye steadily fixed on Jerusalem in spite of all the blandishments of Chaldea and Media. He had the mind of God as to the instability of all the pomp and splendour which was round about him. May we then seek to be like Daniel in having our souls closed to the world, open towards God, controlled by the unseen more than the seen and marked by steadfastness in prayer. (Acts 2, 42). "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. 6, 9). "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." (James 5, 7).

PHASES OF BABYLON.

To the gleaner, there is no more interesting harvest field than the book of the prophet Daniel. In the recorded histories of the three Babylonish rulers, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius, we can see a striking analogy with the history of Christianity in its relation to the world.

In Nebuchadnezzar, we see an intolerant persecuting power setting up an image and requiring universal worship. Those who feared God refused to worship and as a consequence were cast into the fiery furnace. In the earlier

stages of Christian history, persecution and idol worship were prominent features. In the hey-day of the power of Romanism, image worship was rampant and those who refused to bow were put to death. When in turn Protestantism gained the ascendancy, the persecuting spirit was still in evidence. Anglicanism persecuted Dissent and there were the martyrs of the Covenant. Then when the descendants of the Covenanters came into power, the same intolerant spirit asserted itself and so it has ever been in the history of man. Right down through the centuries until recent times, orthodoxy has been intolerant of the existence of that which it deemed heterodox.

In Belshazzar, we see an easy-going, pleasure-seeking, self-indulgent worldling, with contempt for God and His things. He made a feast and worshipped only what ministered to his lusts. In his reign the path of the godly did not lie through suffering and death, they were simply ignored; they were strangers. Belshazzar's kingdom is analogous to what we find around us (1912). Persecution has given place to an easy tolerance. A man may believe anything or he may believe nothing at all. The late Senator Gifford in laying the foundation of lectures in the Scottish Universities "for promoting and diffusing the study of Natural Theology in the widest sense of the term" looked forward to a day when his principles would be widely accepted. That day has come. How aptly his foundation principles express the attitude of modern theology! "The lecturers appointed shall be subjected to no test of any kind, nor any oath, nor to subscribe any declaration of belief nor to make any promise, they may be of any denomination whatever or of none at all, they may be of any religion, or of no religion; or they may be sceptics or agnostics or free thinkers." It is quite a matter of indifference to the man of the world what his fellow man believes. If a Christian takes to open-air preaching, he is not molested, he is merely looked upon with good-natured contempt. In the world's

eyes, his vagaries are his hobby in the same way that another man seeks relaxation from physical and mental pressure in golfing, bowling, and such like.

In Darius, we see again a persecuting power, in connection not with an image but with self exaltation. He issued a decree and set himself in the place of God for 30 days. The Godly Daniel did not honour his edict and as a result paid the penalty of the lion's den. Belshazzar's easy day was followed by the rigid day of Darius and so it has ever been; the resilience of the bent lath causes it to spring when released far beyond its free position. In government, republics have paved the way for more autocratic rule than that which they replaced. The iron foot of the Cæsars crushed down the ruins of the Roman Republics. The French Revolution, the greatest democratic movement in history, ended in the rise of Napoleon Buonaparte, the greatest autocrat the world had ever seen. The simple minded Christian in his day firmly believed that "the man of sin" was being revealed. A century has passed since then and "the man of sin" has not yet come. But the evidences of his advent are incomparably stronger than they were in the days of Napoleon. The easy tolerance and democracy of the present is but a prelude to the consummation of intolerance and autocracy when that "Wicked One shall be revealed." But his ascendancy will be short lived because "the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy him with the brightness of His coming." (2 Thess. ii., 8). The inference we may draw from these analogies is very simple. Daniel was not at the feast, neither was the queen. She came into the banquet house at the critical moment. With what assurance she could tell the king, "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods." She was in the secret of the Lord and could be unmoved when countenances were changing and knees were knocking together. The king was ignorant of and careless about the existence of the man of God. He had forgotten all about the wonderful works of

God in the reign of his predecessor. But the remembrance was still abiding with the queen and so she was a stranger to the feast. Daniel and she manifested themselves as children of light. They did not require to see the mystic fingers tracing out the script on the wall to put them in their proper place relative to the feast. They were in spirit in harmony with the place from whence the fingers came and hence foresaw the coming judgment.

In the closing hour of the great drama of the world's history, man is purveying a feast. All the resources of the world are shown and gloried in. The gods of gold and iron are lauded to the sky. Man's work is the topic at the feast. Social comforts, conveniences and delights are made the great aim of man's effort.

Even as the captivity of Israel was forgotten by Belshazzar and his minions, so the rejection of Christ is by mutual consent ignored. Men, whatever their professed beliefs, are sinking their differences. Atheist and professing Christian are meeting on the broad platform of "natural theology," greeting each other with a common joy, because of the same kindred and the same world. In view of the solemn issues involved in the world's feast, it is of prime importance that we who are sons of the day, sleep not as do others, but that we should watch with sobriety, for they that sleep, sleep in the night. (1 Thess. v., 6, 7).

Although the rejection of Christ is glossed over or hidden under a veil, the attitude of the world is still expressed as at first in the words, "We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke xix., 14). The servants of the rejected nobleman were well aware of the resources of the country but they refrained from being partners in its social advancement during his absence and rejection. Babylon, the woman of Revelation xvii., glorifies herself and lives deliciously with the great in the earth heedless of the handwriting on the wall. The new Jerusalem, the woman of Revelation xxi., will not be manifested till the earth has been cleansed and is ready for the presence of the glory of the Lord. Meanwhile we

who by grace will be incorporated in that glorious bride of Christ cannot be true to Him if we glory in Babylon's jubilee.

MINOR FISSURES AND MAJOR CONVULSIONS.

A careful examination reveals the fact that rocks which to the casual observer are perfectly solid and continuous are really intersected with innumerable minute fissures or cracks, into which it would be impossible to put the point of a pen-knife. Geologists tell us that these cracks were developed during the process of shrinkage in the rocks while they have been cooling down from the initial high temperature of the sun when matter was "without form and void." The striking feature about the fissures, however, is not their existence but the fact that as lines of weakness they always determine the path of rupture whenever they are subjected to blasting operations or other major convulsions.

Applying this illustration to the Christian fellowship, there is no schism in the body, which is God's formation. But the outward expression in man's hands has become lamentably divided. Moreover, there are "fissures" in that which is nominally united along which as lines of weakness division invariably takes place when the periodical major disturbances arise. The great lesson for us to learn is not that we should be constantly engaging our attention with the rifts, and all their sorrowful memories, which have been formed, and seeking to cement them again, but that we should be found seeking to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in the local companies with which we find ourselves.

The fruit of the Spirit is composed of nine wonderful virtues, *viz.*, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. 5, 22, 23). The Colossian believers were exhorted to put on "bowels of mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness." All these were to be crowned by "love" as the perfect bond, while the peace of Christ was to

be the ruling president and His Word to dwell richly and wisely in their hearts. (Col. 3, 12-16). Could there be a finer cluster of grapes on the branch of the vine?

The Church has failed and the difficulties in the way of cementing the breaches formed are practically insuperable. The elimination of the minute fissures which predispose actual rupture is, however, a matter which should engage our best attention. There is only one way in which this can be done! Is there any way in which the cracks in the rocks can be removed? Yes, there is one way and only one! The temperature of the rocks must be raised again to white heat by contact with the sun. Similarly there is only one way in which the fissures which divide the people of God can be removed, *viz.*, by their moral beings regaining white heat through contact with Christ. "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" is that which will set our hearts on fire with love to one another. The "first love" condition is the antidote for all the ills under which professing Christians have fallen. There is nothing easier than getting into the habit of recognising truth in an abstract way while ignoring its experimental application. It is easy to love Christians who live hundreds of miles away and whom we see very seldom, but it is an entirely different thing to love those with whom we are in everyday association and who may perhaps be very trying.

The learned societies, the social clubs, the business syndicates of the world are all organisations of men with kindred aspirations. But the wonderful thing about Christianity is that it empowers us to love those with whom we may have no natural affinity; those with whom we have incompatible temperaments; those whom we would not choose for companions. Christians have, however, one common bond and that is they belong to Christ. There is only one way in which the love of Christ can be entered into and enjoyed, and that is in its expression towards those who bear His name on earth. (*Continued on page 262*).

THE HOUSE OF GOD.

Evidence in the Pentateuch.

The house of a man is where he dwells, similarly the House of God is where God dwells. The term "house of a man" is used in various relations, prominent amongst these is the material structure, since man has a body. But God is a spirit, and as the martyr Stephen in his masterly arraignment of the Jewish leaders said, "the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7, 48). While the Apostle Paul in his address to the Athenian philosophers made a similar statement. That thought was even apprehended at the zenith of the era of material display by Solomon in the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron, ii., 6). Yet there are many illuminating passages in the Old Testament, throwing light on features of the New Testament doctrine of the House of God.

Since Genesis has been well termed "the seed-plot of the Bible," we are not surprised to find that the first intimation in Scripture of the subject appears in Gen. xxviii., 10-22, describing Jacob's dream. Therein he was transported outside his circumstances to witness the purpose of God as to the earth. Four prominent features of the doctrine to be unfolded later received emphasis, *viz.* (1) "Surely the Lord is in this place" (v. 16), *i.e.*, the presence of the Lord was apprehended. (2) "How dreadful is this place" (v. 17). He apprehended that entailed reverence in accord with its holy character. (3) "He beheld the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder, thus it was the gate of heaven" (v. 12-17). Hence the realisation of heavenly administration in the presence of God who is a consuming fire must impress fear on one who comes in contact with the House of God. That is easily understood. Our first parents after they had sinned hid themselves from God. The company of Christians (and most of all their company in a Gospel meeting) is disagreeable to anyone who has not come to know God as a Saviour. (4) "Jacob set up a

pillar and poured oil on the top of it " (v. 18). The pillar indicated testimony or witness (Gen. xxxi., 52). In this case the witness was to the unfailing faithfulness and mercy of God (the Lord God of Abraham, etc.). The oil was typical of the Holy Spirit who makes the House of God a living reality now. Jacob named the place Bethel or House of God, although no real house was then existing. Since that day many have sought to imitate Jacob's example by erecting houses and memorials of different kinds and have described them as relative to God, but without prophetic insight. So that the features of the real house have been obscured. Then Jacob sought to drive a bargain with God. If God would prosper his way then he would own God and would give back 10 per cent. of whatever God gave him. That showed splendid business instinct! A moiety of 50 per cent. would have been the lowest terms he could have offered to man with any hope of acceptance. Frequently people of God nowadays do not reach Jacob's modest standard, they take all from God without thanks or recognition of His interests. Twenty years of circumventing circumstances by his own cleverness brought Jacob to an extremity (Gen. xxxv., 1), and God said to him " Arise go up to Bethel and dwell there." Jacob realised that there was much in his house which was not consistent with the holiness of the House of God so he commanded his household to put away the strange gods and to be clean and change their garments. He hid the idols under the oak by Shechem (usually considered as typical of the significance of the cross of Christ). Behind all the circumstances was the hand of God in discipline. Expediency, hitherto the guiding principle of Jacob, would no longer serve. He would thenceforth have to act according to the righteousness of God. Living away from God inevitably leads to our contracting many associations which are not compatible with the holy character of the House of God. When Jacob got everything cleared up he erected another pillar at Bethel and anointed it in the same way as he had done 20 years before. He had returned to the testimony with which

he was connected at first. But he understood it in a much better way. The hard discipline throughout the 20 years had caused him to apprehend the perfect administration and the holiness of God.

In Genesis the idea of the House of God was only in embryo form since God wished to dwell in the midst of a people, and these did not appear until the record of Exodus was reached. The first eighteen chapters of the book are occupied mainly with the statement of what God did for the people notwithstanding their waywardness. The remainder of the book is more taken up with what man was to do for the Glory of God. In chapter iii., God appeared to Moses in a burning thorn bush which was not consumed. The love and grace of God (a consuming fire, nevertheless) were to be manifested amongst the people of Israel just as miraculously as the fire in the midst of the bush which did not consume it. Forty years before Moses had given up the people in disappointment. Since then God's dealings with him had disestablished his opinion and he had reached the point that he could serve God. Although Israel might be well described as a worthless thorn bush, when God as a consuming fire dwelt in the bush, then all was transformed. (As another has said, "for the first forty years of his life Moses was learning to be something, in the second forty years he was learning to be nothing, and in the last forty years he learned that God was everything"). The ground was holy. As God of Abraham, His will is paramount and unchallengeable. He consumes in discipline what is unsuited to His will, even as in abundant grace and mercy He moulds what is pleasing to Himself so that he can dwell amongst the people. Subsequently the display of Himself as Jehovah (*i.e.*, Lord, I am, the self-existing One), would come into view. Therefore in spite of Pharaoh's stubbornness God would have His people free to serve Him outside Egypt.

A two-fold action was necessary to attain that end:—(1) External power would be manifested to deliver them. (2) Their hearts had to be cleansed and unbelief displaced by

internal power. In the series of God's acts of power in Egypt, there was a distinction or separation made between the land of Goshen where God's people dwelt and the rest of Egypt. The various agencies of judgment on Egypt did not affect Goshen. The ninth plague of judgment was thick darkness which could be felt. For three days no one could stir, but the children of Israel had light in their rude dwellings while the ornate temples of Egypt were shrouded in a more complete blackout than a London night fog! (That is indicative of the spiritual darkness which envelops man's philosophy, while divine light fills the hearts of the people of God, because God is there). The tenth plague was the culmination of God's dealings in smiting the first born in every household in Egypt, from the greatest to the least. But the families of Israel were sheltered inside the houses with bloodstained lintels and sideposts (*i.e.*, the Passover, typical of the death of Christ in one of its aspects). The accompanying bitter herbs indicated self-judgment, wrought by the grace of God in the soul engrossed with the love that averted the judgment stroke of the angel. The unleavened bread showed the separate character to be sustained by the people of God. God could not tolerate in His people the leaven or evil he had to judge in Egypt (typical of the world). The Passover celebration indicated three prominent ideas (*a*) protection, (*b*) food, (*c*) exodus from Egypt. Redemption or deliverance by blood was not complete redemption. It was necessary that the people should be taken out of Egypt. When all hope seemed to vanish as they were hemmed in by the Red Sea in front and the Egyptian host behind, God intervened and they passed through the sea as on dry land. What was their salvation became the destruction of their enemies! Chapter xv. gives the redemption song (the first song in scriptural record). That was contingent not on safety from judgment through the blood of the Lamb but on complete separation from Egypt and the destruction of the enemy's power. The redeemed people then knew that God was for them: v. 2 sprung from thankful hearts who wished to

prepare a habitation for God; v. 17 speaks of the sanctuary and v. 13 of the abode of God's holiness. Chapter xix. introduced the thought of man's response towards God. In obeying the voice of God and keeping His Covenant they would be to Him a peculiar treasure above all people a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. (All the people were to form a royal priesthood. The special family ultimately honoured as priests came into function through the failure of the people).

Chapter xxv. records the instruction of God, "let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." All the material was to be given as a freewill offering by the people. That could not have taken place until redemption had been effected. The House of God or Tabernacle had walls of imperishable shittim wood, made up of 48 boards, 10 cubits high and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits broad, each with two tenons at the bottom fitting into two silver sockets (which were typical of divine grace by redemption in its two constituents, the death and resurrection of Christ). So that the components of the House of God were based on redemption. They did not touch the sands of the desert at any point! Moreover, the boards were bound together by bars and the corners were specially strengthened. Over all was a layer of gold, typical of the righteousness of God. The tabernacle or tent was completed by a covering, composed of ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue, purple and scarlet, with embroidered cherubim thereon (typical of the display of the varied glories of Christ). Over that was a goats' hair covering of eleven curtains (typical of the Holy Nazarite separation of Christ while here). Further coverings of rams' skins, dyed red (consecration unto death) and badgers' skins (holiness excluding evil) completed the roof of the tent. The oblong shaped tabernacle was divided into three compartments. (1) The outer court which was open above and surrounded by hangings 100 cubits long and 50 cubits broad supported by pillars and sockets of brass, while the connecting hooks and fillets were of silver. The brass was

indicative of the righteousness of God testing man in responsibility. So brass was prominent of the outside as gold was of the inside of the tabernacle. At the same time the connection with silver declared the value of the redemption of Christ then future. Man's need discovered by the test was at once met by redemption! The hangings as well as the curtains of entrance to the second chamber bore no cherubim which brought in the thought that although cherubim and a flaming sword kept man out from the tree of life in Eden, no such barrier would exist in the era of display of heavenly things of which the tabernacle was a type. (Christ would be the door and living way).

The brazen altar was for the burnt offering (indicating God's satisfaction in the death of Christ) and the brazen laver (between the altar and the entrance to the Holy place) was for the priests washing their hands (1 Tim. ii., 8), and feet with water (John xiii.) (2) The second chamber, the Holy Place, comprising two-thirds of the covered space (30 cubits long, 10 broad, 10 high), contained the table of shewbread, the pure gold candlestick and the golden altar of incense. The table of shittim wood overlaid with gold had an encircling border and both had crowns. The table bore the twelve loaves or pierced cakes (Lev. xxiv., 5), showing Israel before God maintained by Christ. (3) The third chamber, the Most Holy, consisting of the remaining one-third of the tent, was separated from the second chamber by a veil of the same figured fabric as the curtains forming the roof. The veil was supported by four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold and had four sockets of silver and furnished with gold hooks. The contents of the chamber were: the Ark of testimony ($2\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits) also of shittim wood overlaid with gold (type of the true Manhood and Divine Glory of Christ), and the gold lid of the Ark formed the Mercy Seat. On its two ends all in one piece were two gold cherubims with their faces looking down on the Mercy-Seat (witness of the perfect redemption in the blood of Jesus). In the Ark were to be subsequently put the golden pot with manna (God's treasure in memory of

Christ here but now Man in the Glory). Aaron's rod that budded (Christ's priesthood in power of an endless life), and the tables of the Covenant (all God's promises with His people secured in Christ). Everything was constructed according to the pattern shown to Moses in the Holy Mount, so that no detail was left to the fertile imagination of man. The Tabernacle of testimony was in relation to what was in the mind of God to be manifested publicly in the world to come.

At the end of Exodus we read that the tabernacle or tent of the congregation (literally "the tent of meeting") was covered with the cloud and filled with the Glory of the Lord which was the guide for the people in all their subsequent journeys. Exodus closes thus, and Leviticus commences with the Lord speaking to Moses from that centre. Leviticus is occupied with the description of the offerings and the offerers and the general service connected with the Tabernacle, the House of God. In Numbers, emphasis is put on the Levites bearing and taking charge of the tabernacle of testimony in its movement through the wilderness, also on the prominence of the tabernacle as the central feature of the camp. In Deuteronomy reference to the tabernacle is only made at the close of the book, when the Lord communicated to Moses the intelligence of his approaching death. Moses and Joshua were to appear before the tabernacle of the congregation and the Lord appeared in the pillar of cloud over the door of the tabernacle and spoke to Moses therefrom.

Subsequent evidence in the Old Testament.

In the Book of Joshua, reference is made:—(1) to the valuable part of the spoil of Jericho being put in the treasury of the House of the Lord (typical of what the triumph of Christ has secured for God's glory). (2) to the Gibeonites being condemned to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the House of God (teaches government). (3) after the land had been conquered the tabernacle of the congregation was set up at Shiloh. (4) when the 2½ tribes

were free from warfare returning to their lands beyond Jordan they built an altar at the passage of Jordan and were accused of seeking to break away. The whole congregation indicated the land of the possession of the Lord as wherein the Lord's tabernacle (His centre) dwelt. In the chaos marking the period of the Judges people paid little attention to the tabernacle. In only one instance is mention made when they sought to punish the tribe of Benjamin for an evil deed wrought amongst them. Israel went to the House of God, sought counsel and after their defeat, they returned, wept, sat before the Lord, fasted and presented burnt and peace offerings before the Lord.

In Samuel, his introduction to the House of the Lord and subsequent service and the calamity of the Ark being captured by the Philistines were prominent points in the early part of the book. Then interest was transferred from the Tabernacle to the Ark and God's holiness was vindicated amongst the Philistines, at Bethshemesh, at Kirjath-jearim and in the house of Obed-edom, until the Ark returned to its proper place after the absence of nearly a century. It would appear that Gibeon superseded Shiloh as the place of the Tabernacle. (1 Chron. xvi., 39). As soon as David was secure on the throne of all Israel, he essayed to build a house for the Lord, but he had to learn that however laudable might be his desire, the proposal was not according to the will of God. The acquiescence of the king in the decision was beautiful! He devoted himself with unabated zeal and love to finding a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob in spite of affliction. Although he was not permitted to build the temple he secured the place and found the material. God helped him marvellously in acquiring a vast treasure of gold, silver, etc. The temple or house could not be built until the kingdom was established. All the wealth and resources of the kingdom contributed to the grandeur of the house. The people were delivered from every foe. They dwelt safely under their vines and fig trees. God gave them rest on every side. Whereas in the tumultuous conditions in Judges every man did what was right in his own eyes since

there was no king, everyone in David's kingdom was controlled according to the will of God. All these features are beautiful types of what would come to light in the spiritual house of the following era. In the Psalms the aspirations and the exercises of the soul of the Psalmist relative to the House of God are shown in a remarkable way. The desire for and communication of instruction were prominent features relative to the Temple, *e.g.*, beholding the beauty of the Lord and enquiring in His Temple (Ps. xxvii., 4), also therein every whit spoke of His glory (Ps. xxix., 9). The usage "House of God" is more comprehensive and more frequent than "the Temple" in the Psalms, especially with relation to dwelling therein and going thereto, and His appreciation of even such an external connection as being a doorkeeper, rather than dwelling in the tents of wickedness (Ps. lxxxiv.). But in his exercises the Psalmist did not dwell altogether in the future, his thoughts were constantly recurring to the tabernacle, *e.g.*, in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me and the offering of sacrifices of joy (Ps. xxvii.); and worship in the tabernacle (Ps. cxxxii., 7). Those showed the prophetic bearing of the passages, as the Psalmist could not have access to the Tabernacle then existent, since he was not a priest! Holiness was the prime feature. "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever" (Ps. cxiii., 5).

At length the desire of David was consummated in the early part of the reign of his son Solomon, the King of Peace, The structure of the Temple in the main followed the lines of the Tabernacle. In the fourth year of his reign Solomon began to build the House of the Lord, in Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father and in the place David had prepared at the threshing floor of Ornan where God's grace and mercy intervened on the ground of the acceptance of the burnt offering. In the temple the dimensions of the tabernacle were doubled, both as to length and breadth. In addition there were extra features such as a magnificent porch and two gigantic pillars, *viz.*,

Jachin (meaning "beauty or established") and Boaz (meaning "strength"), each 60 feet high, said to have contained about 300 tons of stone and 900 tons of brass, then a molten sea was borne by twelve oxen besides a large brazen altar and ten lavers were in the outer court. In the Holy Place there were 100 bowls of gold, 10 golden candlesticks and 10 tables with 12 loaves on each and in the middle between was the golden altar of incense. In the Most Holy Place (20 cubits square) stood the Ark containing the two tables of stone. (Apparently Aaron's rod and the golden pot of manna had disappeared!) Solomon made two new cherubim of olive tree, their faces looked towards the house as the witness of blessing for the earth in the day of glory to come secured through redemption by blood. These overshadowed the two small golden cherubim forming part of the ark. The wings of the former stretched across the width of the House. The walls of the Temple consisted of fine cedarwood and hewn stone (polished marble). The inside was carved with figures of cherubim and palms and the whole was overlaid with gold. No light was admitted to the Holiest, but the larger external chamber had narrow windows. The two chambers were separated by the veil. In the Tabernacle there was no room for the priests dwelling, not even a seat for resting, but in the sides of the Temple were 90 chambers hence the House was not only for approach to God but a place for the priests dwelling, so beautifully indicated in the Psalms. (In the Lord's closing ministry in John xiv., he made analogous reference "In My Father's house are many abodes or rest rooms.") In the Tabernacle there was no singing, but in the Temple certain families of Levites whose primary function was bearing the burdens of the House of God came under instruction in the use of musical instruments for the service of the House of God; that was typical of the day of glory yet to come, and also significant of the Spirit's Day when those who by grace partake of the resources and gladness of the House of God are praising people. The temple was seven years in building and near the end of the eighth year just before "the feast

of tabernacles " the Ark and other furniture were transferred from the Tabernacle to the Temple and Solomon dedicated it with a transcendent prayer. Just as he finished fire from heaven consumed the burnt offering and the glory of the Lord filled the House so that the priests could not enter. Then the king made a vast peace offering of oxen and sheep, and kept a seven days feast. After that the people were sent away with glad hearts due to the goodness of the Lord. (The tabernacle was the pattern of things in the heavens and was anointed with oil. The temple was neither!) The fact that God should dwell on earth with men was prominent in all Solomon's arrangements (2 Chron. vi., 2, 18). The result was blessing to man and its reflex action praise to God.

The first twenty years of Solomon's reign were occupied with the building of the House of the Lord and his own house (which took thirteen years), and many other works and his way was prospered greatly. The Queen of Sheba, attracted by the fame of Solomon from distant Ethiopia, tested his incomparable wisdom and viewed his resources and works, but the copestone of wonder was reached when she beheld the ascent by which he went up to the House of the Lord, her heart was completely captured and she broke out into a majestic panegyric! Solomon's unparalleled success seemed to have made him careless, so that in the latter half of his reign he sadly belied the principles of the House of God, getting a multitude of horses from Egypt and taking many foreign wives who turned his heart from the Lord so that he built high places and offered sacrifices to the gods of the nations around. His example induced the people to imitate his practice.

Shortly after the accession of Rehoboam the son of Solomon as king, the kingdom was divided by rebellion. A little later Shishak, king of Egypt, robbed the Temple of many of its choice golden treasures, so that the Temple only lasted about 30 years in its pristine grandeur. Under later wicked kings the Temple fell into decay, although repaired by Joash, Hezekiah and Josiah successively. The

kings in general used the treasures for mercenary purposes. Indeed Manasseh raised altars to the heathen gods in the sacred courts of the Temple. Uzziah usurped the place of a priest and was smitten with leprosy and cut off from the House of the Lord. On that occasion Isaiah was witness of the majesty and holiness of the Lord in the Temple. The features of recovery in Hezekiah's day are instructive: (1) the altar and table with their vessels were cleansed, prepared and sanctified (2 Chr. xxix., 18-19); offerings were made for *all Israel* (although ten-twelfths had disappeared); the Levites and their instruments were set in the house of the Lord according to the command of David, Gad and Nathan (although these worthies had been dead for 250 years). Nothing new was introduced; all details in worship and praise were arranged according to the word of God. The feast of unleavened bread was revived in the pristine purity of its institution and that became a logical antecedent to the revival of the passover feast a century later. At the later date, Hilkiah found the book of the law in the House of the Lord and the reading of it to King Josiah affected the king so greatly that it led to a revival such as had not been seen since the days of Samuel. In the closing years of the kingdom in the brief reigns of the sons of godly Josiah, the chief priests polluted the House of the Lord. The Lord sent His prophets with messages having compassion on the people and His dwelling place, but they mocked and misused them, despised His word until there was no remedy and the wrath of the Lord arose against them. Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem, took away the treasures and demolished the temple and city.

Ezekiel had a vision of the glory of the Lord (1) going up from the cherub, (2) departing off the threshold of the House, (3) going up from the midst of the city, (4) standing over the mountain on the east of the city, successively as if reluctant to leave (evidence of God's long-suffering).

Yet Ezekiel did not close his prophecy until he saw the glory of the Lord coming back to the House by the east gate and then filling the House (Ezek. ch. x., xi. and xliii). In

Ezekiel xl.-xlvii. we get remarkable details of the house in its latter glory. Everything is divinely measured, from the details of the wall and the gates to the inheritance of each tribe. The wall sets forth that all evil will be excluded; the gates that there is access for God's people. From the house there issue the living waters for the blessing of the land; and the trees of the river shall be for food and the leaves for medicine. In Ezekiel xliii., 10-12 the pattern and law (or principle) of administration of the house are referred to tersely "most holy"! The last verse of Ezekiel states the privilege of the house, *viz.*, "the Lord is there."

After 70 years of the captivity, the Lord stirred the spirit of Cyrus, the king of Persia, to invite volunteers in exile to return to Jerusalem and erect a house to the Lord God of heaven. So a remnant under Zerubbabel returned to Jerusalem. Their first act was to erect an altar on which they offered burnt offerings to the Lord. Although the city was in ruins and the wall not rebuilt, enemies around and the bulk of the people still in exile, they clave to the word of God and offered for all Israel. The adversaries in the land sought to help in the building of the house but on their offer being emphatically declined they sought the aid of friends at the Persian court to hinder the building and they succeeded in getting an interdict which lasted a few years until another king arose who was favourably disposed to the building of the house. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah stirred up the people in Jerusalem to renew building. In spite of many hindrances, the work was finished in about 20 years from the start and dedicated to the service of the Lord. The rebuilt temple lacked the Ark and associated furniture, the Shekinah glory of the Lord, the holy fire and the Urim and Thummim (oracle). The old men who had seen the grandeur of the former house wept, but the young men who had not seen anything better shouted for joy, nevertheless all praised the Lord. Haggai in the word of the Lord of Hosts encouraged them by saying that the latter glory of this House shall be greater than the

former (Haggai ii., 9). About 80 years after the first return of the exiles, Ezra of Aaron's priestly family requested the king to be allowed to go to Jerusalem with a band of volunteers. At Jerusalem they found that separation had become largely a lapsed principle! Ezra proclaimed a fast, assembled the people, prayed and confessed the general sin before the House of God. The people wept, repented and decided to cut their wrong associations. The recovery of Ezra's remnant has marks similar to that of Hezekiah's. Their worship, as presented in the altar was "as written in the law of Moses the man of God" (iii., 2). Their praises were "after the ordinance of David, King of Israel" (ii., 10). Every activity in God's house must have the sanction of His word.

About ten years later Nehemiah, who had attained to high position in the Persian court, heard of the sad plight of the remnant in Jerusalem. He wept, fasted and prayed before God. His sorrowful countenance led the king to enquire the reason, with a result that Nehemiah got leave of absence and in due course arrived in Jerusalem. He successfully exhorted the priests to rebuild the walls and gates which had been destroyed. The stubborn proud nobles shrank from the humiliation of manual labour! The powerful enemies were angry, ridiculing the work and even threatening to use force in restraining the builders. When they saw that these tactics were unsuccessful, they tried to entice Nehemiah to leave the work and meet them in an outside village. But Nehemiah was a man of unswerving purpose. Then a false friend suggested that Nehemiah should seek seclusion in the temple in case he should be assassinated. The suggestion was met beautifully in the words "should such a man as I flee to the temple to save his life? I will not go in." Immediately he perceived that the suggestion was not of God and that the enemies had hired the counsellor. In 52 days the wall was rebuilt which is one of the greatest feats in history. Nehemiah committed the charge of the gates to faithful men. The people were gathered together and heard Ezra read the Law and the people bowed their

heads and worshipped the Lord. They kept the feast of tabernacles, dwelling in booths, in a way they had not done since the days of Joshua. They kept the feast for seven days and on the eighth was a solemn assembly with fasting and repentance, the Levites confessing the goodness of God and their own sins. Throughout the proceedings the attention paid to the word of God was an important feature. The result was separation from what was inconsistent with the principles of the House of God. A grandson of the High Priest had married a daughter of the chief opponent of the work. Nehemiah chased him away. It has been said that the youth ultimately became High Priest in Samaria where a spurious imitation of the ritual at Jerusalem was instituted!

Four centuries later, Herod, to win the support of the Jews and foster his own vanity, built a new temple which took 46 years to erect. The building did not follow the pattern of the original. It was sought to eclipse its grandeur and magnitude. The front, composed of white polished marble, was specially beautiful. The enclosure, over 200 yards square, was surrounded by a wall of huge stones on the verge of a precipice over the valley 600 ft. deep. At the top of the precipice were wonderful galleries supported by marble pillars. Solomon's porch, called "Beautiful," was at the East Gate. The gates were 50 ft. by 25 ft. The roof, covered with gold, had a glorious appearance in the sunshine. That was the temple when the Lord came in lowly grace. It existed less than 70 years, serving as a fort in the famous siege by the Romans, when to the great sorrow of Titus, the Roman General and contrary to his command, it was accidentally burned by one of his own soldiers. Two subsequent attempts to rebuild the temple ended disastrously. These were in defiance of the words of the One greater than the Temple Who said, "there shall not be left here one stone upon another." Could anyone gainsay that dictum? A Moslem mosque now occupies the position of the former Holy Place!

Evidence in the Gospels.

In the New Testament, the doctrine of what has been presented previously in a material or typical way is unfolded. There was nothing real or living in either tabernacle or temple. It was all symbolical but in the gospels Christ entered and that infused life into the types. The House of God was only in a representative way in the Old Testament and could not be formed in reality until redemption was accomplished. Therefore we are not disappointed to find in the Lord's own ministry the main features of the House of God. In Matt. Ch. xvi. we have its divine foundation and constitution contingent on Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." The Lord answered "Thou art Peter (a stone) upon this rock (what Peter's confession set forth) I will build my Church and the gates of hell (the administration of the authority of darkness) shall not prevail against it." No human organisation has a place there in spite of the way in which the scripture has been perverted to prove the opposite contention. The complete revelation of God is declared in Christ, the Son of the Living God, *i.e.*, the foundation of the church, the intrinsic element of the House of God. What purported to be the House of God was full of dead ritual. But "christianity is Christ," and that is living. The Holy Spirit stimulates fresh exercises of soul and thus the expression in true prayer and praise will never be formal. May we be delivered from mere correct recitation, which springs from the exercises of yesterday!

In all the gospels the record occurs of the Lord's cleansing the temple and driving out those who had so grossly misrepresented God therein. Shortly after the start of His ministry, in John Ch. ii., He recognises it as His Father's House in which as a house of merchandise they had prostituted its purity for material profit, while the other gospels refer to the incident near the close of His ministry of similar character. While still referring to it as the House of God which should have been maintained for prayer for all people (one of the initial aspects presented in Gen.

xxviii. as "the gate of heaven") the leaders of the people had made it a den of thieves. A little later in His ministry He disowned the house as of God and called it "*your* house shall be left unto you desolate." The two-fold aspect had been apparent from the outset but so long as the Lord was on earth it was God's centre for those who feared the Lord and thought upon His name. So there were those like the widow who bestowed all their possessions (even two mites) in the treasury of the house irrespective of what base gain others might be extracting from contact with the temple. There had been at the birth of the Lord antiquated people like Simeon and Anna, but intelligent as to the mind of God, who clung to the temple (blind to its blemishes) not in a vague sentimental way but positively waiting for the consolation of Israel and looking for its counterpart, *viz.*, redemption in Jerusalem. Although the Jewish leaders had given a false impression, the true character of the house was unchanged and the Lord could speak of it as "My Father's house." In John Ch. i. we have the record that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among the disciples. That is the true idea of the Tabernacle and in the next chapter the thought of Christ's body as the Temple is expressed definitely. The mind of man was so absorbed with the grandeur of Herod's temple that it failed to see that the Lord's words implied a vastly greater work than that conception implied. In John i., 38, 39, the two disciples said, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" He answered, "Come and see." Their seeing Him at home must have affected them greatly! God was revealed as dwelling in Jesus. In Ch. xiv., He was going away to prepare a place for His own. In the interval till His return, the Comforter was to be here and abide with them. God would dwell here in consequence. The Son dwells in the Father's love; we dwell in His love and He dwells in our love. In John Ch. xx. administrative forgiveness in the assembly or House of God (but not in a public way) has reference in the words "whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted, etc," which is analogous to the commission to Peter in Matthew xvi. In spite of the fact that the hands of

the people were imbrued with the blood of the Lord of Glory the Holy Spirit could speak of Jerusalem as "the Holy City" at the moment! (Matt. xxviii., 53). In the great supper of Luke xiv., 16-24, it is shown that all who are brought into the house come by receiving the Kingdom (*viz.*, by the compulsion or sway of grace). The thought of the House of God is contiguous to that of the Kingdom of God in the passage. The latter is individual, the former collective in bearing and is consequent on the individual's reception of the kingdom by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, accepting God's testimony of accomplished righteousness.

Evidence in the Acts.

Although the term "House of God" is not mentioned in the Acts except as referring to the material temple, nevertheless its more visible features are prominent throughout the book. Indeed the prime cause of the formation of the spiritual house is seen in the second chapter, ten days after the ascension of Christ, when the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and filled the house where they were sitting. So what is set forth doctrinally elsewhere is exhibited practically in the Acts, consequent upon redemption having been accomplished. The death, resurrection and ascension of Christ had taken place and the Holy Spirit had come down to earth in consequence. There is a man in the Glory of God and He is Lord of all! The third person of the Godhead came down to earth to testify to the glory of the Lord. The One who came down is as great as the One who went up! Therefore He is able to reveal the precious things of heaven to our souls. The coming of the Holy Spirit was not confined to the twelve disciples but fell upon the whole 120 gathered in one house. That was the proximate fulfilment of the prophetic word in John Ch. xi., that the scattered children of God should be gathered together in one. That was the institution of the House of God in an entirely new character. The people of God on earth became the dwelling of God. Hence the presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost became prominent. The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost who empowered them to

act, gave them right words and utterance, crushed opposition by spiritual power, excluded fleshly considerations, *e.g.*, in Ch. v., deceitful reputation was summarily annulled by death. In Ch. vi., murmuring was disarmed. In Ch. vii., Stephen met persecution to death by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Ch. viii., Philip was guided by the Holy Spirit. Every possible contingency was met by the same power. Subsequently, the lapse in Christian progress has been due to the gradual loss of appreciation of the significance and presence of the Holy Ghost. Ecclesiastical organisation can never make up for spiritual enablement which is entirely due to giving the Holy Spirit His rightful place!

Then the House of God is where His love towards all men is known. What unsurpassable love was manifested in the fact that God proclaimed an amnesty to the murderers of His Son in the very place where He was murdered. That offer included Pilate (the unjust judge), the religious leaders, the wicked accusers, the jeering mob, even the brutal ruffian who drove his spear into the side of the dead Christ after his fellows had done their worst while their victim was alive. The injunction of Peter to all was "repent and be baptised" without qualification, and obedience to that command would entail the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost to each. That magnificent good news went forth from the House of God! The testimony that emanated therefrom was God's message and sent forth in His way by His selected messengers. They were not philosophers nor men of renown nor of noble origin. They were simple fishermen and rustics from despised Galilee! They were erstwhile illiterate people, yet on that day of Pentecost there was not a language under heaven but received recognition. The confusion of Babel which had been introduced by the power of God was neutralised for the time being by the same means.

The prophetic word in the message of the Apostle was "the promise is unto you and your children" (Acts ii., 39). To win over the vacillating governor Pilate, the people had lightly said, "His blood be upon us and our children"

(Matt. xxvii., 25), now the proclamation annulled the vow for the repentant Jews and their children. The latter were admitted to a place of privilege on earth, *viz.*, the House of God. The promise was to the very people who had so flagrantly abused God's approach to man in Christ. The external sign was in baptism. "They that gladly received his word were baptised." That suggests the thought of separation from the world which crucified Christ. In Matthew Ch. xvi., Peter received the keys of administration. In Acts Ch. ii., he opened the door to the Jew and in Acts Ch. x., to the Gentile in Cornelius and his house. In Acts Ch. xvi., the households of Lydia and the Philippian jailer entered into the new sphere of life in separation from the sphere of death in the world. They came under the authority of the Lord. It is quite likely that however different had been the features which marked those households previous to the conversion of the heads, subsequently they agreed in the essential character of being run under the same management, *viz.*, that of the Lord. Nowadays the promiscuous association of christians and worldlings in what is described as "the House of God" shows the grave slump in appreciation of the relative divine principles!

The converts continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine or instruction. The House of God is where intelligence as to the mind of the Lord is manifested. Therefore, it is a prime necessity that a premium should be put on collective reading of the scriptures because therein is enshrined the doctrine which is not affected by the flow of time and the changing fashions of men. The next feature was that they continued in fellowship, *i.e.*, in consequence of the enlightenment from the Apostle's doctrine. They owned the one Lord and partook in the community of interest of His administration. He is the bond of the partnership. The practical expression of that fellowship was in the breaking of bread! The concluding element of the manifestation of the House of God was in prayers. That is where we express our need of the help of God, first as to the needs in the work of the Gospel and then as to the interests of the people of God.

The Evidence in Paul's Writings.

In the Corinthian First Epistle, essentially setting forth the principles of local responsibility, we are not surprised to find at the beginning "to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling," *i.e.*, the inner aspect indwelt by the Spirit of God. Holiness is the first principle of God dwelling in His temple, *i.e.*, the saints collectively, even as righteousness should mark them individually. Therefore that corresponds to the inner shrine or *naos* of the Temple from which perfect illumination or instruction was derived and grace and light diffused, but immediately the Apostle proceeded to refer to the outer aspect in the words "with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord" (1 Cor. i., 2). That statement indicates profession, *i.e.*, the aspect to which reference is usually made in the New Testament under the term "House of God." In Ch. i.-iv. the prominent thought is the resources of the House of God. In Corinthians the main aspect of doctrine which receives emphasis is that the Church building is by the instrumentality of man who may build what is valuable or defective or detrimental. Nevertheless although mainly viewed in human responsibility it takes character from the truth, *e.g.*, "We are workers (or labourers) together with (or under) God, ye are God's husbandry (or masterpiece), God's building." The resources are four-fold (1) Christ as wisdom (i., 30); (2) Holy Ghost (ii.); (3) the Temple (iii.); (4) the ministry of the Apostles (iv.). From Ch. v. onwards the responsibilities receive emphasis. The responsibilities have also a 4-fold aspect (*a*) purity (Ch. v.); (*b*) fellowship (Ch. x.); (*c*) unity (Ch. xii.); (*d*) service (Ch. xiv.). "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God" (1 Cor. iii., 9, 16). The Corinthians possessed that character although not composing the whole entity, therefore they were responsible to conduct themselves in view of that intelligence and dignity. That they failed miserably did not change their responsibility! God does not reduce his standard according to the measure of attainment existing. In the same chapter there is presented that no other

foundation can man lay than Jesus Christ. The Apostle on that foundation was fellow worker with (*i.e.*, under direction) God! In New Testament doctrine the heavenly aspect of the Church is presented under the figure of the "One Body," but the correlated idea of the "House of God" appertains entirely to earth. It has been put in the responsibility of man where failure and defection occur. In 1 Cor. iii. various materials are built in the local assembly and are tested, but only what is of God will remain, such as gold (indicating divine righteousness) silver (divine grace) and precious stones (features of Christ), wood (deposit of the first man), grass (man's prosperity), stubble (what resembles food but has no nourishing quality). Then there is also present what corrupts, *e.g.*, deceitful workers (1 Cor. xi., 13) who introduce defiling teaching, subversive of the truth. 1 Cor. vi. shows the believer's body as the temple of the Holy Ghost, which involves individual holiness. 1 Cor. xii., 28 gives a summary of the constitution and service of the House of God, while in Ch. xiv. the Holy Spirit will direct oral ministry in the local assembly. That tends to prevent clericalism.

On receiving the Holy Ghost, we belong to the House of God where He dwells! Therein we receive divine instruction and take up responsibilities in the place of testimony. These can only be discharged satisfactorily as the instruction is obeyed. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and heard His word (Luke x., 39). The testimony depends on revelation relative to the future day of display. We are responsible to maintain every Scriptural principle, irrespective of the conditions ruling in society or in the profession of Christ's name. Responsibility does not alter with the times! Relative to fellowship, all should rally to the support (and in the love) of the Christian company. There is protection from the influences of evil there! The Jewish altar, the Christian fellowship and the table of demons were severally exclusive of each other. The spirit of division mars the testimony! The service of the House is to be maintained through unceasing exercise, interest and

instruction. We are responsible to demonstrate the unity by maintaining peace and love among ourselves.

2 Cor. vi., 14-18 expands the idea of holiness required and involves a complete separation from contact with the defilement of the world. Thus the truth as to the House of God will exclude evil associations which will compromise its holy character, even as in 1 Cor. v. evil persons are excluded.

In the Ephesian Epistle in its main outline of doctrine the Church is presented according to the purpose of God in her essential constitution relative to the purpose of God, whereas the Corinthian epistle was more taken up with man's responsibility. The Church is the fulness or complement of Him who fills all in all. That is the result through all eternity, but that has not yet emerged to view. Meanwhile all the building is growing into a Holy Temple in the Lord (Eph. ii., 21). "He is our peace who has made both (Jew and Gentile) one, who has abolished the enmity to make in Himself of the twain one new man that he might reconcile both unto God in one body for through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. ii., 14-18). In Eph., Ch. ii., 20, God alone builds on the foundation of the teaching of the New Testament apostles and prophets who unfold the glories and person of the Son of God and the building is for His glory. The building of God is growing into a Holy Temple. His authority is its controlling principle and holiness its character. Although incomplete now, it will be the eternal dwelling place of God. But the Holy Spirit has already taken possession! The stone foundation is compared with the rock foundation of Matt. xvi. and 1 Cor. iii. All the parts and lines of the structure of the House of God converge on Christ as the corner stone. Man could not fit that stone anywhere in his conception of the structure, even as the dihedral angle stone could only fit the top of the pyramid. In Him can be seen and apprehended all God's thoughts and purpose (Zech. iii., 9). Ephesians treats of the growth and glory of the House. The Holy Temple in the Lord indicates the administration of the glory in the future,

meanwhile it is God's dwelling place by or in the Spirit (ii., 22). In Acts ii., the apostles did not apprehend that the new entity included anyone outside the house of Israel. Peter's eyes were cleared from that fallacy in Acts x. But the Jew and Gentile cease to be such when they become incorporated as "one new man" in Himself. No mere fusion of interests and characteristics would do! All these are obliterated in the new entity, the House of God, in which God can dwell in the Spirit. All the saints on earth as indwelt by the Spirit are builded together so that God can have a dwelling on earth. His grace and qualities are apprehended there and shine forth in testimony. The House is filled with heavenly light to be transmitted in gracious blessing to mankind. The saints on earth at any moment form only part of the final entity in which the Lord will be admired by a wondering universe in the Day of Glory (2 Thess. i., 10). Hence in this further aspect the building is growing and at any moment may be completed by the coming of the Lord! (1 Thess. iv.).

Then in Ch. iii. there is the further communication "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." He is the source and dynamic power through the Holy Spirit of all true expression of godliness in our lives. Apart from that we could only exhibit what would be a spurious imitation in sanctimoniousness! In Ch. iv., the character befitting those in such intimacy with God is set forth, *viz.*, walking worthy of the calling with all lowliness as to ourselves, meekness as to others, in general, longsuffering as to our brethren, even if requiring "forbearing" (*i.e.*, suffering gladly) one another in love; being diligent to demonstrate the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace which would be evident in the local company of Christians with whom we have the privilege to be associated!

The first Epistle of Timothy deals with the order and administration of the House of God, and the important feature of the glory of the blessed God and its Gospel. In Ch. i. the Commandment or the law of the house (*i.e.*, its principle of administration) shows the great end or object to be secured by those who form the house of unfeigned faith.

Holiness is the great mark of the house (Ps. xciii., Ezek. xliii.). In Ch. ii. the Christians are exhorted to display the true dependent character of the House of God, making prayers and giving thanks for all men because that is God's disposition for all that all may be saved. The testimony of God is in the house (I Tim. ii., 4-6). Then the importance of prayer receives emphasis, "I will that men (not merely clergy) pray everywhere and lifting up holy hands" and that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel and sobriety not with ornament conspicuous in the world but what God works, as women professing godliness. The good words of the men are in beautiful harmony with the good works of the women. The House of God is marked by godliness and becoming manner! The activity of the men and the passivity of the women illustrate the character of the House in accord with subjection to authority. God is made manifest in a way intelligible to those around, so giving God His true advertisement is incumbent on Christians. It is in the House of God that God makes contact with all men. The man Christ Jesus is the mediator between God and men. In the House, prayer is offered for all, even for those who do not pray for themselves! The House of God has an abiding character as the Church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth. God dwells there by His Spirit. (I Tim. iii., 15).

Ch. iii. refers to service in the House of God which has a much wider scope than while we are together in local assembly. It enters into the most minute detail of our daily lives. Hence behaviour is to be suited to its character as the witness and support of the truth. Bishopric or oversight is exercised as to the advancement of the soul. Deaconship or care refers to the needs of the body. These features are not evinced by culture or pagan ideals in the world. Dignity in the House of God is shown in man being taken from his state of alienation by nature and restored to the true knowledge of God and communion with Him. These features were perfectly seen in the mystery of godliness displayed in Christ. Moreover the people of God are the

dispensers of God's blessing to mankind! Ch. iv.-vi. set forth the details of conduct in the House of God, commencing with the Spirit speaking expressly or like an orator who cannot brook opposition and cannot be withstood, thus the living voice of God in His house. A man is qualified for administration in the House of God according as he acts rightly in his own house. In the former, light is received from God and testimony goes out therefrom. Holiness, dependence, obedience and care are manifested. Oversight for souls and ministry for the bodies show the perfection of the order of the House of God. From the Old Testament scriptures we see that Israel failed in admitting strangers with worldly principles who flouted the holy character of the House of God, thus they used the House for their own interest. The same features have been manifest in the history of the people of God in this era.

In II. Timothy unmistakable instructions are issued relative to the ruinous condition consequent on man's failure. Ch. i. shows that everything vital depends on God's sovereignty and promise, yet there is a divine deposit to keep by the Spirit in spite of the external failure. Ch. ii. begins with an exhortation to be strong in the grace in Christ Jesus, since all is secured in the resurrection of Christ. The failure indicated in I. Cor. iii. results in the likeness to a great house with vessels to honour and dishonour; although the house may no longer evince the true character of God, the only safeguard for the individual is in maintaining separation from evil teaching of systems and people, and preserving association with good which will fit him for the Master's service. The unsatisfactory state does not change the essential character of the house, the foundations of which stand sure. The individual should follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who manifest the essential principle of the House of God, *viz.*, calling on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart, *i.e.*, without ulterior motives and thus marked by transparent honesty. Therefore the path of separation will not involve monastic seclusion. There will be others who have kindred charact-

eristics with whom we can associate. The issue of the process will make for peace. That will not be tolerant laxity or peace at any price involving compromise with a world filled with evil, faithlessness and hatred, but will be the result of righteousness, faith and love! Such a course will call for patience and meekness, with those who will raise foolish questions. It will be necessary to instruct those who oppose which is usually the condition manifested at first, so that God may use the instruction to cause them to bow to the truth! Ch. iii. sets forth that the mass of christendom has lapsed into a state which manifests pagan characteristics, persecuting the godly, but the Christian's resource is in the truth of God enshrined in the Scriptures. Ch. iv. shows the work and attitude of the service of the Lord, when the truth will not be tolerated by Christendom at large. The House of God refers to profession in general and never to a local company of Christians, still less to the building where they meet periodically! The Epistle to Titus issues instructions for God's steward (ch. i., 7), and the teaching of grace (ch. ii., 11-14).

Evidence in Hebrews.

In Hebrews the analogy of the House of God with the Old Testament types relates entirely to the Tabernacle, which was the pattern of things in the heavens. Christ is the builder of the House because "He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the House hath more honour than the House" (Heb. iii., 3). But in the Spirit's power the building grows! There are certain leading thoughts relative to this subject in the epistle, *viz.*, (1) Christ, is Son over God's house (Ch. iii., 6). Moses was only a servant therein. The House is also where the Holy Ghost speaks (v. 7). (2) "We are God's House *if* we hold fast the confidence and joy of the hope (or prospect)." Profession may retain the name of God's House and lose its character. If we lapse into worldly practice and associations the question may be well asked, what real value attaches to our profession of the Lord's name? We shall simply be innocuous or harmless, indistinguishable from the world. That recognises the christian

profession as the sphere of privilege. (3) In another aspect the whole universe is the House of God (Ch. iii., 4, also I. Kings viii., 27), *i.e.*, in the ultimate issue Christ is over the whole system for blessing. (4) Christ is the Great Priest over the House of God (Ch. x., 21), as well as the Apostle thereof. The apostle introduces; the priest carries on! Under the head of the priesthood, Christ is (a) the Offering Priest (vii., 27): (b) the Intercessory Priest living in the power of an endless life, since His priesthood is intransmissible there is no discontinuity in person or function as in the old era (viii., 3); (c) Minister of the Holy Places (viii., 1-2). In spite of defection, God in mercy dwells amongst His people on the ground of Redemption, also in relation to Government and Priesthood. The House of God is the place of privilege but of responsibility as well. In scripture, possession and profession are not put in contrast as is so often declared in current preaching, but they run parallel with each other. The only one who has title to profess is the one who possesses! If people take Christian ground, they are responsible to walk as on such. Time will prove the merits of their profession before men. Hence they are warned of consequences of unreality. The "day" will reveal matters as to eternity!

In Ch. xii., the discipline of the House of God is described. However much we may have to lament the paucity of oral ministry we can be thankful that the ministry in the way of discipline is perfect! Every element in our lives is in perfect adjustment with every other element, so that we are set in the best circumstances to learn the sympathy and help of our Great Priest. The pressure of circumstances curbs the development of fleshly ambition and the desire for the world. Discipline operates so that we may be partakers of the holiness of God, emptying our hearts of self and worldly interests, making room for Christ who cannot brook a rival in our hearts. Discipline may be (1) *punitive* (if we sow to the flesh we can only reap corruption therefrom), but in that aspect restoration is in view; (2) *preservative*, we may find our course blocked by an insurmountable obstacle which

prevents us from going wrong, *i.e.*, evidence of the rich mercy of God; (3) *promotive*, all discipline has the object in view that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Most of our discipline is private so that we may not require to come under public discipline by our associates! God will not let us have our own way. In His house we come under His influence and care. He loves His children and chastens them so that they may be kept in accordance with His love and will. So we do well to meditate on our privileges.

Evidence in Peter's Writings.

In Peter's first epistle, Ch. i. shows the origin and incorruptible nature of the material with which Christ builds. Moreover the material is living with a living hope (or prospect) on account of the resurrection of Christ, meanwhile preservation is by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The apprehension of the living character of the house relieves from mere dead religion and brings into loving one another with a pure heart fervently (or expansively) in contrast to the dead formality of Israel's ritual. Ch. ii. presents the privileges and responsibilities peculiar to the House of God: offering up spiritual sacrifices and evincing the excellent qualities of God and Christ in a world of darkness, thus it corresponds to the approach to the Gate of Heaven (the Godward aspect) and the testimony of the pillar anointed with oil (the manward aspect) of Genesis xxviii. The spiritual house composed of living stones emerges to view, wherein a holy priesthood can offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; but on the outside of the house there are displayed the royal priests who advertise the excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. The stones have no responsibility for their position, they are put in the building. "Coming to Christ as Living Stone" is contingent on having tasted or tested His goodness and His value as Lord in relation to our need. Then we leave the responsible sphere and apprehend Him as Living Stone in His sphere which is filled with His things—"things of mine" of John

16. That conveys all that He is as man Godward in relation to the purpose of God. We are then brought to know the Father. The living stones are kindred to Christ and have their origin in the purpose of God, the Father. Christ draws our hearts away from what is in man's world and we become "living stones" characteristically, *i.e.*, not merely in an abstract sense. As living stones we apprehend and appreciate His love and we love in response to that appreciation. We are under His influence as abiding in Christ. The House of God must declare the character of God. But in order that this may be effected practically the features of that House must be maintained. The breakdown in man's responsibility involves that judgment will begin at the House of God, which is the most valuable spot on earth, so that the glory of God may be vindicated (iv., 17). Public judgment is left till the Lord's appearing. Peter was a sample stone (not the rock). Although his confession was wonderful he had subsequently to apprehend in his soul's history what depths of meaning were concealed therein! Spiritual good of what comes to us as light from God is only afforded later by the work of God in the soul. We cannot understand the principles of the House of God if we fail to recognise that the Lord Jesus Christ is rejected here. The religious leaders threw away the "corner (or angle) stone" as unsuitable for their use. He is nevertheless the keystone of the pyramid in God's architecture. He is precious to God and thus so to those who believe.

Evidence in John's Epistles.

In John's epistles the term "House of God" does not occur, but it is implied by the constant recurrence of the reciprocal statement of our dwelling in God and God dwelling in us (I. John iv.). In John's gospel it was shown that Christ dwelt in God and that God was in Him and in the epistles we see the same home features attributed to what is normal in the Christian. As indwelt by the Holy Spirit we are instructed in obedience and love peculiar to that home circle. Great as indeed that feature is it takes second place to its counterpart that God should dwell in us.

The results are that we love because first loved; we trust God so that our prayers are effectual; we bear testimony to the world; we lend a helping hand to our fellows; we are not deceived by Satan's emissaries who have been let loose in the world. The love of God can only be appreciated in the death of Christ and as a consequence of that apprehension we lay down our lives for the brethren (I. John iii., 16). The House of God is the home circle of the family of God; its atmosphere is love. The new nature is invigorated and cherished by its warmth. In the 19th century a great religious teacher wrote a book on love as "the greatest thing in the world." But although his essay was freely interspersed with references to Scripture texts, he did not touch the fringe of the subject of love as of God. He treated really of human love ignoring that the antecedent of these references is to the love of God which is radically different!

Evidence in the Revelation.

Although the term "House of God" does not occur in the Revelation the whole history of the Church in its features relative to the earth, *i.e.*, appertaining to the House of God, passes in brief review before the prophetic vision, in seven short letters to representative local assemblies in Asia Minor. The features in the responsibility of man receive emphasis, such as the danger of lapses from faithfulness, but here and there the loyalty of those who maintain true remnant character emerges to view (Rev. i.-iii.). In the complex condition evinced, there is seen unmistakably the mind of the Lord on the points under review, just as the Urim and Thummim formed the oracles for Israel. That is not now in public display, so sets forth the thought of the temple.

Christendom will be the scene of unparalleled judgments. The responsibility is proportioned to the light rejected! The history of Babylon shows the character of the fearful judgments which will fall on a Christless church from which the Holy Ghost has departed and which has been spued out of Christ's mouth as nauseous!

Later in the book, the seat of heavenly light or instruction and of administration is clearly presented in the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem. The foundations are furnished with all manner of precious stones manifesting distinction by refracted and reflected light. The gates of the City showing its completeness and perfection are twelve pearls involving distinction in perfect harmony. (The prophet Haggai predicted that in the millennial age the latter glory of the House would eclipse all the splendour of the former glory). It is the temple (the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb) which is mentioned in connection with millennial display, as appropriate to the idea of the Kingdom (Rev. xxi., 22). There the Temple and the City ideas coalesce. The glory of God and the Lamb will be the light thereof and the saved nations will walk in that light, *i.e.*, in perfect intelligence of the mind of God.

Beyond the changes of time are presented the new heaven and the new earth, heralded by a great voice from heaven making the statement, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men" (Rev. xxi., 3). That is not with a chosen nation nor in the selection of grace. In the final emergence to view of the ways of God, the whole universe will manifest the features of the House of God. God will dwell with men in keeping with His eternal characters of constancy and consistency. There will be no question of distinction between light and darkness. There will be no possibility of the intrusion of contrary elements. So the oracular manifestations peculiar to the thought of the temple will be unnecessary. No shrine is seen, for the glory of God shines from every atom of its constitution. There is no Holy place nor Holy of Holies, for every part of it is New Creation, wherein righteousness is static! That will be the consummation of the eternal purpose of God in grace. We trace through the dispensations God's dwelling on earth as the temple displaced the tabernacle and in turn was superseded by the church, embodying both ideas in a living way; the temple will again emerge in the millennium and finally on the new earth the tabernacle of God will be with men!

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